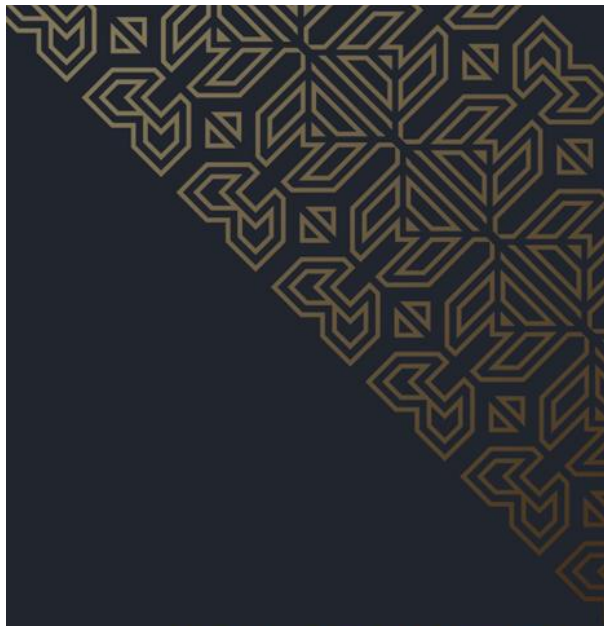




SOUL PROSPERITY

IN SEVERAL SERMONS

WILLIAM BENN



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In several sermons.

By that Eminent Servant of Christ;

Mr. William Benn,

Late of Dorchester in Dorset-shire.

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Editor's Note - During the TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My apologies in advance where such errors occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit, instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in antiquated script in the original facsimiles. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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TO THE WORSHIPFUL.

Thomas Grove, Esq; Of Fern in the County of Wilts.

The Author of this Treatise was a person that greatly honored you, and one whom you highly esteemed, and loved. I therefore presume (as being one entrusted by the Author to publish what was prepared for the Press) to tender it to your Patronage. The Subject speaks its own worth, the present Season its usefulness. As for your Self, you are a Gentleman so universally known, that you are above my Character. That the God of all grace would give you a great increase of grace, and peace in your Old Age, and bless your House, is the hearty Prayer of;

Sir,

Your much Obliged Servant, JOSHUA CHURCHILL.

TO THE READER.

Neither the Author of the ensuing discourse doth stand in need of any testimony from me, among those to whom he was known, nor will the discourse itself need any recommendation unto them that shall peruse it, provided they be any ways serious in Religion. It is therefore rather for compliance with the request of others, then from any inclination in myself, that I prefix these few lines unto what doth ensue. But yet I must say also, that the high esteem which I had of the Author whilst he lived, for the gifts and graces of God that were Eminent in him, and the Seasonableness of the subject matter treated of in this discourse, made me more willing to this compliance than otherwise I should have been. I shall therefore offer a few things to the Reader, which he may esteem or reject as he shall see cause. The Author of this discourse (as is well known) is some while since entered into his rest, and he is so, after his painful, faithful, and successful labor in the Vineyard of Christ for above fifty years. And I shall say no more concerning him, but that as he was eminently furnished with all ministerial abilities, so it is but a joint testimony of all that knew him, that his singular and almost unparalleled perseverance in Prayer, as for all other concerns for the Church of Christ, so for the success of his own Ministry, was that which both strengthened him to his work, and gave him success in it amongst whom he labored. And I mention this only as an encouragement to a just expectation of use, and fruit from this part of his labors, in that it had an eminent share in those fervent Prayers, wherewith all his endeavors in this kind were accompanied. The subject-matter here insisted on by him, is of the highest importance unto all, whose design and business it is to live unto God. For it is not any one single grace whose exercise is directed, nor any one single duty which is pressed and exhorted unto, but the entire management and acting of the principle of Spiritual Life in our whole walk before God, is declared and expressed in this discourse. For in these things do our Souls live, in them doth their prosperity consist. No Soul can prosper but in the due exercises of all graces, whereby the habit of them are

strengthened, and the due performance of all those duties wherein they are exercised. To have a guide in these things, such a guide as evidenced himself went before every step in the way, directing and encouraging others to accompany and follow him in the same course and way, is of great concernment unto such humble, teachable Souls, as design a prosperous condition in the profession of Religion, wherein we are engaged. And the design of this discourse, with the management of it, to direct unto a Soul's prosperity, have weight added to them from the season, wherein by the guidance of Divine Providence they are now published. For we are fallen into a time, wherein the Spiritual diseases, decays and thriftlessness of many professors of Religion do evidence themselves to the World, and complaints of the want of Soul-prosperity, is heard from the most who sincerely inspect the inward state of Religion this day, in themselves and others. It cannot therefore want that beauty which season gives unto a word of truth. The manner of handling both Doctrine and Application in this discourse is such as becomes both the Author of it, and the Subject treated on, for it is done with that gravity and soundness of speech as cannot be reprov'd; with that plainness and perspicuity, which as it excludes all countenance from ornament of Speech, so there is nothing in it that may be exposed to contempt amongst them that understand Spiritual things, or know in any measure, how they ought to be taught. And that which gives life to the whole, is an open evidence that the Author did both express his own experience, and gives the Character of his own mind, in the endeavor after Soul-prosperity, wherein his attainments and success were eminent above the most. And if the Reader be one who is engaged in the same design, he will find, that as face answereth unto face in water, so his heart will answer the heart of the Author in his expressions of his own experience and practice, and it is nothing but the Edification of Believers in faith and holiness that is aimed at, without the least alliance unto any of those controversies in Religion, wherewith the profession of it are perplexed in the World. For though these and such things as these here treated of, are despised and reproached by Men of corrupt minds and profane Spirits, unto whom the whole practice and power of godliness, with the manner of

its Declaration according to the Scripture, is folly and matter of contempt; yet none have yet supposed, that it will admit of a question in Christian Religion, whether Believers ought seriously endeavor the spiritual prosperity of their own Souls. But with such as by whom these things are either despised or neglected, we are not now concerned; as for those who would endeavor to be found of Christ in peace, in what way soever he shall please to visit his Church, or the World, the Season wherein we live, the whole power of temptation, which we are exercised withal, the state present of most Professors, all circumstances and calls of Providence, do make the subject-matter of the duty proposed in this discourse, more than ordinary necessary for their more serious consideration.

JOHN OWEN.

SERMON I.

3 Epist. of John, verse. 2.

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy Soul prospereth.

There are two things, among many others, both which are infallibly certain, and exceeding comfortable to all those that live by Faith, and fear before the Lord. The one is, That the Lord knows them everyone by name. The other is, That he hath a perfect knowledge of all their concernments; How it is with them, both in respect of their Souls, and in respect of their Bodies; and what they stand in need of, for the welfare both of the one, and of the other.

We have both these exemplified in this Epistle, written to one single person, Gaius by name. Who this Gaius was, whether it was Gaius of Macedonia, spoken of Act. 19. Or Gaius of Derbe, spoken of Act. 20. Or Gaius of Corinth, spoken of 1 Cor. 1.14. cannot, I think, be

absolutely determined. However, 'tis certain, The Lord knew well, which of them it was. And the Lord did know, that this Gaius to whom this Epistle was written, was an eminent godly person, one that had a gracious, vigorous, active Soul for God, in a weak and consumptive Body. And upon that account, he directs his Servant John to write this Epistle to him; that he might know, how much he did live in his Care, and what observation he made of him, and his Condition.

This is a very great matter, that an entire portion of Canonical Scripture (as this Epistle is) should be written for the instruction, and consolation of one good man. But we may wonder the less at it, if we look a little backward, we shall find such a portion written to one good woman; but she was, besides her eminent godliness, a person of honor in the World; she was a Lady, That's the second Epistle of John. And that we may know, that in these matters, God is no respecter of persons, we have a third instance of this, in the Epistle to Philemon, written in the behalf of Onesimus, a mean person, comparatively. A servant he had been, and one that miscarried in his service, and ran away from his Master. But now having a saving work of God begun in him, whereof Paul had good experience, he writes that Epistle to Philemon, on his behalf, that he might receive him, not only into Service, but into Favor; not only as a Servant, but as a beloved Brother in the Lord. ver. 16. It was a great privilege, that God vouchsafed these three Persons, above others. It's true, we find more Epistles written to particular Persons, as two to Timothy, and one to Titus; but they were written on a more public, and general account. And the substance of those three Epistles, may be found in that to Timothy, where Paul saith, He wrote, that he might know, how to behave himself in the Church of God, the House of the living God. However, though this was such a great matter, with respect to these three Persons; yet we know very well, that God had not respect to them alone; for Rom. 15.4. the Apostle tells us, Whatever is written, is written for our learning: what is written to Gaius in this Epistle, and what is in this single verse, is written for our learning: The Lord give us to learn, what may be learnt by it.

In these words we have observable three parts.

1. Something expressed. It was exceeding well with Gaius, in respect of his spiritual condition. He was like to have a very comfortable journey to Heaven: His Soul prospered.

2. We have something implied, sc. That it was not altogether so well with Gaius in his outward condition, especially in respect of his health. Though he was a very godly man, he was none of the strongest men. He was weak, and sickly.

3. We have something desired.

(1.) In general. That he might prosper; indefinitely spoken; that he might prosper in all his concernments, within doors and without.

(2.) That he might be in health. He prays that he might have a healthy constitution.

And both these, as desired, are amplified.

1. By the manner thereof, very heartily. I wish above all things.

2. By the measure, or degree, or pattern, according to which he desires this prosperity might be proportioned, and that is, according to the degree, and measure of his Soul-prosperity. [That thou mayest prosper, as thy Soul prospereth.]

It is not unfit to give you an account, in a word or two, of the choice of this Text. Ye may remember that the subjects of some foregoing Exercises were these two things.

1. Concerning a dead Religion. Many Professors of the true Religion, as 'tis professed by them, it is a dead Religion; and their works, in, and about it, are dead works.

2. We came to speak of a dying, withering, languishing Religion. The observation was this.

A living Christian, yet alive to God (and that's all) may, in respect of his Christianity, be in a dying, withering languishing condition.

Because what follows in that Epistle, in Revel. 3. did not give so fair a foundation, to build that upon, which I am now to speak of, concerning a thriving, and prospering Religion, I have made choice of these words. And the observation which I shall, as the Lord shall enable me, insist most upon, will be this.

DOCT.

That of all prosperity, Soul-prosperity is the most desirable prosperity.

But before I come to speak of that Point, it will be requisite, not only to show how the Text bears it, but it may be convenient to point out some few Observations, which the words afford, which I shall, as briefly as may be, pass through; and the first is this.

1. OBS. Concerning the person of this Gaius, who he was. I told you it could not be absolutely determined; but it seems to be very probable, that it was Gaius of Corinth, of whom the Apostle makes mention, Rom. 16.23. That he was Paul's Host, and the Host of the Church. i.e. He was one that either Entertained the Brethren that went up, and down, to preach the Gospel gratis, at his own charge, or else that he had the chief oversight of that public house, that was for their entertainment there. And that which may well lead us to this conjecture, is that which we have verse. 5, 6. of this Epistle; where John gives him this testimony; That whatever he did to the Brethren, and Strangers, he did it faithfully, and they bare witness of his charity. So that, either this was that Gaius, or else, as he had the same name, so he had the same disposition. He was charitable, and hospitable. And this let him very deeply into John's affection. He

loved him dearly, calls him, His beloved, (the same word is rendered, Dearly beloved) and prayeth for him.

NOTE.

Persons of public Spirits, that do good with what they have, according to their ability; especially for the promoting of Religion, are most likely to have, and it is fit they should have, most prayers put up to God, for their welfare and prosperity, in every respect.

It is said Job. 31.20. that The loins of the poor blessed him. They had no blessing to dispose of: but the meaning is, They heartily prayed for a blessing upon Job, and all that he had. We read Act. 9.31. of a good woman, her name was Dorcas. She was full of good works. Peter finds a great many about her Corps, weeping, and telling him, what good she had done, whilst among them, and showed him, not her own Wardrobe, but the Coats she had made for them. Doubtless, she that had so many Tears shed for her, when she was dead, had many prayers put up for her, while she was alive. Perhaps, they were not like to find another Dorcas. It might be then, as it is now. All seek their own, none the things of Christ. All look after their own particular interest. These are like to be, as that wicked Prince, 2 Chron. 21.20. who lived undesired, and died unlamented. What will persons say of such? Psal. 49.19. They will bless them while they live, in hope to get something by them; but when they die, farewell they. They were good for none, but themselves. But it was not so with Gaius, it was not so with Dorcas. It is Calvin 's note: He thinks God raised Dorcas to life, out of respect to the poor people.

2. Observe our Translation. [I wish] <H&G>. It is in the margent [I pray] And the word is indifferently rendered. Act. 27.29.— <H&G>. They wished for day. But 2 Cor. 13.7. <H&G>. I pray God, that ye do no evil; and yet verse. 9. <H&G>. I wish your perfection. Paul 's wishes, were his Prayers.

NOTE.

That it is no inconsiderable part of a Christians wisdom, to be wary, and well advised, in what they wish; for Wishing is like Praying.

We find in Scripture, that very much guilt hath been contracted, and very much folly expressed, by wild, and extravagant wishes. I shall instance in the miscarriages of good people, this way. Job wisheth that he had never been born, chap. 3. Jeremy wisheth that either, he had never been born, or died by and by, chap. 20. Jonah wisheth he were dead, and as much under ground, as he was above ground, chap. 4.9. David wisheth, that he had died for Absalom. But the saddest wish is that of Joshua, chap. 7. v. 9. He was at prayer, but forgot himself sadly. Would God (saith he) we had not come over Jordan. He wisheth, that God had never made good his Promise, of their coming into the Land of Canaan. There is much folly expressed hereby. Many persons please themselves, if they may have liberty of wishing. That they might wish for what they would have, and have what they wish for, then they would be in a brave condition. A fond, and foolish conceit this is, Eccles. 6.12. Who knows what is good for himself in this life? The words are spoken question wise, and we are to understand them negatively. That is only good for us in this life, which is improved in order to our Eternal life. Now God can carry on that course to bring us to Eternal happiness, which he hath chosen his people to, by adversity, as well as prosperity. Therefore this is the duty, and wisdom of the people of God, to leave it with God, as it is Psal. 47.4. Thou shalt choose our inheritance for us. Wisdom is required to make a good choice in anything. God is the only wise God, he will choose well.

Note this farther. In three things God hath set us bounds: Bounds to our Faith, what to believe. Bounds to our Actions, what to do: And bounds to our Prayers, what to desire, and what to ask. And why should our Wishes be unbounded, since they are like Prayers? Idle wishes are, at least, as bad, as idle words, which no man can give account of, Matth. 12.36. Many have gotten their death, and destruction, by getting what they wisht for. They wished, they might die in the Wilderness, and they did so. Num. 14.

Farther, John here wisheth, That Gaius might prosper; John 's wish was a prayer to God for him. From hence we may take this note.

NOTE.

The well-being, and prosperity of every man's outward condition, is wholly at God's disposing. Psal. 127.1. Except the Lord build the house, &c. It is neither the care of the Master, nor the faithfulness of the Servants, nor anything else, that can do anything at all, if God say Nay. If God doth not make the house to grow (as David useth the expression 2 Sam. 23.5.) certainly, it will wither. The Estate, the House, the Family will decay; and, in time, come to nothing. I note this, that we may be all stirred up, to acknowledge God, to be the Fountain, and Spring of all outward Blessings whatsoever. And accordingly.

(1.) As we desire anything should succeed, that we take in hand, relating to our worldly affairs, engage God in all, that he may work with us therein. We have Warrant, in everything to make known our requests to God. Phil. 4.6. In everything, be it never so small, engage God to be with us therein; and say as Abraham 's Servant did, Gen. 24.11. Lord send me good speed every day.

(2.) As we desire to prosper, so serve the Providence of God; wait upon him, and keep his ways, and believe his promises. David gives his Son this counsel; Keep the charge of the Lord, that thou mayest prosper, and have good success, 1 Kings. 2.3. And he had so, while he did so. It is spoken of such a person, Psal. 1.3. Whatsoever he doth, shall prosper: It shall turn to good, in order to the furtherance of the Soul's prosperity.

(3.) When the Lord is pleased to bless the labor of our hands, to make our going out, and our coming in, the beginning, and ending of what we go about successful, give God the praise. Sacrifice not to your own Net, as that worldly person, Psal. 49.18. who blessed himself: No, give God the glory, though the matter be never so small.

Ruth. 2.18, 19, 20. Naomi being brought into a low condition (though she had been a woman of fashion) when her daughter-in-law had sped well in gleaning; O blessed be the Lord, saith she. Truly, this would be well thought of, Psal. 73.4. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee thy hearts desire. When God hath given us our hearts desire, we should delight ourselves in the Lord: And the Mercy of God, should raise us up to rejoice in the God of our Mercies: This would make every days Mercies to reach our Souls.

(4.) [I wish, that thou mayest prosper, &c.] It was well with Gaius already: He prospered with the best prosperity; but John wisheth, that he might be royally blessed. That mercy might compass him about on every side. Hence,

OBSERVE, That though it be a just, and measured truth, That that Man is a blessed Man, whose Soul prospers, in what outward condition soever he be, yet outward prosperity (Soul-prosperity going before) is a superadded blessing, and may be sought for at the hands of God, with submission to the will of God, for ourselves, and in the behalf of others.

It is without all controversy, Though a Man's outward condition were as low as Job 's in the Old Testament, and as Lazarus 's in the New Testament, yet he is blessed, whose Soul prospers. For as it is said, of every Man in his civil capacity: In his best estate he is altogether vanity. Psal. 39.5. He is subject to changes, none can tell what a day may bring forth: Here we have no continuing City, Heb. 13.14. So it may truly be said of a person, whose Soul prospers, whatever his outward condition be, he is altogether blessed. Psal. 94.12. Blessed is the Man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law. When instruction hearkened to, goes with correction, the Soul prospers; he is a blessed Man. In Job. 1. we have a description of Job 's prosperous estate: First, it is said, That he was a Man fearing God. But we have farther, as it were, an Inventory given in, of his outward condition: He had so many Sheep, so many Oxen, so many Asses, so many Camels, &c. These were a superadded blessing to Job. This is

set down, to show the praise of Job 's patience, who bare such a change so as he did: 'It is very true, a Man may easily over-rate and over-value his worldly estate. Verily, if Soul-prosperity do not go before outward prosperity, outward prosperity is but like a Cypher, and signifies nothing, if a figure don't go before it: A Man may write a sheet of Paper full of Cyphers, but all do not make One: When Soul-prosperity goes before, God hath done much for such persons. They have the Earth, they shall have Heaven. They have the Nether Springs, they shall have the Upper Springs; so that if it were asked them, as Christ did his Disciples, Luk. 22.35. Lacked ye anything? They must answer (if they will speak, as the matter is) as the Disciples did, They want nothing. God hath not dealt so with all those, that have shot the gulf, and are past danger for Eternity. Many of them are cut short; yea, they may say many times, as Peter did, Luk. 5.5. We have fished all night, and caught nothing; Labored hard, and caught not so much as a Sprat for their breakfast. Many a Man that labors all the week, hath very much ado to bring both ends together, his Gettings, and his Expenses. The wants of some are so many, that they often know not what to do; and the wants of others are so few, that they want nothing, but to know how to improve, what they have. To know how to abound, is a far greater blessing then to abound. Eccl. 3.14. whatsoever God doth, is forever. If God give a Man an outward worldly estate, it is forever: What, to enjoy it forever? No, things seen are but for Time: But in respect of the use, or abuse of them, they are forever.

Now, to speak to that, which in particular John desires for his friend Gaius, That he might be in health. Gaius was not sick now, that's clear from verse. 6. He did not keep his Bed, nor his Chamber, nor his House; for John adviseth him to bring the Brethren on their way, after a godly sort: But he was a sickly Man.

NOTE.

Those that have much of the heart of God, and live much in the love of God, may feel much of the hand of God; as in other troubles, so in

long continued bodily weaknesses.

That they may be sick, is no marvel, for they must die; but we speak of long, continued weakness: Timothy was such a Man, 1 Tim. 5.23. It is observed of Calvin, that in his latter days, he was very sickly, and weak, contracted, as 'twas thought, by eating too much Aloes: Thuanus saith, he was so seven years before his death. We find, Job observed this in his days, Job. 21.25. One dies in the bitterness of his Soul, never eats his bread with pleasure. [One dies.] What one? Even one good Man, as well as one bad Man: He speaks indifferently of either; all things fall alike to all. The good Man dies in bitterness, and pain, seldom made a good meal. Thus ye see it hath been: And I note this, only for this purpose; that we may see, that no new thing befalls them, with whom God deals so at this day; but that which hath been the lot of those whose Souls have prospered. 1 Cor. 10.13. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to Man.

2. Gaius was very well with respect to his Spiritual state, but he was weakly, and sickly; therefore John prays that he might be in health: Hence note,

NOTE. A healthy constitution of Body, though a Man may be blessed without it; yet in itself is a very great and desirable blessing: It is a comprehensive blessing: It is the Epitome and Abridgment of all outward blessings: It is like Salt, that Seasons every Meat. It is too true, this is not so feelingly acknowledged, as it ought to be, by those that do enjoy it. But when (as it is in Job) a Man's bones are chastened with a multitude of pains, and a Man is worn away with pining sickness; it is rare to find such a person, that doth not set a higher price on health, then he did before. And, verily, it is a very great blessing; whether it be by preservation from sickness; or by recovery out of sickness.

(1.) If it be by preservation from sickness, prize it as a very great mercy. It is left upon Record, as a very signal Providence, and gracious Privilege, vouchsafed to the people of Israel, when they were

in Egypt, where there was so much Sickness, Plague, and Death: Yet (Psal. 105.) there was not one feeble person among them when they came forth; for it is said Exod. 12.27. they were able to come forth on foot, six hundred thousand Persons. And ought it not to be esteemed at this day, in this place, as a great mercy, by those Families which God is pleased to preserve from those sicknesses, that some are under? If ye do not labor to improve this so, that God may not repent, that he hath spared you, ye do not well.

(2.) It is a very great mercy to have health, by recovery from sickness, and weakness; Hezekiah judged it so, Isa. 38.19. The living shall praise thee, as I do this day. David speaks to this, Psal. 103.5. My Soul praise thou the Lord. He renews thy strength as the Eagle: The Eagle (as it is said all Birds of prey do) casts her feathers once a year; new feathers grow up again, and then she is fresh, and lusty; and mounts up as high as before.

Now that health, is so great a blessing, will appear in this, because while the Lord gives it, he puts a very great price into the Man's hands, that hath it, to further his Soul-prosperity. A weakly, sickly person is under many disadvantages, as to that. For observe,

(1.) Weakness, long continued infirmity, often deprives a person of the public Ordinances. Possibly, some may, at this day, by weakness be deprived of such Meetings as this; which we are to reckon public Ordinances, not in respect of the Place, but Administration, Isa. 38.22. What shall be the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord? While he was sick, and weak, he could not do it.

(2.) It very much indisposeth a Man for the solemn performance of the private Duties of Religion. We have a clear instance of this, Jam. 5.13. Is any afflicted? Let him pray: Is any sick? Let him send for the Elders of the Church. Is not sickness a great affliction? It is: Why then should not the sick pray? Sickness, and weakness indispose a person for the solemn performance of that duty.

(3.) Persons subject to long, continued weaknesses of body, are often in much darkness of mind, apt to question the grace of God in them, and the love of God, toward them. For sickness, and weakness indispose a Man's mind: He cannot infer comfortable conclusions from his former experiences of God. He is full of confusion, like a skein of Silk, that a Man can neither wind, nor draw. So it is with an infirm Man. Psal. 80.3. Heman, when his life did draw nigh to the grave, he saith, His Soul was full of trouble. It is a sad case, a weak Body, and a troubled Soul too. Satan is very skillful at his work: He knew this, and therefore he reserved this as his last temptation for Job, hoping that would stick, to afflict his Body.

Now to Apply this.

1. Let all such as God is pleased to bless with any competency of health, and strength, keep their hearts under the obligation, that this lays upon them. Deut. 8.16. The Lord gave them Manna, to humble them. We say, Oh, if we were fit for Mercy, God would give it: Thus Folks talk, that never endeavor to be more fit. If we should never have a Mercy, till we were fit, it would be long enough before we should have any. God many times gives a Mercy first, and makes a people humble afterward. Well then, considering that life, and health, and strength are given to every Man, for the same end, and purpose, for which Paul improved them, Phil. 1.21. To me, to live is Christ. Therefore we should every one of us, while we are well, set about doing of that, which it will be very well, if it be done, before we are sick; but 'tis of absolute necessity to be done, before we die; even, what we have, 2 Pet. 3.14. Give all diligence to be found in Christ Jesus, in a state of union with him. If a Man be not in Christ, while he lives, he cannot live to Christ, nor shall he die to Christ, when he dies, Col. 1.27. Christ in us, is the hope of glory.

Consider then.

1. Though health, and strength be a very great blessing, yet it is a blessing quickly blasted: Job observed it in his days, Job 21.23. One

dies in his full-strength: God gives him no warning at all. Alas, (saith James) what is a Man's life? A vapor, a little warm breath turned up and down in the nostrils; when that is stopped, a Man dies.

2. Consider this: Say God should give us warning; and do with us, as he did with Jezebel, cast us upon a bed of sickness, and give us space to repent; yet times of Bodily sickness, and weakness, are ill times to begin to look after a neglected Soul, and to do neglected Duties. Sicknesses and weaknesses bring a Man under many disadvantages of looking after Soul-concernments, 2 Sam. 25.35. God smites Nabal, he was sick ten days, that was more time then many persons have; yet he could no more repent then the very stone; his heart died within him: Therefore what we have, Joh. 9.4. should be laid to heart; The night will come, when no Man can work. Do the work, that God calls to, while it is called, To day.

(2.) If so be, health and strength be so great a blessing, then let all that do enjoy it, take heed, how they do anything that may prejudice their health; and do, what God would have them do, for the preservation of their health; and not stick at any due charges, suitable to what they are able to bear.

1. Take heed of prejudicing your health. They are very much to be blamed, that will ride wind, and weather, to get money, Matt. 6.25. The Body is more than Raiment: Health and strength are better than riches. Much more do they transgress, that prejudice their health to gratify a sensual lust, For no Man ever yet hated his own flesh, Eph. 5.29. I have read of one Theotinus, who was very much given to drinking, and had very sore eyes; his Physician told him, he must either leave his drunkenness, or lose his eyes: Then (saith he) farewell sight. He would rather lose his sight, then leave his sin.

2. Do what may be done, to preserve health: Therefore the Apostle saith to Timothy, Drink no longer Water, but use a little Wine, for thy stomachs sake, and thine often infirmities. The poor Woman (Mark. 9.) spent all she had upon the Physicians. This is worth observation:

That we must so mind the welfare of our Bodies, for the preserving of health, and strength, when we have it; and recovery of it, when it is lost; for the preservation of the health, and well-fare of our Souls. It is an hard matter to do those things out of obedience to God, from a principle of grace, which a principle of nature inclines a Man to. Tit. 2.4, That they may teach the young Women to be sober, to love their Husbands, to love their Children.

Now, for the Amplification of this wish.

1. For the manner. It was heartily. [Above all things.]

Observe, It is the duty of every gracious person, to be hearty, and real in his prayers, desires, and wishes for the prosperity of the people of God, and for the health of those that are sick, and weak.

The Apostle speaks to the praise of them, Col. 1.4, That they loved all the Saints of God. Ruth. 4.11, The Elders said to Boaz, The Lord bless thee, and this Woman. How heartily did the good Women bless God for their old neighbor Naomi? Ruth. 4.14. It is a rare thing to find such a spirit. Corruption doth narrow, and straighten Men's hearts: Their eye is evil, because God is good. Corruption straightens, but Grace enlargeth a Man's heart. It is a brave spirit, To rejoice with them that rejoice, and to mourn with them that mourn.

OBSERVE again, Who it is that desires this so heartily: It is John, the beloved Disciple, who pressed hearty love upon others. 1 Joh. 3.18. And he expresseth it to Gaius. Hence note,

NOTE.

It is the duty of every Minister to labor, to exemplify in his practice, the Duties he presseth upon others. The Prophet (Hab. 2.4.) speaking of those sad times in the captivity of Babylon, saith, The just shall live by faith. But they might reply, Can you do so yourselves? And he answers, Yes. Hab. 3.17, 18, Although the Fig-

tree shall not blossom, yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my Salvation.

2. Consider the pattern, measure, and degree, according to which John desires, this outward prosperity might be proportioned; and that is, his Soul-prosperity. Surely this Gaius was a very rare Man: It is hard to find such among all those, that bear the honorable name of Christians. How many are there, Christians in profession, and it may be, according to some measure, indeed, and in truth, who prosper in their Estates, and prosper in their Bodies? They are well, and lively (as David 's Enemies were, Psal. 38.19.) but they have poor, lean, withering Souls. So that we may very well, in the behalf of many, invert the Apostle's wish; and wish that their Souls might prosper, as their Bodies prosper, and as their Estates prosper. If we should pray for some, that their Bodies might be, as their Souls are, we should curse them, instead of praying for them: We must say, let their Bodies be filled with noisome Diseases, and let them pine away, for so their Souls do.

But it was not so with Gaius. Hence observe,

NOTE.

Though a person of a sickly and weak constitution be under many disadvantages, yet under them all, it is possible his Soul may thrive, and prosper. 2 Cor. 4.16, Though our outward Man perish, yet our inward Man is renewed day by day.

Here take notice, that when I say such a Man is under some disadvantages, I mean in respect of the outward Duties of Religion, but not as to the inward, and spiritual Duties; as living by Faith, exercising the Love of God, and the Fear of God; and desires after the enjoyment of God: Herein consists true Religion. Woe be to that Man, that hath no more Religion, then can be seen. Religion is not all Outside, the Lining is the best part of it. The Text bears the Doctrine (mentioned in the first place) thus, John wisheth that Gaius might

prosper in all things, as his Soul prospered; we must understand him in subordination to Soul-prosperity. John wisheth that Gaius might prosper in all things, so that his Soul might still prosper. If Gaius 's Soul had received prejudice, John had wished him a great loss: So that the observation is clear:

That of all prosperities, Soul-prosperity is the most desirable prosperity.

SERMON II.

I Now proceed to that Observation I first intended, in the choice of the words. But take notice first; That the Text gives a fair, and full occasion, to speak to it, though perhaps not discerned at first. John, ye see, wisheth all prosperity to his friend Gaius: but this must be understood in a way of subserviency to the prosperity of his Soul: Otherwise, he had wished him far more hurt, then good. If he had wished him anything, that, in the least, had been to the prejudice of his Soul. It is then beyond all controversy, That as he wished that he might prosper, in all things as his Soul prospered, he would be understood, that his desire was, That his Soul always might prosper. Hence observe,

DOCT.

Of all prosperity, the prosperity of the Soul, is the most desirable prosperity.

For the Explication, three things are to be spoken too.

1. What the Soul is in its natural constitution, and what it is in its unregenerate state by reason of Original corruption.

2. Wherein the prosperity of the Soul consisteth, and when it may be said to prosper.

3. What are the Reasons, whereby it may be made to appear, that the prosperity of the Soul is the most desirable prosperity.

For the first of these, there are two things to be taken into consideration, and to be spoken to apart.

1. What the Soul is, in its natural constitution.

ANS.

It is hard to tell you, for it is a thing which no Man ever saw: But this I may say, that it is that, which the Scripture sometimes calls, The Spirit of Man which is in him, 1 Cor. 2.11. Sometimes, and indeed most frequently, The heart of Man. Prov. 23.26, My Son give me thine heart: The inward Man, 2 Cor. 4.16. The hidden Man of the heart, 1 Pet. 3.4. The Candle of the Lord, Prov. 20.27. And this I may say farther; That it is a most excellent piece of God's Workmanship, and indeed well worth the tongue, and pen of an Angel to describe it. The Body of Man, though it was of mean extraction; made, at first, but of the Dust of the Earth, and liable every moment, when God will, to tumble into the grave, to rot, and putrefy, and to be resolved into its first original: Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return again, Gen. 3.19. Yet that it is a very curious piece: David speaking of his Body, Psal. 139. saith verse. 13, 14, That he was fearfully, and wonderfully made. When I think thereof, saith he, (as I do sometimes) it striketh me with astonishment, yea with a dread, and fear of the incomprehensible wisdom, and power of God manifested therein. This my Soul knows full well; yet this is but the Case, the Cabinet: The Soul is the Jewel that is in it: If that be as the Ring, this is the Diamond in the Ring. I shall not undertake an exact definition of it, but only this description.

It is a Spiritual, Immortal substance united to the Body, yet existing, when it is separated from the Body; capable of doing more service

unto God, and of receiving more good from God, then all the Creatures that ever God made, the glorious Angels, and the Human Nature of Christ only excepted.

I shall not insist upon the proof of the particulars of this description. Some of them may, possibly come to be spoken to, hereafter: Only, for the present, take notice that it is endued with three most excellent Faculties, which will go far, if no more should at any time be said, in proving this to be so.

1. With the faculty of Understanding, capable of knowing Good from Evil; Truth from Falsehood; of knowing God in Christ, the knowledge of whom is Eternal Life. Job. 32.8. There is a Spirit in Man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him Understanding. Every Soul hath this faculty, though this faculty in every Soul be not so furnished, yet it is capable of the inspiration of the Almighty, so as to know the truth as it is in Jesus, and every truth, as it ought to be known; without which, Man were no more capable of such knowledge then the Beasts of the field; as Elihu expresseth himself, Job. 35.11. Who teacheth us more than the Beasts of the Earth; and maketh us wiser then the Fowls of Heaven. Therefore Nebuchadnezzar, upon the highest grounds of reason, praiseth, and magnifieth God, for restoring his understanding unto him. Dan. 4.34.

2. Endued it is with the admirable faculty of Conscience, which hath a power to make a Man stand in awe of God, though he does not see him; yea, and of himself too, when no Body knows where he is, nor what he is doing. For it taketh knowledge, and can, or, at last day, will bear witness what a Man hath thought, or spoken, or done; even from his Cradle to his Grave: So that no Man need to call for a Candle, to see what he hath done in the dark. Though the darkness of the night may hide us from others, and the darkness of our mind may hide us from ourselves (for Conscience may be hardened, it may be seared, but it can never be blind) yet still it hath an eye open, to see into our most retired thoughts, which no eye can see, but his,

who seeth all things. And farther, this is a faculty full of power, that it can acquit, or condemn, torment or comfort a Man as the matter requires, say all the World what they can to the contrary, Rom. 2.14.15.

3. It is endued with the faculty of the Will, which hath a liberty of choosing what is good, and refusing what is evil, so that nothing can hurt us without our own consent. Matth. 10.28, Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul. Satan cannot make any of his Fiery darts stick, unless we will ourselves. He did not by his power (for he could not) force Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, though he found her alone, without her Husband: but by his subtlety he beguiled her. It is true, he is said to have filled the heart of Ananias, so as to lie to the Holy Ghost, but he could blame none but himself for it. Act. 5.3.— Why is it, saith Peter, that Satan hath filled thine heart, to lie to the Holy-Ghost? He could not deny, but that it was his own doing: The Devil only pulled the Latch, and he opened the door himself.

These are excellent endowments: Now of a Soul endued with all these excellent faculties, in respect of its original constitution, in every living Man, even the poorest Cast-out (like that infant Ezek. 16.5.) upon that account only, not considered as beautified with the excellencies of the new Creature it is, that our Savior saith, Matth. 16.26. That it is far more worth than the whole World. That the gaining of the one, would not recompense the loss of the other. Now as we say of a poor child, idling and begging about the Streets, that is of a good Complexion, hath a good wit, and a healthy constitution, That it is a thousand pities that such a lovely, hopeful Child should be undone for want of breeding, and education. So we may say much more, and that upon many accounts, That it is sad, exceeding, unspeakably sad, that such an excellent Creature as the Soul of Man is, should perish, eternally perish, and become the most miserable thing that ever God made, (next unto the Devil) for want of good looking to; and that the welfare and prosperity thereof, should never be minded. It were a blessed thing, if Men did but know the worth of

their Souls, and value them accordingly: David indeed did so. He counted it his Darling, his only One, Psal. 22.20. He was so choice, and tender of it, as knowing the welfare thereof did so much concern him, that he would trust none but God with it. Psal. 31.5. Into thy hand, I commit my Spirit. But for the generality, though called Christians, yet, for this, deserve not the name of Men, that they deal worse with their Souls, than Joshua did with the Gibeonites. He made them but hewers of Wood, and drawers of water, but it was for the service of the Tabernacle. But they cause their Souls to attend the service of the World, and that in the basest drudgery; and to spend, and wear away their strength, in making provision for the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the Eye, and the pride of life. (But this I may speak to, if the Lord please, in the Application.) Only, I would ask, Who is he that can think of it, without sadness, that so noble a Creature should be so basely abused? That being so Spiritual in its Constitution, it should be so Sensual, so Carnal, in its Operations?

This is all that I shall say of the first branch, of the first thing that was proposed; What the Soul is, in its original constitution. Unless this be well considered, we shall never be convinced, That of all prosperity, the prosperity of the Soul, is the most desirable prosperity.

2. I now proceed to the second branch; In what case it is, in its unconverted state, by reason of original Corruption. If I should say no more then this, it were enough: That it is in as bad a case, as sin can make it, having lost the image of God, the favor of God, and all communion with God; as it is set forth unto us, in that threefold Parable, Luk. 15. of the lost Groat, the lost Sheep, and the lost Son. But this is not all; for what by reason of original sin imputed, I mean the first sin of Adam in eating of the forbidden fruit, and believing the Father of Lies, before the God of truth. This is charged upon every Soul, because the common Soul of Mankind was then in Adam: And even for this, every Soul in its unregenerate state, is a cursed Soul. And then farther, by reason of original sin, communicated, and imparted, the very image of Satan is engraven upon it; so that it is

full of unrighteousness, a very Seed-plot of all ungodliness. I shall farther amplify this, in speaking a little, and but a little, of that woeful desolation, that is made hereby, in all those faculties of the Soul, mentioned but now. Something of this had need be said, and well considered of; otherwise, a Man will never be convinced of the absolute necessity, of minding the prosperity of the Soul, above all other prosperities.

1. It is undeniable, that a woeful desolation is made in the understanding, for it is filled with vile, and unworthy apprehensions, and misapprehensions of God. Psal. 50.21, Thou thoughtest, that I was altogether such a one as thyself. That he looked upon the most notorious sins, but as Human infirmities, for so the man spoken of there, did; not any light at all in it, to seek after Reconciliation with God, in that way, wherein it may be found. Rom. 3.11, There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. Full of Pride, and fleshly Reasonings it is, and contradictions against the truth. No more able to discern Divine, and Supernatural Truths, as they ought to be discerned, then a Beast can discern the things of Man. 1 Cor. 2.14, But the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned. It is said Col. 2.23. to be a fleshly mind: So that though everyone be not born a Natural Fool, yet everyone is born a Spiritual Fool. The most refined, unregenerate person is no better. Those Virgins Matth. 25. that made so fair a profession, are said to be foolish Virgins, contenting themselves with Lamps without Oil. Thus the eye of the Soul is darkened; How great then (as our Savior saith, Matth. 6.23.) is the darkness of the whole Soul? So great it is, that it is wholly thereby estranged from the life of God. Ephes. 4.18.

2. No less desolation is made in the Conscience: As the Mind, so the Conscience is defiled, Tit. 1.15. This is very sad, if we consider either the Office the Conscience is designed for, or the particulars wherein the defilement of it, consisteth.

1. Its Office. It is the Candle of the Lord, by which a Man should be directed in the way wherein he ought to walk. Indeed, God having given it such a power, and command over Man, that nothing but God is above it: therefore it is, that though a Man may do that sometimes, which is against his will, and against his affections, and not sin; yet he ought not to go against his Conscience, though it be Erroneous, because Conscience witnesseth for God; so that to go against Conscience, though the thing be not materially sinful, yet formally it is; because the authority of God is contemned: therefore it is said Rom. 14.23, He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of Faith: for whatsoever is not of Faith, is sin.

2. For the defilement of Conscience, I shall instance only in two branches.

1. It is defiled with ignorance: Such a thick veil of darkness is grown over it, as though it observes everything that is done; yet it often most shamefully mistakes Evil for Good, and Good for Evil. I told you, that it should be to a Man's actions, as the Pilot to the Ship, to Guide and Steer it right, by a right Rule, to a right End. But having no light, it leads a Man down to Hell, when he thinks he is in the high way to Heaven. As a Pilot having lost his Compass, or the use of it, in a dark night, runs upon the Rocks, when he thinks he is entering into the Haven. Joh. 16.2,— The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think he doth God service. Act. 26.9. I verily thought, with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

2. It is defiled with stupidity, and unsensibleness. 1 Tim. 4.2, — having their Conscience seared with a hot Iron. It is true, the Apostle speaks there, of an habitual hardness, grown upon Men by long continued custom of sinning; till they sin, and know not; till they sin and care not: Yet it is originally in the Conscience at first, and doth not so much come into it, as grow out of it; as that sprig of an Oak, which at first (when it first appears) is very tender, easily turned this way, or that way; but grows at last, and that by its inbred quality, into

a hard and stubborn bough; so it is here. It is worth our observing to this purpose, that what the Prophet David, Psal. 14.3. and 53.3. speaks of some Men, that they are altogether become filthy, the Apostle Rom. 3.10, 12, 13. applies to all, in their unregenerate state. So what is spoken of the unsensibleness of some Men's Consciences, may be applied to all, in their unregenerate state: for the longer they continue in that state, the sooner they grow to that degree of stupidity, to be (as they Eph. 4.18.) past all feeling: Conscience in their Breasts, is, as it were, in a dead sleep; it suffers them to live in a state of sin, and go on in a way of sin, without any check, or any, that is to any purpose regarded; like a Serpent that is charmed, and neither stings, nor bites. Gen. 37.25. And they sat down to eat bread, after they had cast their Brother into a pit. In this sad case is the Soul, in respect of the Understanding, and the Conscience.

3. But in some respects, the most woeful desolation of all, is made in the Will. It is true that original corruption frets like a gangrene through the whole Soul, but the poison of it chiefly hath infected the Will. All that the Scripture speaks of the hardness of the heart, and of the stiff neck, and the Iron-sinew, is little or nothing else, but the obstinacy, and frowardness, and perverseness of the Will. Much might be said to this: But I shall instance only in this; that it is full of contrariety to the holy, and righteous will of God. I would, saith God, and ye would not, as he often complains in the Scripture, Matth. 23.27. Psal. 81.11. This is the misery of an unregenerate Soul: for the will of God is not only absolutely good in itself, but it is also Relatively good to every Soul, that in godly sincerity submits to it. Mich. 6.8, He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good (good for thee) Deut. 6.24, The Lord commanded us to do all these Statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always. So that the Will of Man is absolutely cross to the happiness of the whole Man, in being so cross to the Will of God. It may truly be said of every Man, That nothing stands so much in the way of his Salvation, as his own Will. Joh. 5.40, And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life. I might farther exemplify this, in showing how corrupt, and naught it is in all its operations, in choosing what it ought to loath. Prov. 21.10, The

Soul of the wicked desireth evil. Isa. 66.3, — their Soul delighteth in their abominations. And in loathing what it ought to choose. It is charged upon them, Levite. 26.43. That their Souls abhorred the Word of God; would not suffer it to come near their hearts, but cast it behind their backs, Psal. 50.17. Neither is this out of Distemper only, as a Man when he is sick may loath the meat, which he loves when he is well; but out of antipathy, and inbred enmity, which may be mortified, but can never be reconciled. Nay, it is farther charged, Zech. 11.8. That their Souls abhorred God himself; though not as a universal good, and the giver of every good thing: but as a particular good, and cross to their lusts, and carnal interests: When it comes to that, then they say, as Job. 21.14. Therefore, they say to the Almighty, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Of such things, they are willingly ignorant 2 Pet. 3.5. I shall shut up this sad discourse with this: That the will of every unregenerate Soul, is called, The will of the Flesh, Eph. 2.3. And the will of the Flesh, is the very same with that which is called, The will of the Devil, 2 Tim. 2.26.

Thus ye have something spoken, to both the branches of the first thing that was proposed for the explication of the Point.

(1.) What the Soul is in respect of its original constitution. This is fit to be considered; otherwise it will be (I think) impossible to convince a Man of the truth of the Doctrine. That of all prosperities, the prosperity of the Soul is the most desirable prosperity.

(2.) In what case it is, in its unregenerate state, by reason of original corruption: Otherwise, it will be as hard to convince a Man, of the absolute necessity of minding, as he ought, the welfare and prosperity of his Soul. In respect of the former, one would think it were impossible, that a Man believing this to be true, and that his Soul must live with him, when he is dead, either in Eternal happiness, or Eternal misery, should suffer such an excellent thing to be lost, and perish through his own default. In respect of the latter, one would think it impossible, that such a vile, such an abominable thing as sin hath made it, should ever come to be good, and prosper.

And, indeed, it is beyond the power of Men, or Angels to effect it. The recovery of a lost Soul is more precious then so. But to this it may be said, as our Savior said to his Disciples, Mat. 19.26, With Men, it is impossible, but all things are possible to God.

2. I proceed to the second thing proposed, to show, wherein the prosperity of the Soul consists, and when it may be said, to prosper?

By way of Answer to this, we must take notice, that Soul-prosperity, comes under a double consideration.

1. In respect of its Rise.

2. In respect of its Growth.

1. In respect of its Rise, and first Foundation. This must be considered two ways.

(1.) Either as looking, after it, upward, without us:

(2.) Or looking after it, inwardly, within us.

1. If we look after it, upward, we shall find its first foundation laid in God's Eternal, Electing Love.

2. If we look after it inwardly, within us, then we shall find, that it begins in that day, and hour, when by the word and spirit of Christ the whole Man, both Body and Soul, is brought into a state of Fellowship, and Union with Christ. Which is done, and not done any other way (I speak not of Elect Infants, dying in their infancy) then by obeying the call of Christ, to come to him, and abide with him, and in him, resigning ourselves to him, to be ruled, and saved by him, in his own way: Thus understand it.

1. God's Eternal love, is God's Eternal purpose, to work in the Soul, in his appointed time, that good thing, which he knows, will put it into a capacity of prospering, Eph. 1.9, He made known to us the mystery

of his will, according to his good pleasure, as he had purposed in himself. ver. 11, In whom (that is, in Christ) we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. This Eternal purpose, ye see, to do so and so, for to work so and so, in such, and such a Soul, is his Eternal love to those Souls.

The time when this purpose takes effect, is then, and not till then, when the Soul obeyeth the call of Christ. Then it is, that an actual Application of that good thing, which was intended, is made. This is exemplified in the Lord's dealing with Paul. He was a chosen Vessel, from all Eternity, Act. 9.15. But then was not this good thing wrought in him, by the improvement whereof his Soul might prosper, until he obeyed the Call of Christ: For till then, he was a Persecutor of the Church of God, and that beyond measure. But when it pleased God to call him by his grace, and to reveal his Son in him; then, that good thing was wrought in him, according as God had purposed, as he declares, Gal. 1.13, 14, 15, 16, Immediately, he conferred not with flesh, and blood. But (as Act. 9.20.) he straightway Preached in the Synagogue, that Christ was the Son of God; for as he tells King Agrippa, Act. 26.19, He was not disobedient to the heavenly Vision. Now, if ye ask what this good thing was, which he received in obeying this call, in improvement whereof, his Soul began presently to prosper? I shall give it you in a word: It was a Heaven-born principle of Spiritual life. 1 Joh. 5.12. He that hath the Son, hath Life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. Then (as he saith, Eph. 2.5.) He was quickened, who before was dead in sins, and trespasses. Then, his Soul was in a way of thriving. As a Tree, when there is life in the Root, it is capable, if well ordered, of prospering, and bringing forth fruit.

Thus it is evident, that if we look upward, we find the first foundation of Soul-prosperity is laid in God's Eternal, Electing Love. But if we look inward, it is then laid, when once, we are effectually called, 2 Tim. 1.9. Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling: That is, He hath brought us into a state of Salvation; which is the only

state wherein the Soul prospers. And there it shall prosper. Rom. 8.28. And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose. verse. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. When this Call is first obeyed, the Soul begins to prosper, for the Understanding begins then to be savingly enlightened. 2 Pet. 1.9, But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off. In that day of God's power, the Soul is made willing, Psal. 110.3. And then the Conscience begins to be purged from dead works, Heb. 9.14. And this good thing, thus, in this day begun, shall, one day, be made perfect, in full and absolute Soul prosperity. 1 Thes. 5.23, The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. So prays the Apostle for them, and is confident his prayers shall be heard, verse. 24, Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it. He saith to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 1.8, 9. Who shall confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ.

I might now dismiss this point, concerning the first Rise, and Foundation of this Soul-prosperity; and proceed to show the growth and progress of it. But I must first speak a few words, to prevent, if possible, all mistakes by anything that hath been said. It cannot be denied, but in some, that never yet heartily, and unfeignedly obeyed the call of Christ, what by one means, what by another, they living under the ministry of the Gospel, there may be wrought not only a fair Reformation of the outward Man, but likewise some inward work upon the Soul; and that in each of the three forementioned excellent Faculties, which have an appearance of very great tendency to Soul-prosperity, but indeed come very far short of it, as to the truth, and reality of the matter.

1. In the Understanding, there may be much light in the things of God. We read Matth. 7.22. that not only one or two, but Many shall say, we have Prophesied in thy Name. Some think they lied in saying

so, as if none were partakers of such excellent gifts in their unconverted state, but the Scripture is clear to the contrary, Heb. 6.4, — Those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. —If they shall fall away, &c. Yet here was nothing really wrought, for the prosperity of the Soul. They had none of those good things, which do accompany salvation. verse. 9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that do accompany Salvation. Thus it is with many; they know much, but their Souls are not fully brought under the power, and authority of what they know: still, upon the account of some lust, or other, they are under the power of darkness, spoken of Col. 1.13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.

2. In the Will, there may be some light touches of the Spirit, inclining it to cleave to the outward and visible part of Religion; together with some workings in the motions, and outgoings thereof in several affections, Matth. 13.20, — the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it. 1 King. 21.27. Ahab rent his Clothes, and put Sack-cloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in Sack-cloth, and went softly. verse. 29. Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? And these stirrings of heart may work some resolutions, and something may be done in pursuance of those resolutions. Psal. 78.34, 36, 37, When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and inquired early after God, &c.

3. The Conscience likewise may be so awakened; and so much may an unregenerate Man stand in awe of it, that he dare not go against the light thereof. Thus was it with Paul, he was so exceeding zealous, and made such Conscience of obeying the Tradition of the Fathers, that he durst not but do as he did. Act. 26.9. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus. And he had great peace in so doing, Rom. 7.9, For I was alive without the Law once. So had Abimelech, in that he did nothing, but what in conscience he thought to be Lawful. Gen. 20.6. For this reason, so many among the sober sort of the Heathen commended a good Conscience.

All these things seem very fair, but lay them all together, and let one and the same Man be thus qualified in all these respects, yet they are not in the least, any true evidence, that true, and real Soul-prosperity is begun in them. For all the light in his understanding, his portion, at last, will be utter darkness. And for the workings in the Will, and the Conscience, though they may seem to be not far from the Kingdom of God, as Mark. 12.34. Yet all is but as the Grasshoppers, which (as ye may observe) make many a leap, as if they would mount up to the skies, and then presently fall down to the Earth again. Still, one thing is wanting: They are not effectually called: Nor, by all this, can any prove, that they are called into a state of Union with Christ: Therefore they have no Spiritual life. This Understanding is still dead, the Conscience dead, the Will dead, the whole Soul spiritually dead: For he that hath not the Son, hath not life, 1 Joh. 5.12. So that they are not yet in the right way of Soul thriving. As whilst a dead Tree is a dead Tree, it cannot prosper, nor bring forth fruit. This we may see in those that had most to show for themselves: So much, that the Scripture calls it, seeking and enquiring after God: Remembering that the most High was their Rock, &c. Psal. 78.34, 35, 36. Yet there was no Soul-prosperity begun. verse. 37. all this while, their hearts were not right; they were Spiritually dead. Therefore as ye desire to find any Evidence within you, of the Foundation of Soul-prosperity: Give diligence to make your calling sure, 2 Pet. 1.10. This makes it sure, that ye are within the compass of Electing love, and that God hath wrought in you according to his purpose.

SERMON III.

I Proceed now to the second particular. To show wherein the prosperity of the Soul especially consisteth: and when it may be said, to thrive, and prosper. This is the principal thing, the Text, and

Doctrine engage to speak unto. And, indeed, to speak unto it, is exceeding necessary: You may well remember what was laid down in a Doctrine, not long since handled. That a living Christian, though alive to God, yet in respect of his Christianity, and Religion, may be in a withering, languishing condition; as far from prospering, as those Trees are, whose leaves fall off, the boughs wither, and the root decays. It is so with many. As it is much talked on, that these times have brought forth many broken Merchants: So they have many broken, or almost broken Professors. Good beginnings (it is too often found) are not always seconded with suitable proceedings. Too many are too like the New Moon in its first quarter, then it gives much light, but it is down again, and it's dark again all over before the Morning light. It was a sad question, which the Apostle put to the Galatians, chap. 5. v. 7, Ye did run well, who did hinder you? It was a question, with a very sharp rebuke in it; and it withal imports, that no satisfying reason could be given, why they should make such a halt.

Now in speaking to this necessary point, I shall first mention some things in general, wherein the prosperity of the Soul consists. And then something, which may more particularly demonstrate the truth, and reality of it.

1. In general. I shall premise; That as the first Rise, and Foundation of Soul-prosperity (as to any possibility of Evidence, that such a thing is begun) is laid in those principles of Spiritual life, which are received by virtue of Union with Christ: So the growth and progress thereof consists in their increase. As they increase, so the prosperity of the Soul increaseth, and no otherwise. It is possible a Man may grow in gifts, and be very forward in exercising them, and yet the Soul not thrive. It is said of the Corinthians, they came behind in no gift, 1 Cor. 1.7. but their grace did not thrive answerably to their gifts. No, they were still but Babes, and very carnal. 1 Cor. 3.1, 2, 3.

2. I farther premise this: That there is a natural tendency in the principles of this life to grow, as there is in the best Seed, that is cast

into the ground to grow, and to bring forth fruit according to its kind: For they are the Seed of the living God; there is life in them, and every living thing grows according to the measure, which the God of its life hath appointed. The Picture of a Child doth not grow: it hath the same dimensions now, which it had twenty years ago. But the living Child, to which these principles are compared, that, by receiving kindly nourishment, grows, 1 Pet. 2.2, As new born Babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. And certain it is, that no work of the Spirit is designed for glory, but that which is growing. 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. Gifts may wither, but grace will grow into glory.

These two things premised, I come now to speak (and that first of those things in general, which are undeniable evidences of Soul-prosperity.)

1. When this thriving and growth is universal: The Body prospers, when there is a healthy constitution all over: When the Head is well, the Stomach is well, and all the vital parts are sound within: But in Children that have the Rickets, the Head is only growing, the inferior parts of the Body being weak, and feeble: When it is so, we say; the Child prospers not. It is oftentimes so with the Soul: It may seemingly prosper in some things, when it doth not really prosper in other things, or indeed in anything. It was so with many in the Church of Ephesus: Their zeal was warm in externals, in a high and mighty opposition against false Teachers, Errors, and Heresies, these they could not endure, Rev. 2.6. But it was not so in other things, in the best things, there was a great decay in the inward Man, in the vitals of Godliness, in those graces that accompany Salvation, ver. 4, 5, I have something against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works. This is as far from true Soul-prosperity, as a Tradesman from thriving, who gains by someone peddling commodity, and loseth thrice as much in greater matters. The Soul

prosper, when it grows up in all things. Eph. 4.15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things, in him who is the Head, even Christ. It were endless almost to reckon up the thriving and prospering in every grace. I shall therefore instance in 2 things, by the thriving whereof, we may take an estimate of the rest.

1. When the Soul thrives in those two graces, which by experience are found to have as great an influence on the health of the Soul, as Natural heat, and Radical moisture, (so Physicians say, and Reason saith so too) have upon the health of the Body. The just temperament of these, is that which preserves life, and health, and strength. So when these two graces, that of Faith, which is as the Natural heat, and that of Repentance, which is as the Radical moisture, are thriving, and growing toward their full height, then the Soul is in a very prosperous way.

1. When Faith grows, which is the Natural heat, as it did, 2 Thes. 1.3, — because that your Faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all, toward each other aboundeth.

Now this growth is best discerned.

1. When it grows in depth. So as the Soul is more and more settled, grounded, rooted, and built up in Christ. Col. 1.23, If ye continue in the Faith, grounded, and settled. And ch. 2.7, Rooted, and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith. So that the heart is fixed, and is at peace within, when all without is shaken, and the foundation of all Creature-comforts turned upside down. As a Tree, whose Root doth remain firm, when the top doth shake. Psal. 56.3, What time, I am afraid, I will trust in thee. He could keep his faith above his fears, Psal. 112.7. He shall not be afraid of evil Tydings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. Job. 13.15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. As if he had said: Though I read a sentence of Death upon what concerns this Life; yet I have somewhat to trust him for, beyond this Life. No danger, nor death shall beat me off from the holdfast of my faith in God, through Christ Jesus: When it is thus, that promise will

be made good, Isa. 26.3, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

2. When it grows in breadth, so as it gives a firm, absolute, unlimited assent to the whole truth of God, and receives the testimony of God, as in one thing, so in everything, which it apprehends to be of God; and that purely, because God saith so, whatever Sense and Reason, can object to the contrary. So Act. 24.14. But I confess unto thee, that after the way, which they call Heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law, and the Prophets. Joh. 3.33, He that believeth his testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true, (in everything.) I speak this of justifying faith, not only considered in its most eminent act, which is to receive Jesus Christ, and rest upon him alone, for whatsoever may give a title to, or a fitness for eternal Salvation; but in its most full, complete, and perfect act, assenting to whatsoever is historically delivered in the word; believing every Command, every Threatening, every Promise, both of this life, and the life to come. So as whatever is recorded in the word, is so believed, not without some gracious effect upon the Soul. Observe it in four particulars.

(1.) A growing, thriving faith so believes what is Historically delivered concerning the Creation of the World, as nothing is too hard for it. Although the things believed do not yet appear; yet that hinders not a full assurance of their future existence; seeing the same power of God, which created the World of nothing, can give a Being to whatever he hath said, shall be, when it seems good unto him. Psal. 121.2, My help cometh from the Lord, which made Heaven and Earth. As if he had said; I will never distrust his power for whatever I stand in need of, who could erect such a stately Fabric from nothing.

(2.) A growing, thriving faith believes every Command of God, Psal. 119.66, — I have believed thy Commandments. He believes them to be holy, just, and good, and brings down every thought more and more in subjection unto them all. Thus Abraham 's faith growing, and thriving hath many eminent acts of obedience ascribed to it.

Heb. 11.8. By Faith Abraham, when he was called of God, to go into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. A hard trial: For as it is in the Proverb; The smoke of a Man's own Chimney, is as good as the fire of another's. So that Command, which was yet more hard, of offering up his only begotten Son, that is, of his wife Sarah, the Son of the Promise, in whose Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, yet he submitted to it. Heb. 11.17. though he had but short warning, Gen. 22.2, 3. He received the Command over-night, and went about it next Morning.

(3.) A growing, thriving Faith believes the threatening of the Word; and this belief makes the Soul to stand in awe of them. Psal. 119.161, — my heart standeth in awe of thy word. So Heb. 11.7. Noah 's Faith takes warning at the threatening: He was moved with fear, and prepared an Ark to the saving of his House. This is not too low for the best grown Faith to act, nor be acted upon. God thought it not unmeet for Adam to make use of, in Innocency, Gen. 2.17. Job found it in himself, chap. 31.23, Destruction from God was a terror unto me: and by reason of his Highness, I could not endure.

(4.) A thriving, growing faith, with all thankfulness, accepts the Promises, and with all heartiness relies upon God for the performance of mercy promised. Resting upon the promise, when he hath nothing else to avouch it; when there is neither Sense, nor Reason to second Faith. So Abraham, Rom. 4.17, 18, &c. He believed God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that are not, as if they were: Who against hope, believed in hope. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own Body now dead, &c. He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able to perform, 2 Cor. 5.7, We walk by faith, and not by sight. i. e. By the sensible enjoyment of what God hath promised, but by faith, believing, and waiting for the accomplishment: Notwithstanding all the real improbability, and seeming impossibilities that are in the way: When faith thus grows,

the Soul prospers exceedingly. Now the heart will be kept more sweet, and clean then ordinary, Act. 15.9, — purifying their hearts by faith. The World will be Conquered. 1 Joh. 5.4, And this is the victory that overcometh the World, even your faith. And hereby Satan himself is trodden underfoot.

2. When Repentance grows (which is as the Radical moisture) then the Soul prospers. Now Repentance grows,

(1.) When there is a growth and increase in the necessary adjunct of Repentance; in that which is as inseparable from it, as heat is from the fire; and that is in an hearty grief, and godly sorrow for sin. This is necessary, that the Soul may experimentally know the bitterness of sin, and taste, as it were, the Gall, and Wormwood that is in it. Jer. 2.19, Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing, and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. And it is inseparable, for it cannot be rationally imagined, that a Man whose Eyes are opened, to see what great provocation there is in the least sin, as it is against the most high, and most holy God; it is impossible that it should be without some pricking of the heart, as they felt Act. 2, 37. Now, when this grows, and increaseth, so as it reacheth not only Beams, but Motes, not only Camels, but Gnats; melting the heart with godly sorrow before God, for the least vain word proceeding out of the mouth; yea for sinful silence, in not speaking, when and what we ought to speak: and for the least sinful thought in the secret of our Souls, when this brings us upon our knees before God, and that with the first opportunity after the first discovery of it, as it did David, 1 Sam. 24.5. And it came to pass, that afterward David 's heart smote him. When it is thus, the Soul is in the high way of prospering. For, what tenderness, what watchfulness, what humility, what high prizing of Christ, are likely to thrive, and prosper in such a Soul, when it sees how it forfeits all its hopes every day, and therefore hath such need of Christ every day, that the forfeiture may not be taken:

(2.) The Soul prospereth when there is a growth, and increase in the Essential parts of Repentance, and they are these two: (1.) Turning from sin, and (2.) Turning to God. Herein the very Essence and Nature of this grace doth consist. To work this was the scope of the Apostles ministry. Act. 26.18. And this is that, which sorrow for sin (if it be godly sorrow indeed) doth work, 2 Cor. 7.10. For godly sorrow worketh Repentance to salvation.

(1.) For the former of these: When the heart is heated with holy indignation against the least sin; and against itself, for being, through its own carelessness, surprised by it, and defiled with it, as Job was, chap. 42.6. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. And when holy and humble resolutions, in the strength of Christ, are more heightened to keep himself that the wicked one touch him not, 1 Joh. 5.18. so as to leave any of his polluting impressions upon him. Psal. 17.3, — thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing. I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Psal. 39.1, I said, I will take heed unto my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. Hos. 14.8, Ephraim shall say, What have I anymore to do with Idols. Isa. 30.22, Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven Images, of the ornament of thy molten Images of Gold: Thou shalt cast them away, as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

(2.) For the latter part: Turning unto God; it is evident, that this is an Essential part of Repentance. For every sin, so far as it prevails, turns the heart from God. Jam. 1.14, Every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Jer. 32.33, And they have turned to me the back, and not the face. Now the repenting sinner, that prizeth the loving kindness of God as better then life, then life with all its fillings up with earthly comforts, cannot but set himself to turn unto God; as they did, Hosea. 6.1, Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us. Turn unto God, and that,

(1.) As the chiefest good, out of an unfeigned desire to have his good will, to live in his love, and to enjoy Communion with him. Psal. 4.6, 7, — Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time, that their Corn, and their Wine increased. Psal. 73.25, 26, Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My heart, and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

(2.) As our utmost end; reckoning upon it, that therefore we live, that we may exalt him, and sanctify his holy name in our hearts, and please him in all our ways, still endeavoring, that in all things our end may fall in with his. Rom. 6.11, Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 14.7, 8, For none of us liveth to himself, and no Man dieth to himself: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord, whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord's.

Thus ye see when Repentance may be said to grow; and that in the growth thereof, the Soul exceedingly prospers. Ye have likewise, the first evidence of universal growth, namely the growth of Faith, and Repentance; when these two grow in the Soul, which are as necessary for the welfare of the Soul, as the Natural heat, and Radical moisture are for the welfare of the Body, then the Soul prospereth. The God of all grace, bless us all with this prosperity: This is prosperity indeed.

But with sadness of heart, it may be said of these two graces, what is observed of some Outlandish fruits, that though with much cost, and care they are transplanted into this Country, yet they thrive not, as they do in their native Soil, because of the coldness of the Climate. Even so it is with Faith, and Repentance, though they are much spoken of, yet they thrive not: Though in respect of their Root, they may be in the Soul, yet what through the coldness, deadness, sluggishness, and unmortifiedness of our hearts, they prosper not;

and therefore our Souls prosper not, neither can they ever prosper, while these are neglected.

2. I proceed now to the second instance of universal growth: and that is, when that blessing laid up in that promise recorded, Hos. 14.5. is given forth; when the God of all grace is as the dew to the Soul; so that it grows as the Lily, and as the Cedars in Lebanon. The dew, ye know, is a very sweet refreshing moisture, to the dry, and thirsty ground; which soaking into the Earth, makes it bring forth its fruits, and the fruit thereof to grow. So the dew of Heavenly influences, and Divine supplies of grace, when they fall upon the Soul, they make the Root of Divine principles to bring forth fruit, and the fruit to grow. And when it grows as the Lily, and as the Cedar, then the Soul prospers.

(1.) When it grows as the Lily. The Lily, ye know, is a very lovely Plant. Solomon in all his glory, was not like it. Now, the Soul grows as the Lily, when it grows in those lovely graces mentioned, Col. 3.12, Bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering. Forbearing one another, forgiving one another. What a lovely sight is it to see (so far as Man can see) a Soul clothed with these graces? Lovely they are in the eyes even of those, that are strangers to the life, and power of Religion; they cannot skill of the mysteries of Faith, of Communion with God, of the life of Faith, of the comforts of the Holy Ghost; but of these things they can judge, and cannot but commend. All commended Cranmer, that holy Martyr for his meekness; and kindness, even to those that had wronged him, that it grew to a Proverb, Do him an ill turn, and he will be your friend forever. So likewise, it grows as the Lily, when it grows in gentleness, peaceableness, and easiness, to be entreated; when there is an ingenuous facility, either to be persuaded to what is good, or dissuaded from what is evil, though in those things that are contrary to our former apprehensions, according to that in Jam. 3.17, But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated. —This is lovely as the Lily. Some there are who are guilty of that which is condemned, 2 Pet. 2.10, Self-

willed; that will not let go their prejudices; as if to change their mind in what they are once engaged, were a disparagement to them. This is very unlovely, for this is the greatest folly, not to give place to right Reason. This hath not been the way of those whose Souls have prospered. David hearkened to the counsel of Abigail, and thought it no disparagement unto him; yielding to the strength of her reasons, to alter his mind; and blessed God that he so happily met with her, 1 Sam. 25.32, 33. It is Prophesied, Isa. 11.6, The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, &c. When Souls prosper under the Government of Christ, they will be so far subdued, and changed through the Spiritual efficacy thereof, that those who, by nature, were as fiery, as violent, as untamed, and intractable, as Wolves, and Leopards, and Lions, shall be so ductile, teachable, and persuadable to what is good, that a little Child shall lead them, and prevail with them, to alter their mind, bringing Scripture and Reason with them. This is lovely; when these Principles of grace grow in the Soul, the Soul grows as the Lily.

(2.) The Soul then prospers, when it grows, not only as the Lily, but as the Cedars in Lebanon, which are much spoken of, in the Scripture. Of all Trees, these shoot up highest, and endure longest: The Timber whereof not being subject to rot, as other Timber. So that the Soul grows as the Cedar, when that deep, inward, rooted respect to things below, which rules in an unmortified heart, is so far mortified, that a Man's Treasure is changed: We now lay up our Treasure in Heaven, and set our affections on things that are above, mounting up as the Eagles, Isa. 40.31. Looking after the things that are not seen, as the things our Souls delight in, having chosen them for our portion; preparing for, longing after, and rejoicing in hope of enjoying them. When things that are seen afford us but little, but matter of care, and grief, trouble, and sorrow: When the Soul creeps on the Earth like a Snail, and is up in the things of the World, as an Eel in the Mud, then it never prospers.

2. When a lasting durable frame of godliness is attained, and preserved, then likewise it grows as the Cedar. As it said of Enoch, Gen. 5.21. That he walked with God 300 years together. So it may be

said, that our best works are at last: as Rev. 2.19, I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first. And that our Salvation is nearer, then when we (first) believed. Rom. 13.11. But when good impressions wear off, and hardly come on again, when inward melting's quickly dry up, as the morning dew; when the Soul is as it were sick of the Staggers; now goes forward, and then goes backward, it is far from prospering as it ought.

This is all, I have to say to the first Particular, that in the first Rise, and Foundation of Soul-prosperity, as to any possible evidencing that such a thing is begun, is laid in those first principles of Spiritual life, which are received by virtue of our union with Christ; so the growth, and progress thereof consists in their increase, and then, this increase, where this thriving is, is universal, when growth in one principle is added to another, as when Men add house to house, and field to field, they are said to prosper in the World. Isa. 5.8. So when Faith, which is as the natural heat, is added to Repentance, which is as the Radical moisture, and the growth of the Cedar is added to the growth of the Lily, then the Soul prospers.

I now proceed to the second Particular, As the Soul prospers, when growth in gracious principles is universal, so much more, when gracious principles are kept in exercise. The Scripture speaks much of this, more then, perhaps, is taken notice of. For all those commands we have up and down in Scripture, to love the Lord, to fear him, to believe in the Lord Jesus, do not so much require the first principle, as the acting and exercising of that principle: As for instance, 1 Joh. 3.23. Commands the exercise of Faith and Love. We read of the work of Faith, 2 Thes. 1.11. The work, and labor of love. Heb. 6.10. The perfect work of patience, Jam. 1.5. Of walking in the fear of the Lord, Act. 9.31. Of walking in love, Eph. 5.2. Of walking by faith, 2 Cor. 5.7. Of living by faith, Gal. 2.20. All these expressions note, the actual exercises of these graces, each of them being busied in, and taken up with their proper work. This is of absolute necessity unto Soul-prosperity. Bodily exercise may be so used, as that it may

be a great means of preserving Bodily health, but this is of far greater use for preserving the health of the Soul; for something else, sometimes, at least as to some persons, may supply the want of Bodily exercise, so as a person may do well enough without it: But nothing can supply, for the good of the Soul, the neglect of the exercise of grace. Yea indeed, it is all one, as to Soul-prosperity, for the time, when it is not exercised, as if there were no grace in the Soul at all. We have many sad instances of this, that it hath been so: when the contrary principles of corruption have choked, as it were, oppressed, and bound up, the gracious principle from stirring, and moving, to make any opposition, to any purpose. Isa. 64.6, — our iniquities like the wind, have taken us away. This we see in David, without any wrong to the memory of Joseph, I suppose it may be said, that he had more grace, then Joseph had, yet David not exercising it, fell (as it is said of Saul, 2 Sam. 1.21.) among the uncircumcised; the Shield of the Mighty, wherewith he might have quenched the fiery Darts of Satan, was vilely cast away, as if he had never been anointed, with the anointing of the Spirit of God; whereas Joseph stood like a Conqueror in the hour of temptation, when it came upon him, with so much violence, and advantage. What was the reason of this, but that Joseph, at that time, had his Loins girt, his Lamp burning, his grace in exercise, as we find, Gen. 39.9? But it was not so, in that sad hour, with David, he was slothful, and did not stir up himself to resist, but gave place to Satan. In a word, Joseph was awake, and David was asleep. Nay, at another time, David was overcome, when Saul resisted, and overcame a temptation of the same kind. Compare 1 Sam. 25.21, 22. David resolved to revenge himself, when he took himself to be affronted by Nabal; with 1 Sam. 10.27. The Children of Belial said of Saul: How shall this Man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no present; but Saul held his peace. We see by this, that the having of much grace, avails not to the prosperity of the Soul, if it be not exercised. It is, for that present, all one to speak of, as if there were none. It is very observable to this purpose, what we have in three Evangelists, concerning Christ's reprovng of his Disciples, when they were so afraid of being drowned, Matth. 8.26, Why are ye so fearful, O ye of

little Faith? In Mark, it is otherwise related, chap. 4.37, How is it that ye have no faith? Luke 's expression, chap. 8.25. is in a different way from both: Where is your Faith? Yet here is no such difference, but what is easily reconciled. They had a little faith, as it is in Matthew: No faith, as it is in Mark. Luke takes up the difference, Where is your Faith? Saith he: Their little faith was to seek, when they had need of it; therefore their Souls were as much out of order, and their fear as great, as if their hearts had been full of unbelief all over.

It is then clearly thus: The Soul prospers so much, and so long only as grace is exercised according as the matter requires. This we have exemplified in Gaius, whose Soul prospered, at so high a rate. Truth was in him, and he walked in the Truth, ver. 3. of this Epistle: In godly sincerity, as Paul did, 2 Cor. 1.12. He walked with God as Noah did, Gen. 6.9. He walked humbly with God, as Mich. 6.8. And all that do so, shall walk with God in White, Rev. 3.4. (as doubtless Gaius doth now;) an expression that holds forth that inconceivable glory, wherewith that Soul shall, one day, be clothed; yea, and their Bodies too, at last, when made like unto the glorious Body of Christ. When his Face did shine, and his Raiment was white as the light, Matth. 17.2.

3. The Soul prospers, when, in all these things, it prospers daily. One day after another; and one day as well as another; when more and more is daily done, and more and more daily received, in the forementioned particulars. This Paul could say, 2 Cor. 4.16, — though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed day by day. The Body of Man, though it be of as healthy a constitution as any in the World; yet it grows but to such an age, then it comes to a consistency, standing at a stay; and after it hath done so a while, it begins to decay. But as it may be so, yet it should be otherwise with a prosperous Soul. Phil. 3.12, 13, 14, Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus, &c. It was now 25 years since Paul 's Conversion; for this Epistle to the Philippians was written the same year with that to the Ephesians;

and both of them in that time mentioned, Act. 28.30, 31, When Paul dwelt two years (at Rome) in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him. He had been so long a Man in Christ, done and suffered so much for Christ, and received so much from Christ, yet he is exceeding hungry, and thirsty to receive more (spiritually, he was very poor in his own opinion) that so he might do more, where he was called. Though perfection (as he well knew) was not attainable in this life, yet he aimed at it, hoping he might come nearer to it, then yet he was. [I follow after, that I may apprehend.] What? Even that perfection which was then wanting. This was a prosperous Soul. I say no more to this, then as our Savior said in another case to the Lawyer, Luke. 10.37, Go, and do likewise.

4. Then the Soul prospereth, when in conjunction with all these, it is more and more Rooted in Christ. So as notwithstanding all our growth in grace, and all our exercise of grace, the life we live, so far as it is gracious (and it ought to be so, in all things) is more in Christ, and from Christ, and what we expect to receive from Christ, then in, and from ourselves, when we think with ourselves as the Apostle said, Gal. 2.20, Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. Therefore interest Christ in all that ye do. Look unto him for assistance in everything (Phil. 4.13, I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me.) and for acceptance of all, 1 Pet. 2.5, Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy Priesthood to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. Let us go on, thus leaning upon our Beloved. The heart of Christ was much upon this, that all that are in a state of Union with him, should learn this, and live under the actual consideration of it, Joh. 15.4, 5, Abide in me, and I in you; as the Branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me, ye can do nothing. And the more this is learned, and accordingly reduced into practice, the more the Soul will prosper. It is worth our noting that true growth is noted by our growing in Christ. Eph. 4.15,

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ. 2 Pet. 3.18, But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ. As if to grow in parts, in duties, or anything else, without growing in him, were a swelling, rather than a growth. The swelling of the Leg, or Arm, is no good sign that the party grows stronger. It is thus indeed: whiles we are full of our own strength, our Souls prosper not, 1 Sam. 2.9, — for by strength shall no Man prevail. Therefore a prospering Soul, though it hath, and when it hath put on the whole Armor of God, yet it is not to trust thereto, but to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, Eph. 6.10. Certainly, the more deeply this principle is engraven in our hearts, and the more we act according to it, the better it will be with us. He that labored more abundantly than they all, that could say, He had finished his course, fought the good fight, and kept the faith, was he that said, Not I, but the grace of God that was with me, 1 Cor. 15.10. Happy are those Souls, and more happy they are like to be, that are so trained up in a continual sensibleness of their own insufficiency, as to what is spiritually good, that still there is a looking up for more supplies, that we may exercise what we have, Phil. 1.19, — and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. What Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, 2 Thes. 3.5, The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ. i. e. into the exercise thereof. A Soul that would prosper, must pray for itself. Yea, and for that which Paul desired others to pray on his behalf, Eph. 6.18, 19, Praying always with all Prayer, and Supplication, —that utterance may be given unto me. Paul had already a great gift of utterance, and memory, and had great experience of God's presence with him, in the exercise thereof, having preached so well, and so long, now twenty five years together, yet desires their prayers, not only for the continuance of these gifts, but also for the actual exercise of them, so often as ever there was occasion of using them. And no doubt Paul did pray thus for himself, as often as he was to preach, and as little doubt there is, but that he did his work so much the better for it, and with the better success.

Thus ye have, what I have to say, concerning the first thing proposed: What concerns the prosperity of the Soul in general, wherein it consists, and when a Man may be said to prosper.

SERMON IV.

I Now proceed more particularly to demonstrate, that in truth, and reality, the Soul doth prosper, according to the degree, and measure, wherein the Soul abounds in them.

1. The Soul prospers, when it is full of Praises to God: So kept, from day today, under the Law of thankfulness, that it abounds in thanksgiving to God. Col. 2.7, Abounding therein with thanksgiving. It is possible, some may think otherwise, that this is no such great matter; but let these following particulars be duly considered, and I hope ye will acknowledge it to be as I say. Consider then,

1. Though it be true, that there are some solemn Seasons, which call for solemn Praises, when God hath abounded in the expressions of his love to us, and Fatherly care for us, in some special favor, bestowed upon us, giving us to experience the truth of what David found, Psal. 31.7. I will rejoice, and be glad in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my trouble, and known my Soul in adversity. Though, I say, this be true, yet we are under express obligation, to make it part, and a great part of our business every day, Heb. 13.15. By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name. It was David 's resolution to keep his heart under the power, and authority of this Law, Psal. 145.2, Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy Name forever and ever.

2. Though it be true likewise, that there be some days when the Lord calls to mourning: As Isa. 22.12. Yet the saddest hours, that the all-disposing Providence of the most wise God, brings us into, bring no discharge from this duty. Neither need we look for it, for these two duties are very well consistent together. Otherwise, we may be sure, that God, who gives a command sometimes to Mourn, would never have given us a command always to Rejoice; if these two had been contrary one to another. And besides, even in those days, when divine Dispensations call for mourning, when things go most cross to our desires, and affections, yet we have matter of Thanksgiving; if it were but for this, That it is never so bad with us, but it might be worse. Paul acknowledgeth this to be a mercy, that he had less cause of sorrow, then he might have had, Phil. 2.27, For indeed, he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. Psal. 118.18, 19, The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord. This needs not seem strange at all, for even then, when the Providences of God have very much appearance of contradiction to the Promises, and are therefore most sadly cross to our hopes, and expectations, a gracious person, if his Soul prosper, and be kept in a gracious frame, may, by the eye of Faith, foresee the good hand of God, working even then, for good unto him: David, in one of the saddest days that ever befell him, as dark as it was with him, had a glimmering of this, 2 Sam. 16.12, Let Shimei alone, said he, let him curse, it may be the Lord will look upon mine affliction, and will requite me good for his cursing me this day. I can tell you of one, whose spiritual sight was clear in this matter: One, that when sad tidings were brought him, that cut deep, and went near his heart: Well, saith he, I will go, and bless God for that good, which, in due time, I believe he will work out, by the heavy burden now laid upon me. He did believe there would Honey be found, at the end of that Rod. These persons knew full well, that all things that do befall the Lord's Covenant people, are either blessings in their own nature, or are turned into blessings, in the Issue. Psal. 25.10, All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as

keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies. He always hath, and ever will so order all things, as that they shall all work to bring electing love, and glorifying love together. This Jacob experienced. Compare Gen. 42.36, —Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away? All these things are against me, with Gen. 48.16, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the Lads. And David did hope to find it so, when his condition was very low, and his spirit very much sunk, and fallen, Psal. 42.11, Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Thus ye have the first Particular; that it is our duty every day. Though, we are sometimes called to Mourning, yet we are always called to Thanksgiving, therefore we ought to resolve with David. Psal. 34.1. I will bless the Lord, at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2. When the Soul is always habitually prepared, and, as the matter requires, abounds in the actual performance of this duty; it is in a prosperous, and spiritually thriving frame.

This will appear, if we inquire into the nature of Religious Thanksgiving. For these three things we shall find necessarily required to the essence of it.

(1.) A Cordial acknowledging of God alone, as the Supreme cause, and first mover in all the good we have, of what kind soever it be; by what hand soever, it is conveyed unto us. This is necessary, for we shall never pay our Rent to him, whom we do not acknowledge our Landlord. We have cause to say of everything, the least thing we receive, as Psal. 118.23, This is the Lord's doing.

(2.) A real sensibleness that it is the Almighty goodness of God, and that alone, that sets his all-disposing Providence on work to give forth anything, the least thing unto us, that may be any way useful

unto us: And this, in conjunction with a humble sense of our own unworthiness, to live in the thoughts of such a God, who hath all the World to care for, for our good, even the least good. Thus did Jacob, Gen. 32.10, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy Servant. Gen. 33.5, — The Children, which God hath graciously given thy Servant.

(3.) A hearty, and humble resignation of ourselves to live unto God, because of his goodness unto us. This is the Law of thankfulness; and so far as a thankful heart lives under this Law, so far he must be able to say, as Paul did, Phil. 1.21, To me to live, is Christ.

These things are essential to the acceptable discharge of this duty; and so far as Men fail in any of them, so far they come short in the due performance thereof. And this being duly considered, it is very evident, that that work of praising God, so as to give him the praises due unto his name (as the expression is, Psal. 29.2.) is so humbling, so melting, so self-abasing, so God-exalting; taking all from Self, and giving all to God; so heart-engaging, and obliging, that it cannot be otherwise, but that the Soul doth prosper, yea exceedingly prosper, when it is faithful therein. Read 2 Sam. 7. verse. 10. to the end: And 1 Chron. 29. from verse. 10. to the end of the 19th. And ye shall find in both those Chapters, that David 's heart was never more after God's own heart, nor ever did his Soul more eminently prosper, then at that time, when it was so warm in this duty. And this would be farther taken notice of, that we never read in all the Scripture (so far as I can find) that any, whose Soul was not at least in a capacity of prospering, whatever they might do formally, did ever set themselves seriously about it. We find Saul sometime sacrificing, and now and then enquiring after God. We read of Ahab humbling himself, and walking in Sack-cloth, but not a word of Praising God, either by the one, or by the other. No marvel; for pure need may drive a Man to his prayers: As Jon. 1.5, Then the Mariners were afraid, and cried every Man to his God. But it is pure Grace that makes a Man thankful (as thankfulness hath been described in its Essential parts) Formal thanksgivings are common, and with some, more common than

formal prayers: But neither the one, nor the other signify anything with God, Job. 35.13, Surely, God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. A mouthful of words, is but a mouthful worth; no more with God, then a mouthful of wind. It is certain, there is no more real thankfulness, then there is a real resignation of ourselves to God, to live unto him. 2 Tim. 3.2, Unthankful, and unholy are conjoined. Though they may be somewhat distinguished, yet they are not divided, Eph. 5.4, Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks. Ye may collect from thence, that a thankful Soul, is a mortified Soul. It is true, we read that the Pharisee began, with, a Lord I thank thee, Luk. 18.11. but he stumbled at the Threshold; for read over all that he saith to the end, and ye will find that he doth not so much praise God, as commend himself. I shall conclude this with Eph. 5.19, 20, Speaking to yourselves in Psalms, —Giving thanks always, for all things to God, and the Father, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. These two verses speak fully to that, which I aim at: for observe the connection between them, and ye will find the Apostle, makes giving of thanks always, for all things, an effect and evidence of being filled with the Spirit: Without all doubt, a Soul full of the praises of God, is so far full of the spirit of God, and so far begins the work of Heaven upon Earth. And therefore it is without all controversy, that a truly thankful Soul, so far, and so long, as it continues so, is really a prosperous Soul.

2. The prosperity of the Soul, as it is very much promoted, so it is, and may be, as much evidenced, by the right Government, and due ordering of our Affections, of Liking, and Disliking. Of Liking, as Love, Joy, Delight, Desire. Of Disliking, as Fear, Sorrow, and Grief, Anger and Wrath. This is a large point: I shall endeavor therefore, to give you as much as I can, in a little. Consider then.

(1.) Affections, especially those of Liking, were planted in the nature of Man at first, to be to the Soul, as Wings to the Bird, which make her flight so easy: So were these, to make our approaches to God, more delightful, that it might be as meat and drink to us, to do the

Will of our Father. And such a sweet harmony there was in Adam 's Soul (whilst he was as God made him) that he could judge of things as they were, affect things as he judged of them, and act according as he affected: Being made perfect after the Image of God, he had all his affections, at command, according to the Will of God.

(2.) By reason of Original corruption, as those noble Faculties, the Understanding, Will, and Conscience (as I have lately showed you) so the Affections are most horribly polluted, and are become so many fleshly, and deceitful lusts. They are as another Antichrist in the Soul, ruling over Conscience, which should rule all, under God. For as corrupt as they are, every Man, in his corrupted state, is led by them, more than he is by anything else. For as they Affect, so they Judge; so they Do, what seems good in their own Eyes without considering any other rule, as they did, Judge. 21.25. till, at last, God give them up unto them: As Rom. 1, 24, Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts. verse. 26, For this cause, God gave them up to vile affections. The case of such is very sad: For as it is one of the greatest blessings, where grace is rewarded with grace. As Psal. 119.55, 56, I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law. This I had, because I kept thy precepts. So this is one of the greatest curses, when God punisheth sin, with sin, leaving Men to do what they will. As Psal. 81.11, 12, But my people would not hearken to my voice; Israel would none of me. So I gave them up, unto their own hearts lust, and they walked in their own counsels.

(3.) To mortify the inordinacy of these Affections, that they may be fixed upon their proper Objects. So as to Love, what they ought to love, and Hate what they ought to hate, &c. To keep them so in order, that they be not moved, but when there is cause; and when there is cause, not without measure. To do this, is one of the greatest, and hardest works, that a Christian hath to do. It is said, Gal. 5.24, And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. i.e. They are about it, and make it their daily work, and the better success they have in this work, the more their Soul prospers.

It is said Prov. 16.32, He that is slow to anger, is better than the Mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit, then he that taketh a City. Not, he that is never angry (for the anger of the new Creature is a duty, Eph. 4.26, Be angry, and sin not) but, he that is slow to anger, is of greater excellency then he that conquers a City. He is more set by in the sight of God, for the strength of his Soul, whereby he conquers himself, then ever any Man was, or will be for his Bodily strength, whereby he conquers others. It is more honorable to be a Paul, then an Alexander, Prov. 14.29, He that is slow to wrath, is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit, exalteth folly. He that is slow to wrath, is a Man of understanding; much resolution being requisite, to keep that, or any other affection, especially when it is stirred, within its due bounds, Jam. 3.13, Who is a wise Man, and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him show out of a good conversation, his words with meekness of wisdom. And great need there is to exercise this wisdom, when occasions are given, which may kindle that affection, to preserve the spirit, in a meek and quiet frame. For as sanctified affections are as a gentle wind to the Soul, whereby it moves aright toward God, with a calm, and well-composed warmth, in every duty. So unruly affections are as a storm, a very Hurricane to the Soul; so as like a River, in a great tempest, the Banks are over-flown, and much mud, and slime are left behind. He that can prevent the rising of such a storm, or can speedily allay it, is a Man of understanding indeed.

4. The Soul is then spiritually thriving, and prosperous, when the inordinacy of the affections is mortified, so as,

(1.) Every affection acts as a saving grace in the Soul, when the affection of Love, is renewed by the spirit of God, into the grace of love, and so fixed upon God in Christ, that other things are respected only in subordination thereunto: When the affection of Fear is renewed into the grace of Fear, so as to keep the heart under an holy awe of God, as David 's was, Psal. 119.161, — My heart standeth in awe of thy word. So when the affection of sorrow is renewed into the grace of sorrow; into that godly sorrow for sin, which the Apostle

saith, worketh Repentance, 2 Cor. 7.10. In a word, when Love, Joy, and Delight open the heart unto God, as unto the chiefest good; and Fear, Grief and Sorrow, shut the heart against sin, as the greatest evil.

(2.) When that which is unmortified (as still something of the flesh remains in them, when they are sanctified) is so far subdued by that which is wrought by the spirit in them, that they are kept in a suitable pliability, to all the Dispensations of God to every Providence, wherewith we are exercised; rejoicing, when he would have us to rejoice, and as he would have us to rejoice: Mourning, when he calls us to mourning, and as he would have us to mourn: Being angry, when God would have us to be angry, and so far as he would have us to be angry: Angry as Christ was, Mar. 3.5, And when he looked round about them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. When this is the business the Soul labors in, and strives to attain unto, more and more, and is really humbled before God, when any defects are observed, and pardon pleaded, and resolutions increased in the strength of Christ, to keep a stricter watch for the future, The Soul, at least, begins to thrive.

(3.) When though we let out our affections to this, or that, as sometimes we may lawfully do, and in duty ought to do, about the things of this life, and what concerns us in our outward condition, yet we can take them off again, as the matter requires; as when we are to address ourselves to God, in any act of worship. This is hard work. Moses was very angry, as there was cause, Exod. 32.19, &c. But it was the morrow after, before he prayed for them, verse. 30.31 But when we can do with our affections, as Abraham did with his Servants, Gen. 22. Leave them at the foot of the hill, when we go to be with God, in the Mount. The more, and oftener, this is done, the more and better the Soul prospers. I shall conclude all that I have to say in this matter, with this, which every one of you, that have any spiritual experience, what it is to converse with God, will acknowledge: That the Soul prospers, according to its Communion with God; and Communion with God, on our part is both preserved, maintained,

and enjoyed, by the well governing and exercising of sanctified affections, of Love, Fear, Joy, and Sorrow, Trust and Desire. These are the motions of the Will, and the out-goings of the Heart: As 1 Thes. 2.8, Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but our own Soul, because ye were dear unto us. They are said also to be the Feet of the Soul. Eccles. 5.1, Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the House of God. i.e., See, that thy heart be fixed, and thy affections composed. By these, the Soul draws nigh to God in Christ, closeth with him, and abides in him from day today. And the more it doth so, the more it prospers; for God draws nigh to such, Jam. 4.8, Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. And he never comes empty handed. If the Father go out to meet the repenting, returning Prodigal; the poor young Man finds the affection of a Father: Therefore what S. James speaks, of bridling the tongue, is true also of governing the affections: He is a perfect Man, he can bridle the whole Body. And after this perfection we should strive, as ever we desire that our Souls should prosper.

Thus much of the second Particular.

3. The Soul prospers, when the principles of spiritual life are so kept in exercise, that in times of doubtful expectation, we can cast upon all events, with a humble resignation of all into the hands of God, being willing to submit to his determination, whatever it be. And when the matter is out of doubt, so as the evil which we feared, and perhaps worse, is actually upon us, and a sentence of death and desolation is passed upon all Creature comforts, we can then find rest, and satisfaction in the exercise of faith on the promises of God. Here two things are to be considered. A little to each of them.

(1.) When in times of doubtful expectation, such as besides what any one of us may be in, with respect to his own particular condition, we are all of us in, upon a public account, we can cast upon all events, with a humble resignation of all into the hands of God, and with a willing mind submit to his determination. Thus it was with David, 2

Sam. 15. If ye read the Chapter, and consider the story, ye will acknowledge it was a time of great sadness: he could not but be full of fear, of what might befall him, God was now reckoning with him for his sin; so he had reason to think. His own Son, and a great Body of his people were up in Arms against him: He was at great uncertainties, what God would do with him: He forecast, what might be, this way, and that way; and not being able to foresee the event, he refers all to God's disposing; leaving all his troubled thoughts, fears, and doubts with him. verse. 25, 26. If not so, then thus. If so, then so. He is in either way at a point. Here I am, let him do (saith he) what he pleaseth. This was a Heaven-born frame of Spirit, to be able to perish, and to be undone in his outward condition, if God would have it so. Such a Man may be beggared and butchered, sooner than hurt. Surely David 's Soul now prospered; for never was his Kingdom more shaken; yet never was his heart more fixed. It was not so with David, at all times. 1 Sam. 27.1, And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day, by the hand of Saul. —Psal. 73.2, But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped. verse. 13, Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. He was upon the point of repenting, that ever he had repented. This is not to be marveled at, though it be to be lamented; as (if the Lord will) I may show in the Application of the point, That it is a rare sight, and seldom, or never seen, that any Man's Soul prosperity is always alike. Thus much of the first Particular.

2. When the matter is out of doubt, and as bad, or worse, then what we feared is come upon us, yet that Soul is in a prosperous frame, that can even then, in that dark, and sad hour, find sufficient satisfaction in the exercise of faith, in the promises of God, as Hab. 2.4, — but the just shall live by his faith. Then, even then, when the spirits of other Men, in the like case with him, fail and sink, and even die within them, he is upheld in comfort: When his faith is unto him, like the Cork that is upon the Net; though the Lead on the one side, sink it down, yet the Cork on the other side, keeps it up. When the eye of faith looks upward, and sees the hand of the only-wise God, in all that befalls him, who makes everything beautiful in his time; a

righteous God, and can do no wrong; a good God, and will do no harm, when faith believes all this, that it is but to humble him, and try him, and to do him good in the latter end: As Deut. 8.16. And sees love, and faithfulness in all, and hopes to find, what David found, and thankfully acknowledged, Psal. 119.75, I know that thy judgments are right, and that thou, in faithfulness, hast afflicted me. That in all the trouble that came upon him, God was therein faithful to the interest of his Soul, (a thing, which without much difficulty may be obtained of reason) to bear up under all, whilst we are persuaded, that all is done, in love, and faithfulness for our good. As for instance, though it troubles a Man to be in a Town, and forced to stay there, when it is besieged by a potent Enemy, yet the same Man can be content, when need requires, that his Physician should confine him to his Chamber, because he believes, that he doth it out of love and care for his health. And surely, those Souls, who when they are under the lash of Divine Rods, and are tossed with storms, and tempests (perhaps more than any they know of) can thus exercise their faith, and find satisfaction in the promises of God, so as to rejoice in tribulation, in hope of a good issue, surely they are prosperous Souls. Thus the Soul of Habakkuk prospered, when he exemplified his own Doctrine, That the just should live by faith, in the time of the Invasion of the Babylonians, by his own practice, Hab. 3.17, 18, Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, &c. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. It is observable, what I have read to this purpose (Magdeburg. Cent. 5. cap. 10.) that when Attila King of the Huns, came into France, Lupus Bishop of Troges, met him, and asked him who he was, that made such spoil, and devastations in the World: He answered, Dei se esse flagellum; That he was the scourge of God, whereupon he commanded the City-Gates to be set open unto him, and welcomed him with these words, Fauste ingrediatur flagellum Dei, Whilst the Rod is in God's hand, there is no danger. If this were so (as it related by good Authors) the Mans heart was in a good frame: his faith was above his fears: This is the third Particular.

4. The Soul prospers, when grace is so exercised, that it grows more and more clear in point of Covenant-interest.

Observe here, these two things.

(1.) When it grows into such a well-grounded hope, and comfortable apprehension thereof, as, ordinarily, it prevails over fears, and doubts, though it doth not wholly silence them, nor free the Soul from them. This is that, which the Apostle calls, The joy of Faith, Phil. 1.25. Arising from the solid satisfaction, which the heart receives, by a firm adhering to Christ, in whom all fullness dwells, for perfecting the work of Redemption, and Salvation, who is a faithful, and merciful High Priest, and able to save, to the uttermost, all those that come to God by him. This is surely Soul prosperity.

(2.) Much more when the joy of faith, grows into the joy of spiritual Sense, which is called, Full joy, Joh. 16.24.— Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 1 Joh. 1.4, These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, as Rom. 5.5. When the spirit doth tell us a thing in the Ear (as the expression is 1 Sam. 9.15. It is said there, The Lord told Samuel in his Ear.) that we are sealed to the day of Redemption, witnessing unto us our Adoption; so as the Soul knows it is no delusion, but the very voice of the Spirit of God; as Abraham knew that it was God himself, that spake to him, and commanded him, to go and sacrifice his Son, and no temptation from Satan; so as the Soul can say, as Psal. 116.7. Return to thy rest, O my Soul, the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. Now I see, the invisible God is my God. All the Greatness and Goodness, all the Truth and Faithfulness, all the Power and Wisdom, yea all the Holiness and Justice of the Eternal and Ever-living God, are the things which are the portion of my Soul. Now I see that all the Eternal counsels of God, wrought from all Eternity, to make me Eternally happy. Now I know that Jesus Christ came from the bosom of the Father for me, and my Salvation. That my sins are put upon his account; and his righteousness is put upon my account. Now I know my place, where I

shall stand, in the great day of the Lord; even at the right hand of my Savior, and hear that joyful sentence, Matth. 25.34, Come, ye blessed of my Father. This is, in some sense, I think, the uttermost height of the Souls prosperity.

For whenever the Soul is thus high, in point of Comfort, it is as high in point of Holiness. Whilst this continues, the Soul can do, and suffer anything for God, which he calls unto. As the believing Hebrews whilst they knew their interest in the enduring substance, Heb. 10.34, — Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your Goods, knowing in yourselves, that ye have in Heaven, a better, and an enduring substance. The heart being thus enlarged, it goes not a foot-pace, but runs the way of God's Commandments, Psal. 119.32, I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. That which we have Ephes. 3.17, 18, 19. is clear to this purpose. The Apostle prays, on their behalf, that they might know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of God. And why did he pray so? It was that they might be filled with all the fullness of God; according to the uttermost measure attainable in this life, and in full, and absolute perfection in the life to come.

Thus I have given you all that I shall say, concerning those things, which particularly demonstrate the truth, and reality of the Souls prosperity: Only I desire to leave these two things with you, in the conclusion, to prevent mistakes.

1. That none ought to argue against themselves, that their Souls do not prosper, because, as yet they come short, it may be, at sometimes altogether short of what hath been laid down in this fifth and last particular. They are seldom so clear in point of their Covenant interest, as to feel the joy of Faith, much less the joy of Sense. To endeavor to be clear in this matter is every ones duty. 2 Pet. 1.10, Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your calling, and election sure. To attain it is part of our Reward. But when it is not attained, yet the Soul may be thriving, and prospering, for all that. Moses his face did shine, and he did not know it, Exod. 34.19.

This was at his second being with God in the Mount: We read of no such thing, at the first time. We may see by this, that God doth not communicate himself in the same measure, at all times alike, to any of his Servants. It hath been so of old, and is so now. Many partake much of the quickening presence of God, when they have but little, or none at all of the comforting presence of God, Isa. 50.10, Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? &c. Hence it is, that they oftentimes as sadly complain as Zion did, (but all without cause.) Isa. 49.14. But Zion said the Lord hath forsaken me; and my Lord hath forgotten me. q. d. I am cast out of his love, not only forsaken, but forgotten: when it was neither so, nor so, as ye see, verse. 15, Can a Woman forsake her sucking Child? &c. They may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

2. Though all that hath been hitherto said, concerning Soul-prosperity, are such things, as are wrought in, and laid up in the hidden Man of the heart: yet these things are in the Soul, as the Candle in the Lanthorn, to shine forth in a holy, and blameless conversation; and in the constant performance of the visible part of Religion, and that in conjunction with others, as opportunity is offered. For though frequency therein, doth not infallibly prove, that the Soul doth prosper; yet in the neglect thereof, the Soul never did, nor will prosper. We read Joh. 20.24, 25. What a very bad frame did grow upon the Soul of Thomas, by the neglect of one good meeting. Whether it was out of too much fear, of what mischief might befall him, from the Council that condemned his Lord, and Master; or from too much care to settle his own private concernments, it is hard to determine; but certain it is, that his Soul was thereby brought into a sad condition. Therefore, as we desire our Souls should prosper, we should attend daily at the gates of Wisdom, Prov. 8.34. He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own Soul, Prov. 15.32. It is no easy matter for a Man to prosper in the World. Prov. 10.4, He becometh poor, that dealeth with a slack hand: So it is here; therefore as Deut. 4.9, Keep thy Soul diligently, lest thou forget. —

SERMON V.

I Now proceed to the third and last Particular: The reasons for the confirming of the truth of the Proposition.

1. The first is this. Soul prosperity is so far all in all, both to the prosperity of every Man's outward condition in general, and of the health, and welfare of the Body in particular; that it is absolutely impossible, that either the one, or the other should truly, and really prosper, but in conjunction with Soul-prosperity. There are two branches in this reason, and if both of them be made good, then the proposition is so far made good: That of all prosperity, Soul-prosperity, is the most desirable prosperity. And it is easy, to make them both good by Scripture.

(1.) That there is no true and real prosperity to any Man's outward condition, without Soul-prosperity. This is true; yet it must be granted that very many whose Souls are poor, and blind, and naked, that lie dead, yea rotting in the lusts of ungodliness, do divide the good things of this World among them. Their portion is made fat, Psal. 73.12. Insomuch that the Prophet Jeremy was astonished at it, Jer. 12.1, — Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy, that deal very treacherously? But this is far from true prosperity; for all this while, as their Persons, so their Prosperity is under the curse of God, Mal. 2.2, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. That which was threatened of old, Deut. 28.17. lies sore, and heavy, upon such to this day; though they neither see it, nor fear it, nor feel it: Cursed is their Basket, and cursed is their Store. This will be demonstrated more fully under another head, after I have made this good, That outward prosperity truly so called, and as it is a blessing, depends wholly upon Soul-prosperity. And that it doth so, is evident by this, That as all those, so only those whose Souls do prosper, are within the compass of the Promise of prospering in their outward condition.

The two first verses of the first Psalm give a fair character of a prospering Soul, and the third verse gives the Promise, That whatsoever such a Soul doth (according to the rule of the Law, wherein it delighteth) shall prosper, so far as is consistent with Soul-prosperity. Beyond that the Promise cannot reach it, neither doth any truly prosperous Soul desire it.

Here note two things.

(1.) That this was most eminently made good in the Old Testament: Where under that dark Dispensation of Spiritual Truths, and Blessings, the promises ran most upon externals. The only-wise God, saw it best of all so to encourage his then Infant Church as I may call it) to their duty. We read in Deut. 28. that after God had engaged himself upon serious minding their Soul prosperity, in this, and that, and other particulars. In verse. 8. he engageth for all whatever in that kind, could be desired; assuring them, that he would command a blessing upon them, in all their Store-houses, and in all that they should put their hand unto; and accordingly, this was made good. Whilst Solomon kept the charge of the Lord, all things went well with him. 2 Chron. 7.11. It is said, whatever he took in hand, he prosperously effected. Thus God always dealt with that Nation, while Religion flourished; and Soul-work prospered, then all things prospered. Hag. 2.19. God calls upon them there, to observe, that their outward prosperity should bear date, from that day forward, that they began to mind the good of their Souls. In the Second of Jeremy, God challengeth them to produce one instance, at any time, to the contrary; but it was more, then they could do. There in verse. 31. of that Chapter, thus the Lord speaks unto them: O generation! — Have I been a barren wilderness unto you? O generation! Of what? Nay, that is not expressed, but a void space is left, that anything might be written of them, that was naught. O generation of Vipers, of Monsters, that might have prospered, and would not. Well then, thus far it is clear, that Soul-prosperity, had the promises of outward prosperity, and under that Dispensation, eminently made good.

(2.) As it was eminently so, then, it is really so, now; even at this day. All they whose Souls do prosper, as they are Heirs of all those ancient promises, so they have promises superadded of a later date, 1 Tim. 4.8.— Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Matth. 6.32, 33, Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. And sometimes as, Prov. 28.10, — the upright shall have good things in possession. A full share of outward blessings is given unto them, suitable to persons of their condition, beyond what, once, they could have expected, or, it may be, did desire; so that they have just cause thankfully to acknowledge, as David did, that their Cup runs over.

(3.) When the only wise God, sees it good, either to preserve their Souls in, or to bring them into a more prosperous frame, then they are; to exercise them with some straights, and to keep them short, yet even then they may say that which David saith, Psal. 23.6. (even then when their Cup is low) That the loving kindness of God follows them, so far, that what they have not, they want not, having learned to want; being satisfied with that which they have of their own, within, Prov. 14.14,— A good Man shall be satisfied from himself: Experiencing the workings of the heart of God toward them, in his Fatherly care for them, remembering them in their low estate: and the workings of their own hearts toward God, in that, through grace, they are enabled to reckon upon it, That God's allowance is best for them; and that by faith, they can live upon him for their livelihood, when they have little in sight, to live upon. So that they can subscribe to what the Apostle saith. 1 Tim. 6.6. (as a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation) That godliness, with contentment, is great gain. They have the clear gain of a quiet, and well-composed spirit; so that their Souls dwell at ease, as Psal. 25.13. And is not this real prosperity? Verily it is so. Are not these prosperous persons? Surely they are so.

Thus, we see, the first branch of the first reason is confirmed: That the prosperity of Men's outward condition, in the general, depends

upon Soul-prosperity.

2. The other branch will be as clearly made good, That the health, and well-fare of the Body, stands upon the same bottom. No Man therein, ever did or ever shall truly, and really prosper, but in conjunction with Soul-prosperity. This may seem at the first mentioning, as great a Paradox, as the former. But it is a just, and measured truth, and cannot but be acknowledged to be so, if we consider the state of the Body, either in reference to this World, or the World to come.

(1.) In reference to this World. Though it be true, that many whose Souls are death-struck, sinfully sick unto death, the second death, eternal death; in respect of their bodily health, live to a great old age, in great health, scarce knowing, for a long while together, what a days sickness means: As Job observed in his time, Job 21.23. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease, and quiet; yet Bodily health as a blessing is certainly annexed to Soul-prosperity, Prov. 3.7. 8, — fear the Lord, and depart from evil. The Soul prospers that doth so, and while it doth so. And what then? It shall be health to thy Navel, and marrow to thy Bones. Now, according to the store of marrow, which moistens, and feeds the Bones; so is the strength of the Body. And then, it shall be health to thy Navel. This is expressed, because (as Physicians say) Bodily health, in a natural way, depends chiefly on the vital parts, and entrails; which are comprehended under the Navel, because there, they are knit up, and fastened. The meaning then is this: Fear the Lord, and depart from evil, and thy Body shall be strong, and healthy. This shall be health to all thy flesh, as Prov. 4.22, For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Thus it is, and will be, till sickness and weakness be better for the well fare of the Soul; as it was to Gaius, in the Text, whose Soul prospered the better, under his Bodily weakness. And when sickness and weakness grow upon us, the gracious workings of a healthy, and prosperous Soul, are, in some sense, the best Physic, and the most cherishing Cordials, to a weak, and languishing Body. When the Soul can say, as Psal. 73.26. My heart, and my flesh faileth,

but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. Isa. 38.2, 3, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said: Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked in truth before thee, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. It is observable what ye may read in the Book of Martyrs, concerning Mr. Saunders, that whilst he was in examination, before the Bishop of London, he felt a most ravishing sweetness from every part of his Body, come together to the place, and seat of his heart; and from thence, it did ebb and flow, to and fro, to every part of his body, to his marvelous consolation. This he told to one of his friends.

Thus far this branch of the reason is made good, That the health and welfare of the Body, as it is a blessing, may be expected; and cannot otherwise be expected, then in conjunction with Soul-prosperity. Whatever Men think of it, this is true: That though Nature be an enemy to Grace, yet Grace, especially thriving, and prospering, is a friend, the best friend to Nature.

(2.) In reference to the World to come, the well-being of the Body, to all Eternity, depends absolutely upon the well-being of the Soul. That fares, as the Soul fares. If the Soul perish, and be undone, the Body is undone, and perisheth too. We read Luk. 16.24, 25. that when the Soul of the rich Man was in Hell, not the least refreshment could be had for his Body, not a drop of water to cool his Tongue. Therefore as Job 27.8, He hath no hope of all that he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul. But if the Soul prospers, while it is in the Body (as it doth when it doth lay up its treasure in Heaven, and hath its conversation in Heaven) then the Body when it is laid in the Grave, as it is still a Member of Christ, death doth not dissolve that union, It sleeps in Jesus, 1 Thes. 4.14. And by virtue of that union, it shall be raised up, and made like the glorious Body of Christ.

Thus ye have the first reason made good, in both the branches of it, that Soul-prosperity is so far all in all, &c.

2. Of all prosperities, Soul-prosperity is the most desirable prosperity, because it is made up of the most desirable materials. Those goods whereof it consisteth are the best things, the most desirable blessings. It's true, the materials whereof Worldly prosperity consists are good things too. We read, Luk. 16. that the rich Man's purple Garments, and fine Linnen, which were his every-days-wearing, and his sumptuous fare wherewith his Table was furnished every day, and his great estate which maintained all this, were good things in themselves (and might have been good to him, if he had used them well.) So they are said to be, verse. 25. But what are these things to the principles of Spiritual life, thriving and increasing in the Soul? Verily, great heaps of Gold, and Silver, are but great heaps of Dust, and Dirt, to the least grain of grace: The price of it is far above rubies, Job 28.18. The Apostle speaking of one particular grace, the grace of Faith (one of these choice materials which make up soul prosperity) saith, That the Trial of it (when it is exercised) is much more precious than Gold. 1 Pet. 1.7. No marvel then, if Solomon (who knew the worth of everything, as much as ever any Man did) saith of it, That the Merchandize thereof is better than Silver, and the gain thereof then fine Gold. But of the excellency of the materials of Soul-prosperity, I need say no more then what hath been said in the explication of the point; only I shall show you a little, of that exceeding much, which the Scripture speaks of the materials of Worldly prosperity, by way of undervaluing them, to abate the esteem of them, and, if possible, to beat down their price.

In Eccles. 1.1. ye find Solomon the King, to be Solomon the Preacher; and as he had a large heart, so he took a large Text to Preach upon; no less than the whole World, with all its honors, profits, and pleasures, which raise up. Worldly prosperity to the highest Pinnacle, that is imaginable: And (which is exceeding observable) after he had thoroughly studied his Text, and taken as exact a survey of it, as unwearied diligence in searching, joined with incomparable wisdom, could attain unto, he could, with all his skill, raise but this one Doctrine, That all is vanity, vanity of vanities; extreme vanity all over. This was all he could make of all the fine things, that the World,

in its best dress, (so far as he could see) did afford. And as he saith by way of question, Eccles. 2.12, What can that Man do, that cometh after the King? After such a King? If any Man will try whether he may have better success, then Solomon had, I shall tell him what he shall find. This he shall find, and let him make his best of it.

(1.) That whatever reality he thinks that he finds, he will, after a while, find to be slight, and superficial: That they only please the carnal, and sensual part. This was all their predecessor found, Luk. 12.19, I will say to my Soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry. Neither will they do this always, but a little disappointment (the pride and passion of his own heart mingling with it) doth for the time, while the fit lasteth, embitter all, as Esth. 5.13, Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordechai the Jew sitting in the King's gate.

(2.) That even in this, whatever he finds, affords no lasting satisfaction, Eccles. 1.8, All things are full of labor, Man cannot utter it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing. The eye may be satisfied, and wearied with the Act of seeing, but the lust of the eye is not satisfied. The eye sees this, and that, more than once, he thought he should ever have seen, which he could have called his own: but yet still the eye would see more. And it cannot be otherwise; for all that can be seen, is too little for a Man's heart. They may be a belly full, Psal. 17.14. but they cannot be a heart full. There is no proportion, between the heart, and them; and therefore there can be no satisfaction. Besides, They cannot satisfy, because they are always found to be less in the Enjoyment, then in the expectation: Gehazi found them so, 2 King. 5.26. He thought of purchasing a great Farm, and of stocking it himself; but he found an evil disease cleaving to himself, and to his posterity; and that for more years, then his Farm should be either in his or in their possession. And yet farther he will find, that they cannot satisfy, because as they increase; so the heart is more and more let out unto them. And impossible it is, for that desire ever to be satisfied, which grows, by the increase of the thing desired. And yet more, say an earthly, narrow Soul may say, he is

satisfied, yet Men may choose whether they will believe him or no. However, this he will find, that though what he hath, may raise his esteem in the World, yet no real worth is added unto him thereby. It is well, if they do not make him worse. The valuation of Gold is raised sometimes from twenty, to twenty four, or twenty five shillings, yet the piece is the same still. Dan. 11.21. And in his estate, shall stand up a vile person. Prov. 10.20, — The heart of the wicked is little worth. What therefore, if the Man St. James speaks of, comes in, with a Gold-ring; if that be his best, wherein is he to be esteemed? Many things more might be said to this purpose, but this is enough to show, that in respect even of the choicest materials thereof, Worldly prosperity is no way desirable, in comparison of Soul-prosperity. If that be all a Man hath to rejoice in, he rejoiceth in a thing of naught, Amos 6.13. It may be said of all such, as Psal. 39.6. They walk in a vain show, and surely disquiet themselves in vain, heaping up riches (which are accounted, the chiefest materials of Worldly prosperity) when he knows not who shall gather them, a wise man, or a fool. For any Man then to prejudice his Soul-prosperity, in the pursuit of these things, contracts that guilt charged upon them, Jon. 2.8, They follow lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies.

3. A third reason is this. Of all prosperity, Soul-prosperity is the most desirable prosperity, because the effects, and consequents thereof, are the best, and most desirable effects; far beyond the effects of Worldly prosperity, separated from Soul-prosperity: For then they are both, sad, and sinful. It is seen to be so, in respect of the effects thereof, in this World, and it would be found to be so, for the future, in the World to come.

(1.) In this World: Thereby, the wickedness that is in the heart appears; half whereof would not have been so manifest, if they had not prospered so much in the World. It proves but fuel for their lusts; drawing out multiplied acts of sin, which is charged upon them, Jam. 2.7, Do not they (rich Men) blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? Riches beget pride, Luk. 16.19. There was a certain rich Man, which was clothed in Purple, and fine Linnen, and fared

sumptuously every day. Pride begets casting off trust in God, 1 Tim. 6.17, Charge them that are rich in this World that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. Carnal boasting, with contempt of others, Jer. 9.23, — Let not the rich Man glory in his riches. Carnal confidence, Psal. 62.10, — If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. Oppression, Jam. 2.6, Do not rich Men oppress you? These are some of those evil fruits, which a prosperous state produceth, when Men's lusts are not subdued, and mortified by Soul-prosperity. Men being charged to take heed of them, that shows their proneness to them. So that if the Angels were called to give such an account, as they were, Zech. 1.10, 11. doubtless they would give this account, that they never observed more notorious neglect of what is of everlasting concernment, never more savoring the things of the flesh, never more prodigious Riot in some, never more sordid Earthliness in others; the Earth they tread upon getting so into their hearts, that they are more Earthy then the Earth itself. Such an account of these, and such like abominations, the Angels would give, that they never saw more of these impieties, then among those that prosper in the World, whose Worldly prosperity is separated from Soul-prosperity. This is their way, as is said, Psal. 49.13. and this is their folly. These are the effects of it, that are seen in this World. Not that all these sad effects are seen in everyone, but some in one, and some in another.

(2.) The effects will be found to be as sad in the World to come. It is a sad sight to see Men undo themselves with their own mercies, as Bees that are drowned in their own Honey: but so it is, Prov. 1.32, — The prosperity of Fools shall destroy them. i.e., with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. It is evident from Scripture, that but few shall be saved, Matth. 22.14, Many are called but few are chosen. And it is as evident, that but few of those few, will be found among the rich, and prosperous, 1 Cor. 1.26, For ye see your calling, Brethren, that not many wise Men after the flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called. Yea, it is yet more evident, that the Spirit of God speaks in the Scripture, as if Salvation had been almost impropriated to the meaner sort of people; and that those

who prosper in the World, had been almost excluded. Jam. 2.5, — hath not God chosen the poor of this World, rich in faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him. The Church is called the Congregation of the poor, Psal. 74.19. Such as were of the lower rank, destitute of Worldly advantages. But for the rich, and prosperous, see Luk. 6.24, 25, Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you, that are full, for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn, and weep. Jam. 5.1. Go to now, ye rich Men, weep and howl, for the miseries that shall come upon you. The Apostle speaks not by way of advice and counsel, to prevent their judgment by godly sorrow. The exercise of that grace it not expressed by howling: but he speaks by way of threatening, and denouncing wrath, and vengeance. They had their good things in this life: their pleasure upon Earth, verse. 5. Rev. 18.7, By how much she glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment, and sorrow give her. Yet this is not to be understood, as if God would condemn the rich, because they were rich, no more than he will save the poor for their poverty: But he will condemn the rich for their sin, and save the poor for their faith, and piety, through Jesus Christ.

Much more might be said, to show that Worldly prosperity separated from Soul-prosperity, is by no means, a prosperity to be desired. It is but Eternal misery at a little distance: Much less is it to be compared with Soul-prosperity. This ye may judge by those effects of it, which are seen to be so, in this World; and will be found to be so in the World to come.

(2.) But now if we consider the Effects, and Consequents of Soul-prosperity, we shall find, they are every way most desirable, whether we consider the effects thereof for the present, in this life; or for the future, in the life to come.

(1.) In this life. When the Soul prospereth, and the divine well-fare thereof is kept, in its heavenly temper, by divine influences from above; then there is such a glory and beauty in it, as is much set by,

in the sight of God, Psal. 45.11, So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty. It is a lovely sight to see anything grow, so as to thrive, and prosper; Corn on the ground, Cattle in the field, Fruit on the tree. Children in the house, growing up as Olive Plants about the Table. But the growth, and prosperity of the Soul is much more lovely. Indeed there is much spiritual beauty and loveliness in the very first principles of spiritual life, wherein, (as I have showed you) the first Foundation of Soul-prosperity, as to our discerning it, is laid. These are much of the same nature, and bear the same name with that perfect state of happiness, which is enjoyed in Heaven. As that is called, Glory, so are these, 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. And if so; then where all these lovely principles thrive and prosper, the spirit of glory rests upon such a Soul, as 1 Pet. 4.14. This is so; but that which I shall specially instance in, as most comprehensive of the blessed effects of Soul-prosperity in this life, is that sweet peace within, and heavenly serenity of spirit, which a prosperous Soul, so long as it doth prosper, may, and (if it know its own happiness) usually doth enjoy.

1. Much sweet peace, because of that sweet agreement which there is between a Man's Conscience, and Himself. Conscience we know, if enlightened, presseth to duty; which, if neglected in its season, will wound and sting. A prosperous Soul is more afraid of this, then to be threat'ned with a fiery Furnace, Dan. 3.13. That did not affright them at all; but a Man may say as Job 27.6, My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live. He was not afraid of those rebuking's, and upbraiding's. Now, when grace is kept in exercise, as it is in a prosperous Soul, this keeps peace, and that when troubles, and trials come upon us, as an armed Man. 2 Cor. 1.12, Our rejoicing is in 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. This evidenced the prosperity of his Soul, and that was his rejoicing. That prayer of the Apostle for others, Gal. 6.16. was heard

for himself. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy.

(2.) Much sweet peace; because there is a sweet agreement, between a Man's affection, and his condition. A prosperous Soul living, and desiring to live in the enjoyment of God, is where it would be; and is willing to be, what God will have him to be, in the darkest hours that befall him, Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, Rom. 5.2. This subdues his affection to his condition; when his condition otherwise would not be according to his affection. Being clear in the point, of his interest in God, he can say, how barren soever his condition be of outward comforts, The Lord is my portion: I have a goodly heritage, Psal. 16.5, 6. Making God his Heaven, and his Earth too, Psal. 73.25.

(3.) A sweet peace: because a sweet agreement between a Man's Hope and his Reason. When the foundation of Soul-prosperity is first laid, being quickened with principles of spiritual life, it is born again to a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance, 1 Pet. 1.3, 4. And when the Soul prospers, according to the knowledge it hath of its own state, it is able to give a reason of its hope, as the expression is, 1 Pet. 3.15. A reason grounded upon the free promise of God, Rom. 2.7. If ye continue in well-doing: and nothing is well done, where grace is not exercised. But if it be so, ye look for glory and immortality, and eternal life. Then following after righteousness, holiness, &c. Eternal life is as it were within reach; we may lay hold on it, 1 Tim. 6.12. Thus Paul had reason on his side, 2 Tim. 4.7, 8. A good sight well managed, a good course well finished, a good faith well preserved. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness: Not because of this, but because of the free promise of God; for though a Man's Soul prosper to his dying day, yet eternal life is the gift of God, Roman. 6.23. Rev. 2.10.

(4.) Much sweet peace: Because there will be a sweet agreement between a Man's Resolutions, and his Performances; both in respect of Doing, and Suffering the Will of God.

(1.) In doing what God requires. The principles of spiritual life, the first day they are received, so incline the heart heavenward, that such resolutions are taken up, as Psal. 39.1, I said, I will take heed to my ways. Now, when grace is not exercised, and the Soul prospers not, then there is no keeping up this resolution, good purposes are broken off. That divine principle which should keep the heart from backsliding, is kept under, and oppressed by the contrary working of corruption. Such a Soul deals with God, as that Son did with his Father, to whom, he promised, to go, but went not. But now, so far as the Soul prospers, Performances will be answerable to Resolutions. See Paul 's resolution, Act. 24.16, And herein, do I exercise myself to have always a Conscience void of offense toward God, and toward Men. Heb. 13.18, Pray for us; for we trust we have a good Conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. And see his performance, Phil. 4.12, I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. It must needs be so; for the more the Soul prospereth, every work of Religion will be the better performed, with more delight, with less weariness; with more constancy, and less distraction.

(2.) Sweet peace; because of sweet agreement between a Man's resolutions, and his performances in respect of suffering what God imposeth, and inflicteth; whether upon a Man's own personal account, or upon the common account of Religion; when the first principles of Soul-prosperity are infused, the Soul is inclined to comply with Christ's injunction, Luk. 9.23. If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow me. And the more the Soul prospereth, the more the Will is melted down, into the Will of God, to suffer what God will, and that in submission to his Will, Psal. 39.9, I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. Or upon the common account of Religion. Heb. 11.35, — others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Know then, that all unquiet workings in our Spirits, and all sinking discouragements, in such a day, and hour of trial, come not from our condition, how sad soever it be, or in how great danger soever, we may apprehend ourselves to be, of losing all we have; as from our

Corruption, because our Souls prosper no more. It is observable, what we have to this purpose, in Matth. 5, Blessed (saith our Savior) are the poor in spirit, verse. 3. The meek, the mourners, the pure in heart, and those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, in the following verses. And then, verse. 10, Blessed are they that are persecuted, for righteousness sake. And why is this put in the last place, but to show unto us, that now the Soul prospers? There is poverty of spirit: there is purity of heart; there is meekness, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Now suffering in these, is such as becomes a Christian. This is enough to prove this, That the more the Soul prospers, there will be the more peace, because the more agreement betwixt a Man's Resolution, and Performance, both in respect of Active and Passive obedience. A prospering Soul makes this his business, To magnify Christ, whether it be by life, or by death, Phil. 1.20.

(5.) There is much sweet peace in a prospering Soul, because of that sweet agreement which there is between God, and such a Soul; which, if it be felt, passeth all understanding, Phil. 4.7. and therefore, all expression. But possibly, this Peace may not be proclaimed, so as every prospering Soul may hear it, and believe it, rather often doubting, that it is not concluded. But for certain it is, and in due time God will let them know it, Psal. 85.8, I will hear, what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his People, and to his Saints. And it is as certain, such Souls are at peace with God, for then they follow hard after God, as Psal. 63.8. desiring nothing more than reconciliation with him; their eyes dropping down tears, as Lam. 1.16, — because the Comforter, which should relieve my Soul is far from me. Blessed are such mourners, for they shall be comforted, Matth. 5.4.

Thus we have some of the desirable effects of Soul prosperity, in this life.

(2.) For the effects, and consequents of Soul-prosperity for the future, in reference to the World to come, thus in a word; it hath a

most blessed influence into Eternity: Then Soul-prosperity is perfected in holiness, Heb. 12.23, — The Spirits of just Men made perfect. Ephes. 5.27, Without spot, or wrinkle. And perfected in happiness, in the full enjoyment of God. It sees God so far, as seeing imports enjoying; Then it may be said without a figure to such a Soul, as Isa. 60.1, Arise, and shine, thy light is come, the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Thus ye have the reasons of the point.

SERMON VI.

If this be so, [Use. 1] That of all prosperities, Soul-prosperity, is the most desirable prosperity. Then from hence, we may infer: That it is the most rational thing in the World, for all those, that believe they have immortal Souls, in mortal Bodies, to mind the well-fare, and prosperity of their Souls, above all things else in the World. This is certainly to act, according to the best, and highest principles of reason, that ever any Man did from the beginning of the World to this day.

It may be supposed, by what ye have heard, that ye are now fully satisfied in the truth of the Doctrine, and believe that nothing prospereth in your hand, with prosperity truly so called, and as it is a blessing, but when, and where the Soul prospereth; therefore none to be minded like that, none but in subordination to that. And seeing it is a principle planted by the God of Nature, in the heart of Man by Nature, to mind that above all things else, wherein he firmly believes his happiness, above all things, doth consist. And withal, seeing to Prosper, and to be happy, though the words be two, are but one and the same thing: And that ye are persuaded, a Man is only so far really

happy, as his Soul prospers: These things being so, one would think, I might forbear to press anything farther, and might say concerning this duty of minding Soul-prosperity, as the Apostle doth of Brotherly love, 1 Thes. 4.9. ye need not that I should write anymore concerning it.

But considering what a deep, inward, rooted respect for, and reaching after the things of the World, there appears to be in some, who yet profess, they are fully convinced of the vanity thereof, and such a strong bias in others, turning them aside into ways that are not good: So far it may be charged upon them, as Rom. 1.18. They hold the truth (they believe) in unrighteousness; not suffering it to exercise its authority in their Consciences: And feeling it is so difficult a thing, yea impossible, without the Almighty power of the Spirit of God, to raise up a drosly, earthy spirit, sunk into the world, to look after things that are not seen; to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and to set their affections on things that are above; or to six a vain, light spirit, so as to reduce it, to a sober and serious consideration of the things of Eternity; and yet both the one, and the other must be done by all those, that resolve to mind the prosperity of their Souls above all other prosperity. I shall to what hath been said already, (before I come to show the great work that is to be done for the welfare of Souls) first give you some Arguments to prove the Inference, That if Soul-Prosperity, be the most desirable Prosperity; Then is it the most rational thing in the world, to mind it above all things else.

(1.) It is a rational thing (ye must all grant it) for any man to part with anything, except the Peace of his own Conscience, and to do anything that is possible to be done, except sinning against God, for the preservation of natural life. It is a Scripture expression, Prov. 6.26. that Life is precious. It is indeed the most precious thing in Nature. Matth. 6.25. Is not the life more than meat? Act. 27. They cast away the Lading of the Ship, in hope to save their lives, Esth. 7.2, 3, 4, Let my life be given me at my petition. For we are sold, I and my people to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. If we had been sold for Bond-men, and for Bond-women, I had held my tongue. See how

she pleaded for her life; he valued not the one half of 127 Provinces, in comparison of that. And we read of a poor woman, that had spent all that she had, in hope of health, which is a degree below life, Mar. 5. Now if it should be asked, as Jam. 4.14. What is this life, that is so much valued? We must answer, as he doth, That it is a vapor which appeareth for a very little time, and then vanisheth away. The frailty whereof is set forth by heaps of similitudes in Scripture, from the most perishing things that come under observation. It is but a little warm breath, turned in, and out at our nostrils, a narrow passage, and soon stopped, Isa. 2.22. Cease from Man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and wherein is he to be accounted of?

Now if it be so agreeable to reason, by all lawful means to serve the Providence of God, for the preservation of such poor, and frail things as our lives are; (as indeed we are bound in obedience to God's command) Is it not much more rational, to do whatever God would have us to do, for the life and well-fare, of our immortal Souls? Certainly if Nature teach a Man to prize his life above the World, Grace should make a Man to prize his Soul above his Life. Believe it, To save our Lives, and to save our Souls, are two things. This we find in Scripture, that those who have learned to value their Souls, according to their excellency, and have understood how much their own happiness is concerned in them, have willingly run the hazard of their lives, to save their Souls, not only as Paul, 1 Cor. 9.27, 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 cast-away; but also as they, Revel. 12.11, — they loved not their lives unto the death. They did not so love their lives, as out of inordinate care to preserve them, and so to escape death, when God called them, by their open profession to give in their testimony for Christ, and his Gospel, against the Anti-Christian Generation. So Dan. 3.19, &c. The three Witnesses chose rather to be thrown into the fiery Furnace, than to worship the Golden Image. Heb. 11.35, Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance. Yea so careless have some of the Saints of old, been of their Bodies, in comparison of their care for the well-fare of their Souls, as if they had been other folks Bodies, and not their own.

We read Act, 7, that when the sentence of death was passed upon Stephen, he prays not for the mitigation of his Enemies rage, he is totally silent concerning his burial. (It's true, there were some good Men took care of it, Act. 8.2. but not at his entreaty that we read of) but that which his thoughts were most taken up withal, ye read verse. 59. They stoned Steven, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. So the Lord Jesus left his Body in the hands of Pilate, but he commended his Spirit into his Father's hands, Luk. 23.46. It is observable, what we have Psal. 141.7, 8. when some of David 's followers, were hacked, and hewed in pieces, and left unburied, or (as some think) when their dead Bodies, after they were buried, were digged up, and their bones were scattered about the Grave's mouth: When David saw, or heard of this, see what he had most in his thoughts: Lord, leave not my Soul destitute.

Thus ye have one argument to make good the Inference: That it is the most rational thing in the World, to mind the welfare of our Souls, above all things else, because it is very rational, above all outward things, to mind the preservation of our lives. And that though it be so, those that have been wise to Salvation, have minded the saving of their Souls, above the saving of their Lives, there being indeed no comparison between this Natural life, and the Spiritual life of the Soul.

(2.) It is every way most rational, agreeable to the best, and highest principles of reason, to mind that most, which Jesus Christ (in whom dwelt all the Treasures of Wisdom) minded most. This none will deny, but that as it is the highest pitch of our holiness, that our Ends in all things fall in with his: So it ought to be our greatest business, that in all things we should be of the same mind with Christ. Now that this was, and still is the greatest work that Jesus Christ did, and still doth mind in our behalf, will appear by these particulars.

1. This was the great work, next to the glorifying of his Father (and therein he did glorify his Father) that was in his heart to accomplish; in, and by that mysterious work of his Incarnation, in taking upon

him Man's nature, and for which he made himself of no reputation in the World; for which he suffered so much, and still doth so much by his intercession in Heaven, to this day, that (as Isa. 53.11.) he might see the Travel of his own Soul, and be satisfied in the complete, and Eternal prosperity, of all their Souls, which God the Father gave unto him, and for which he engaged himself. John 6.38, 39, 40, For I came down from Heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Fathers will which sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again, at the last day. In 1 Pet. 2.25. Christ is said to be the Shepherd of Souls. Now a faithful Shepherd, though he will be ready to do his Master, what good service he can, in anything; yet his chiefest care is for his Master's flock. Such a faithful Shepherd is Jesus Christ, he highly minds the meanest thing, wherein any of his are concerned: Satan (to his own great vexation) cannot overlook this, Job 1.10, Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? And we know, that when he was visibly in the World, he was exceeding helpful to the Bodies of Men, yet his chiefest care was over his peculiar flock, as the Shepherd of Souls. He laid down his Natural life, to procure their Spiritual life: That dead Souls might live, and living Souls prosper. That they might have life, and live in abundance. Joh. 10.10, 11. For this end he ever lives to make intercession for those that come unto him, that they might be saved to the uttermost, Heb. 7.25. And as the effect of his intercession (according to his promise, Joh. 16.16.) he sends the Spirit of Grace into their hearts, to work in them all the graces, that accompany Salvation. And to abide in them, to preserve what he hath wrought, that in believing, their Souls might be saved, Heb. 10.39. And that they might receive the end of their Faith, the Salvation of their Souls, 1 Pet. 1.9.

This is the first thing, that Jesus Christ minded this most, in our behalf, that for this cause he came into the World, to seek, and to save lost Souls, Luk. 19.10.

(2.) This is the great end, he aims to carry on by all his Ordinances. The Law of God (that is the whole Doctrine revealed in the word) is for the Conversion of Souls, Psal. 19.7. And for Edification of Souls, Act. 20.32. I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up. The Sacraments are Spiritual Food for Souls. 1 Cor. 10.3, 4, And did all eat the same Spiritual meat. And did all drink the same Spiritual drink. Yea, Excommunication (that dreadful Ordinance, so it be managed according to the mind of Christ) for it is a delivering a Man to Satan, yet it is with reference to the good of his Soul, 1 Cor. 5.5. To deliver such a one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. For this end, he appointed the Ministry to be a standing Ordinance unto the end of the World, that they might watch over Souls, Heb. 13.17. This was that which the Apostles aimed at, according to their Commission from Christ. Paul saith, That he was made all things to all Men, that by all means, he might save some, 1 Cor. 9.22. In his removal from one place to another, he aimed at the conveying of some Spiritual gift, where ever he came, for the good of Souls, Rom. 1.11, For I long to see you, that I may impart to you, some Spiritual gift. In all his prayers, for those to whom he wished all the good that might be, this was the great thing he desired in their behalf, that their Souls might prosper, Eph. 3.14, 15, 16, 17, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit, in the inner Man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith, &c. Gal. 6.18, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit. Prospering Souls were his joy, and Crown, Phil. 4.1.

3. This was, and is the great end of all his Providential Dispensations. They are, or may be, all them, either Food, or Physic for the Soul. Thriving in holiness, as ye have heard, is Soul-thriving. Now this is the end, that all comforting, desirable Providences seem to drive on, Obad. verse. 17. But upon Mount Zion, there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness. All afflicting, saddening Providences, are for the same purpose, Heb. 12.10, God chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Yea for this very cause, it

often goes very ill with many of those that live highly in the love of God, in their outward condition, that their spiritual condition may prosper, and flourish, Isa. 27.9, By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin: Which is the sickness, and otherwise would be the death of the Soul, and its destruction, Psal. 119.71, It is good for me, that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. And therefore he acknowledgeth to the praise of the wisdom, and rich grace of God, that in very faithfulness to the interest of his Soul, the hand of the Lord had been upon him, so as it was.

Now lay all this together: That this was the great end of Christ's Incarnation, Death, and Suffering, and Intercession: The great end for which all Ordinances, and Providences are appointed to be subservient unto, and it will evidently appear, that this was, and is, above all things else, most upon the heart of Christ, in our behalf, that our Souls might prosper; therefore it ought to be most upon our hearts, and it is most rational, it should be so.

3. It is every way most agreeable to the best, and highest principles of reason, with all possible diligence, and seriousness to mind that, the neglect whereof, will be our utter undoing, to all Eternity, and bring both Body, and Soul under the most absolute, and unavoidable woe, and misery, that ever befell, or possibly can befall any Creature, that ever God made, next unto the Devil himself. That principle of self-preservation planted in the heart of Man by Nature, if improved, cannot but teach him this; That it is most rational for him to mind that, the neglect whereof would bring this ruin upon him. Now what woe, and misery is laid up for a neglected, perishing, unprospering Soul, ye have fully expressed, beyond what can be conceived, in one verse, Matth. 25.41. whereof I shall mention but these two particulars, which are of all others, most dreadful, and terrible.

(1.) Such a Soul is designed to be driven away from God; with his curse upon them, Never to see his face, To be Eternally separated from those everlasting joys, which Souls that live and prosper, in a

most absolute fullness do enjoy, in the enjoyment of God, whilst the everlasting God enjoys his own blessed self. If this were all, the misery were unspeakable: It is said, Act. 20.37, 38. that when Paul took his leave of his friends at Ephesus; it was a very sad parting; They all wept very sore, fell upon Paul 's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all, for the words, which he spake unto them, that they should see his face no more. If this were such an heart-breaking unto them, it must needs be impossible for any, that ever tasted, in any measure, how gracious the Lord is, to bear so much as a thought of never seeing, of never enjoying God more. Ye know, for a Man to lose his sight were very sad, though he should have no pain in his eyes, Solomon saith, Eccles. 7.11. Truly light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to behold the Sun: So that a Man would scarce think, that the greatest Worldly prosperity were enough to repair that loss. What then would this blind person think of his condition, if besides the loss of his sight, one should stand by, and continually be dropping scalding Lead into his eyes? Yet so it is here. For,

(2.) A lost, unprosperous Soul is not only designed to be thus driven away from God, but it is designed to the same misery, and the same torment with the Devils; and this they can neither escape, nor endure. None can answer that question, Ezek. 22.14, Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the day when I shall deal with thee? No, it cannot. For who knoweth the power of thine anger: even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath, Psal. 90.11. None is able to express, yea nor to conceive, what a dreadful thing it is, to be buried, as it were, alive, under the Tomb-stone of the infinite wrath of the ever-living God, Heb. 10.31, It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Rev. 6.15, 16, 17, — They shall hide themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains. And say to the Mountains, and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? This is that which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor can possibly enter into the heart of Man to conceive. Ye find up and down in the Scripture, that whatever is most terrible to sense, is made use of, to

express the terribleness of it, and yet comes far short of it. Let but this one argument sink into your hearts, and be, if but once a week, seriously thought on, and possibly, this alone may convince you of the truth of what I say. That it is the most rational thing in the World, for all those who believe they have immortal Souls, in mortal Bodies, to mind the well-fare, and prosperity of their Souls, above all things else in the World.

4. Let me add one argument more. It is the most rational thing in the World, for every Man seriously to mind that, which above all things else, best answers God's great end in giving him his Being, and with it, all that is needful for support, together with more understanding than the Beasts of the field: And if ye ask, what this is? Ye have an answer, Prov. 16.4, God made all things for himself: For the glorifying of his own blessed name. Rom. 11, For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: To whom be glory forever, Amen. Now as no Man dishonors God, but in doing that which tends to the ruin and destruction of his own Soul. So no Man doth anything, or possibly can do anything, which really tends to the well-fare of his own Soul, but therein he also glorifies God. For instance, To live in the exercise of Repentance; confessing, and humbling our Souls in the sight of God, for our daily failings. To live in the exercise of Faith, applying ourselves to Jesus Christ, as interceding, in our behalf for grace, and mercy, suitable to our daily necessities, resting upon his truth, and faithfulness in his promises, notwithstanding all difficulties appearing in the way of accomplishment: Walking in the fear of the Lord, and fruitfulness in every good work: These are all great furtherers of Soul-prosperity, Josh. 7.19, My Son, give glory to God, and make confession to him. Revel. 16.9, — They repented not, to give glory to God. Rom. 4.19, 20, — but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Isa. 8.13, Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. Joh. 15.8, Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. This is as certain, as that Jesus Christ glorified his Father, in finishing the work of Redemption, and Salvation, for lost sinners. Joh. 17.4.

Thus ye have the Inference made good.

[Use. 2] If this be so, That Soul prosperity is the most desirable prosperity; and that it is therefore (as ye have heard) the most rational thing in the World, to mind it, above all things else. Then be persuaded (as the Prophet Isa. adviseth, ch. 46.8.) To remember this, bring it again to mind, resolve upon it, and show yourselves to be Men; that act according to principles of reason, and not Brutes. Let that sink into your hearts, which ye may read, Hos. 11.4. The Lord there aggravates their unworthy dealing with him by this, That though he knew their averseness to what he had required of them, yet he had not drawn them to their duty, by violence, as unruly Bullocks to the yoke, but in a way singularly obliging, suitable to rational Creatures, He had drawn them with the Cords of a Man, with arguments from his bounty, and goodness, which of all others, carry the highest grounds of reason with them, why God should be obeyed. This, I say, should be seriously considered, that reflecting on ourselves, and finding that God deals thus with us, draws us with the Cords of a Man, in an argumentative way to persuade us to this great duty: O then let us be persuaded to stir up ourselves with the uttermost bent of our endeavors, from this day forward, to mind it as the great business of our lives, and pray (as Gen. 9.27.) that God would enlarge our hearts, and fill them with desires, and resolutions about this matter, and diligently hearken to the counsel, which God, in his word, prescribes you in this great affair.

To make way to acquaint you with what that is, I must mind you a little of that which was more largely spoken unto, when we first entered upon the explication of the point. Two things were then endeavored to be cleared unto you.

1. Wherein the prosperity of the Soul consisteth, and when it may be said to prosper. I told you then, that the prosperity thereof is to be considered both in its first rise, and foundation: Or in its growth, and progress. As to the first rise of it, it was proved, that if we look upwards, we shall find it begin in God's Eternal, Electing love, which

is without beginning. But if we look inwardly, so as to discern it in ourselves. The first foundation of it is laid in that day, and hour (though the very day and hour hath, I think, not been discerned by many, though perhaps by some.) But however discerned, or not discerned, in that day and hour, it begins, when by the word of Christ, and by the Spirit of Christ, the whole Man, both Soul and Body is brought into a state of Union with Christ. For then the Soul receives the first Seeds of Heaven born principles of Spiritual life, and then begins to be in a capacity of prospering.

2. As the first foundation is laid in these principles: So the growth and progress thereof consists in their increase. As they increase, so the prosperity of the Soul increaseth. So that if ye give up yourselves to be guided by right reason, your work for the substance of it, is first to see that your Souls are Spiritually alive. And secondly, that they thrive and prosper in that wherein they live.

In reference to the former of them, I have two things to say,

(1.) To all, and every one of you, that you would set some time apart, seriously to debate the matter, between God, and yourselves alone, and none else with you: whether ever ye felt the day of God's power upon your spirits, to prevail so far upon you. As,

1. To cast you down from the good opinion, which ye had of yourselves, by a thorough conviction of the woeful mistake wherein ye were, about the state of your Souls. That ye thought them alive, when they were (as now ye see) dead in sin, pleasing yourselves with the Religion of your Education, as Paul did before his Conversion. That ye thought, ye had good hearts toward God, whereas now ye see, that (as Psal. 5.9.) your inward parts were very wickedness. That whereas ye thought not of any danger ye were in of the wrath to come, now ye see, ye are condemned by a holy, and righteous Law. And that, what by reason of your Actual sins, and what by reason of your Original sin, ye utterly despair of Salvation in that state wherein ye pleased yourselves, and see clearly that outward Reformation will

not serve your turn, but ye must be inwardly changed into the Image of God, and be born again by the Spirit of God, else ye can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is such a casting down, as Paul experienced when he said, Sin revived, and I died, Rom. 7.9.

2. Whether, besides this casting down, ye have also experienced the day of God's power, so far to prevail upon you, as to raise up your hearts, to a willing, and hearty acceptance of Christ, to all intents and purposes, in order to Salvation. To kill, and destroy that enmity which you find in your hearts, against the ways of God, so as to bring you into a state of Reconciliation with God, and to all the means of conformity to him, and Communion with him, to impute unto you the merits of Christ's death, for a full and free discharge from the guilt of all your sins, and to impute unto you his Righteousness, that ye may be accepted as righteous, unto Eternal life. To mortify all your corruptions, to quicken your dead hearts, with the principles of Spiritual life; those principles of true holiness, without which, ye know, ye shall never see God; with a sincere resolution, in his strength to wait upon him, and keep his way. That he would do all this for you, and work all this in you; and that ye are humbled for defects in living no more upon him, that he might be all this unto you. Verily, so far as any person can really assert this, that thus he hath been cast down, and thus he hath been, and is raised up; though he may sometimes be in the dark, as to the safety of his estate for Eternity; he hath good Scripture ground (though he may not see it) to believe that he is called into fellowship with Christ, 1 Cor. 1.9. And that his Soul begins to live, and is in a capacity of prospering: For when the Soul (it may be, after a long shutting up under unbelief) thus opens to Christ, then Christ comes into the Soul, as Rev. 3.20. And when he comes, he brings the principles of Spiritual life with him, 1 Joh. 5.12, He that hath the Son, hath Life.

This is the first Particular. A word to all.

2. I have a word to some, to those I mean, that know nothing, as yet, what either this casting down, or lifting up, means. And it is a word

of advice, That as ever they desire their Souls should live, and be in a capacity of prospering, that they would break off, from all their dead works, and resolve, for this end, that they may be thus cast down, and lifted up, To be swift to hear, as Jam. 1.19. And to attend unto the words of this life, so as it is said to be, Joh. 5.20. The word, whereby dead Souls are quickened, Joh. 5.25,— the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. And that in order hereunto, ye would take the right way of working what ye hear upon your hearts; thus, or to this purpose, reason the case with yourselves.

(1.) Soul-prosperity, I am now convinced, is the most desirable prosperity: And if my Soul prosper not, all the sooner, possibly, it may never prosper, for, this night, it may be taken from me. And if it do not prosper, nothing will prosper with me, so as to turn to good, whilst I live: and when I am dead, I shall be one of the most woeful, and miserable Creatures, to all Eternity, that ever God made, next to the Devils.

(2.) If my Soul be, as I have reason to be afraid it is, still in its unregenerate state, then it is spiritually dead in sin; and while it continues so, it is in no more capacity of prospering, then a dead Tree, while it continues dead, is in a capacity of bringing forth ripe fruit. This I now clearly see, though I did not so much as think on it before.

(3.) If I do not so receive Jesus Christ, as that Jesus Christ may receive me, into a state of Union with himself, my Soul can never live, for so I hear from, 1 Joh. 5.12. He that hath not the Son, hath not life.

(4.) If I would so receive Jesus Christ, as that he may receive me, into Union with himself, and I receive life from him, I must so receive the word, as to be so cast down, and so lifted up, as I have heard. Therefore, by his help, I resolve for this end to hear, yea as I am commanded, Isa. 55.3. diligently to hear, to hearken, and to incline

mine Ear: And to make application to myself, of what may be for my casting down, and for my lifting up; that, according to the promise, in that Text, my Soul may live.

This do, and Live.

SERMON VII.

Having spoken something to the first Particular: That everyone ought to see it, who desires that his Soul should prosper, that he be Spiritually alive.

I now proceed to the second, wherein two things are to observed: That if indeed ye are spiritually alive, then to see to it.

1. That your Spiritual life be lively, and prosper.
2. That when it begins to be better, than it hath been with you, in the inward Man, then to take heed that ye lose not the things ye have wrought, 2 Ep. of Joh. verse. 8.

I shall enter upon the former of these, at present.

1. To see to it, that your Spiritual life be lively, and prosper; for therein the prosperity of your Souls consists. And, because everything almost, that I have to speak unto, in handling this great, and necessary Doctrine, needs much enforcement, because much neglected, I shall, before I come to the Directions, speak something, by way of argument, to heighten your endeavors herein.

Consider then.

(1.) A Soul, that is alive to God, though burdened with a weak, Consumptive Body, and with a considerable fullness of outward blessings (both which, many times, are great disadvantages) yet may prosper. We see it exemplified in Gaius; He was but of a weak, and crazy Constitution, that's implied in the Text. And he was withal, a Man of some Estate, in the World: That's implied verse. 6. Which have born witness of thy charity, before the Church. Yet neither the one, nor the other hindered, but that his Soul did prosper. It was as John said; for doubtless John was as far from giving flattering titles, as Elihu said, he was, Job 32.22.

(2.) Our Souls ought to be as dear unto us, as the Soul of Gaius was to him. If Gaius made Religion his business, minding, above all things, that one thing which is necessary. If he kept his heart above all keeping, So that neither Corruption from within, nor Temptation from without, could set his Salvation-work backward. If he laid up his treasure in Heaven, valuing both the best things, and the worst things of the World, as something, or as nothing unto him, farther then as they might be improved to promote the Eternal well-fare of his Soul. All which, without doubt, in a great measure he did, and more then all this too; otherwise, he had never received this testimony from such a Man, as John was; which, to his honor, hath stood upon Record, these 1600 years, and shall do to the end of the World. For as our Savior said of Mary, Matth. 26.13. So wherever this Epistle shall be read in the whole World, this that Gaius did, shall be told, for a memorial of him, That his Soul did prosper. Therefore, as our Savior saith, Luk. 10. We ought to go, and do likewise. For he was under no more obligation to do what he did, then we are: And our Souls ought to be as dear to us, as his was to him.

3. There is not one word to be found to the contrary in all the Scripture, but that how short soever, we come of this pattern, at present, yet if we set ourselves to do, as he did, our Souls may prosper as much, as ever his did. Jesus Christ, we are sure, can make them prosper, Joh. 10.10, — I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 2 Cor. 9.8. For ye know the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich. Eph. 3.20, — He is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask, or think, according to the power, that worketh in us. Neither, (which is much to be observed) doth he speak of his absolute power; by which he is able to do more, then he will do, but of his Ordinary working power, for so it is, in the latter end of the verse. [According to his power that worketh in us.] So that we may conclude, that he hath not out-acted the greatness of his power, in, or for the prospering of any Man's Soul; but he can work as much again, for another. Eph. 4.10, He that descended, is the same also that ascended up, far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things. As he filled up the whole work of his Mediatorship, which was to be done upon Earth: So he ascended up to Heaven, to fulfil what remains, and that is, forever to fill even all the living members, of his mystical Body with the Principles of Spiritual life, so that everyone shall receive according to his measure, Eph. 4.7, But unto every of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Neither doth he tell any Man, that he hath given him so much, that he will give him no more. No Man knows, how great his measure may be; The grace that Christ intends to give, he gives not all at once; so that a Man may hope, his works may be best at last; as was said of them, Rev. 2.19. For,

(1.) There is no particular grace, though it be in the Soul, at present, but as smoking Flax, but it may by daily exercise, and good usage, grow to a great eminency.

(2.) There is no Corruption, though more deeply Rooted then others, in a Man's natural Constitution, but that, in time, by walking in the Spirit, bringing it to the Law of Christ, to the death of Christ, and to the love of Christ, and joining his own endeavors to the Spirit of Christ, he may get an eminent victory over it, and see it, by degrees, fall down before him.

(3.) There is no particular duty, how backward, and indisposed soever he may be to it, at present, or hath been, a long time heretofore against it, but he may grow to an eminency in the practice of it.

(4.) There is no one temptation, of what kind soever, or how often soever he hath been overcome by it, but by taking to himself the whole armor of God; and strengthening himself in the strength of the Lord (which is every ones duty to do) but he may so resist it, and conquer it, that the Devil shall fly before him.

(5.) There is no condition, how many snares soever, it may be compassed about withal, but through the exercise of grace, it may be managed to such Spiritual advantage as may exceedingly promote Soul-prosperity.

(6.) There are no doubts, no fears, no sinking discouragements, arising from what spring soever, but they may be answered, and scattered as a mist before the Sun, shining forth in its full strength.

By all this we see that it is as I have said: That as there is no reason for any Man absolutely to conclude, though he apprehend himself, at present to be Spiritually dead, that his Soul shall never live: So there is no sufficient reason for any Man to doubt, who is really, though weakly alive to God, but that waiting upon God, and keeping his way, his Spiritual life may grow to be lively, and his Soul may prosper as much as ever the Soul of Gaius did. Therefore, let us up, and be doing, and the Lord will be with us, Phil. 2.12, 13, Work out your own Salvation, with fear, and trembling. For it is God, that worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure. This is that which slackens many Men's endeavors, that because they think they shall never attain to such a height of Soul-prosperity, as others have attained unto; therefore they stir not up themselves, to reach after any prosperity at all; as is charged on them, Isa. 64.7, There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee. As some poor Men, because they think, they shall never get

beforehand, as many of their Neighbors do; whatever others get, they shall never be worth a Groat, and therefore mind no more then to live from hand to mouth. But we have not so learned Christ. This is all that I shall say by way of argument, to persuade.

I now proceed to speak of the former of those two Particulars, mentioned but now: That those that are spiritually alive, ought to see to it, that their Spiritual life be lively, and prosper, because therein the prosperity of their Souls consisteth. The great matter to be inquired into, is to show what is to be done, in order to the carrying on, of this holy, and blessed design. In speaking unto it, Let this be considered. That there is a Rule for, and a Regiment of Health for the Soul, as there is for the Body. And what in a natural way, may be prescribed, and ought to be made use of, for the well-fare of the one, may be prescribed, and ought to be made use of, in a Spiritual way, for the well-fare of the other. Of this kind, there are five several things, which I shall speak to in order.

1. In reference to Bodily health, upon good advisement, the seasonable use of Physic is necessary. This is an Ordinance of God, and ought to be used in faith, and obedience to God. Sometimes, for preventing of Diseases, which otherwise might prejudice our health, and sometimes for curing, and removing of them, which otherwise may endanger our life. Answerably to this, we find in the Scripture (which is the Magazine, and Store-house for all Spiritual Receipts) Physic prescribed for the Soul, by Jesus Christ himself, the great Physician of Souls; without the due, and seasonable use whereof, it is impossible, the Soul should prosper.

Before I tell you what it is, it is fit to premise these three things.

1. That the Soul of every Man, Spiritually alive to God, is as subject to Spiritual Diseases, as the Body of any living Man is to Bodily Diseases. And it is sin alone, and nothing else but sin, which is the sickness of the Soul, and which if it be not cured, will be the death, and destruction of the Soul. It is the resemblance by which it is

frequently set forth in the Scripture; and that most fitly, as all Scripture resemblances are. For as sickness hinders the operation of Nature, wasting, and consuming, by degrees, both the Natural heat, and Radical moisture, often changing, and altering a Man's countenance, as Job 2.12, And when they lift up their eyes afar off, and knew him not. Often causing much pain, so as the sick Man grows worse (and unless happily recovered, by the blessing of God, upon the use of Means) until death seize upon him. So that sickness, upon this account, is truly said, to be contrary to Nature, an Enemy to Nature. Even such a thing is sin to the Soul: It is contrary to the well-fare, and prosperity of it. It Wars against it, 1 Pet. 2.11. It hinders the gracious acting's of it, Rom. 7.21, I find a Law then, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. It puts even living, and good Souls under such a disguise, that they neither speak, nor do like themselves. As Job 's Wife, (though it is believed, that she was a good Woman) yet she spake (as her Husband told her) as one of the foolish Women, Job 2.10. So 1 Cor. 3.3. Their unmortified lusts put them under such a disguise, that they walked as Men; as those that were still dead in sin, and never had received any principle of Spiritual life. And farther, As sickness causeth pain; so guilt following of sin, often causeth intolerable pain, in the anguish, and charging's of Conscience. In a word, sin being indulged consumes, and wastes what is of God, in the Soul; so (as it is said of the worst of Men, 2 Tim. 3.13.) it grows worse, and worse; and if not happily prevented, it ends, at last, in Eternal death, Rom. 8.13, If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.

2. As in all these respects, sin is such a thing to the Soul, as sickness is to the Body: So, that we may be the more affected, and take the more notice of it, It is fitly expressed by the same name. As Pride is fitly compared to a Tympany; Earthly-mindedness to a Dropsy; Carnal security to a Lethargy; Unruly passions to a Frenzy; Apostasy, and Back sliding from the ways of God, to the Falling-sickness; Envy, to a Consumption; An unquiet, discontented Spirit, to the grief of the Bowels: Sore Diseases, all of these are. And besides all these, Original sin is as a Leprosy, over-spreading the whole Soul. This evil Disease,

which is, indeed, all Diseases in one, cleaves unto all Adam 's posterity, as Gehazi 's Leprosy did to all his Seed; for his Son (if he had any) and his Son's Son, and so from generation to generation, were all Lepers, 2 Kings 5.27.

3. Though this be generally acknowledged, That sin is the sickness of the Soul; therefore the Soul prospers only so far as it is well rid of it; yet this would be farther observed, That though sin have such evil effects upon the Soul, as Diseases have upon the Body: and that the names of Bodily Diseases, do so fitly resemble the Diseases of the Soul: yet the difference is great, as to that which is required, to dispose the sick in Soul, and the sick in Body, toward a recovery. In the Diseases of the Body it matters not much (it may perhaps something, but much it doth not) whether the sick Man know the name or nature of his Disease; so he have a faithful, and skillful Physician: Nor whether he know the virtue of what is prescribed him, or the composition of it. Or whether he be able to judge of the increase, or declining of his Disease, by the beating of his Pulse: Though perhaps, some insight into these things, might afford to some persons at least, some satisfaction; yet they are left specially to the care, and wisdom of the Physician, who often conceals the danger, lest the sick Man's fears, and fancy might do him more hurt, then his Physic doth him good. But it is otherwise in Soul-sickness; a clear insight into the Disease, is of great use, that everyone should understand (according to that expression, 1 Kings 8.38.) the plague of his own heart; and what strength it hath got over him; how long it hath been growing upon him, and by what means, and occasions, he fell into it. These are good steps toward spiritual health. This is required in order to cure, Jer. 3.13, Know, and acknowledge thine iniquity. And then, distinctly to understand the way of cure, and to follow those directions, which Jesus Christ the great Physician of our Souls, prescribes, is a far greater, and better step.

Having premised these things, I shall now lay before you what is prescribed by him.

(1.) When the Body is full of corrupt humors, there is need of Purging Physic. Even such need hath the Soul, when it is over-grown, and oppressed, with corrupt lusts, which are the noisome steams of Original corruption. It was well with them, of whom it is said, 1 Pet. 1.22. that they had purified their Souls. This is commanded, Jam. 4.8, Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded. 2 Cor. 7.1, — Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit. This is absolutely necessary; for as sin is to the Soul, as sickness is to the Body; so the purging out of these corrupt lusts, is to the Soul, what this purging Physic is to the Disease, Joh. 15.2, Every branch in me (saith Christ) I will purge, that it may bring forth more fruit. In Mal. 3.3. it is prophesied, That God will sit as a Refiner, and as a Purifier of Silver; and purify the Sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord, an offering in Righteousness. Now this purging, and emptying the heart of the evil treasure that is in it, is all one with mortification; and wherever, and in whom soever this is neglected, that necessary and commendable practice of abounding in the External duties of Religion, avails nothing, to Soul-prosperity: Ye see this exemplified in the Pharisees, Matth. 6. Nay, though the Soul be alive to Christ, yet if this be neglected, the Soul prospers not. This is evident in those Church members in Corinth. Paul supposed them to be in Christ: Yet their unmortified lusts, clearly proved it against them, that they did not thrive, their Souls did not prosper. They were but Babes in Christ: They were in a comparative sense, in respect to what they ought to have been, and might have been, but very Carnal still, 1 Cor. 3.2, 3. This then ought to be taken notice of, that besides the real foundation of universal mortification, that is laid in at first, in the Soul's Conversion to Christ, wherein the absolute, and uninterrupted Reign of Original sin is broken; yet the continual exercise of mortification, is to be minded, and taken up, otherwise it is not like to go well with the Soul. For it is in this case, as it was with the Monarchies, Dan. 4.12. Though their Dominion was taken away, yet their lives were continued for a season. So it is here; for Original sin is like Leaven, which being mingled with the Dough, the Bread will always, more or less, taste of it. So that the most mortified Christian hath still more mortifying work on his hands, which he must

dispatch. Those that are in Christ, Rom. 8.1. and savor the things of the Spirit, verse. 5. Yet are pressed to a further progress in this duty, verse. 13, — but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the Body, ye shall live.

This in general.

2. When by communing with our own hearts, and observing the outgoings of our own Spirits, we clearly see that we are among the transgressors, not among the righteous; I mean, among the sick, and not among the sound, then speedily and seriously to set ourselves to the use of such purging, and mortifying means, as Christ hath prescribed in his word.

And here I desire you to note, that the means appointed, in this case, to be used, come under a double consideration.

(1.) Some there are, which we may not desire, nor adventure upon, but as the Providence of God, according to the condition we are in, calls us to make use of.

(2.) There are other means, which, whatever our condition be, we ought, immediately, and daily, to apply ourselves, to make use of, as the matter requires; and upon special occasions, in a manner more than ordinary.

For the former of these, they are of two sorts.

(1.) The Evil of Affliction. And

(2.) The Evil of Sin.

1. The Evil of Affliction, of what kind soever it be, or for what cause soever, it comes to be our portion, whether upon our own Personal account; or upon the Common account of Religion. These are the means, that God makes use of, Dan. 11.35, And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them

white. Isa. 27.9, By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away their sin. And they are fit means, for they have a great tendency to awaken the Conscience, as Gen. 42.21, And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our Brother. To break the unruliness of our Spirits, and to make us willing to hearken to what God speaks unto us, in his word, Hos. 5.15, I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction, they will seek me early. And therefore, when God is pleased to exercise us this way, we ought to improve them for this end. And it is a great aggravation of sin, and a great evidence of an heart greatly unmortified, not to do it, Isa. 57.17, For the iniquity of his covetousness, I was wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly, in the way of his heart. Therefore, Hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it, Mic. 6.9. Yet for all this, we may not desire to come under the lash of any of God's Rods, when we are free, in hope that we may thus improve them: For who knows beforehand, but that when he hath his desire, and is under the Rod, that it will not either be with him, as it was with Ahaz, 2 Chron. 28.22, And in the time of his sickness, he did trespass yet more against the Lord. This is that King Ahaz. Or otherwise with him, that it was with Nabal, whose heart was as unsensible in him as a stone, during the time of his sickness, 1 Sam. 25. This we are sure of, that there needs an Almighty power to work with them, to make them have any effectual influence, to purge out so much as one of those lusts, which hinder the well-fare, and prosperity of the Soul. And what ground we have to hope that God will put forth any such power, with any of his Rods, especially, when we ourselves, without any call from God, have called for them, and desired them, would be well considered of.

2. As the Evil of Affliction is not to be desired for this end, but only to be made use of, for this end, when God brings it upon us: So it is with the Evil of Sin. God is pleased often to make use of his people's miscarriages, to work much this way, bringing Soul-health out of Soul-sickness. Thus God wrought with Peter. Compare Matth. 26.33. with John 21.15. And with Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32.26, Hezekiah

humbled himself for the pride of his heart. And thus he wrought with David. That great sin of his, through the mighty working of the Spirit of God upon his heart, occasioned as great exercise of his Repentance, and of his Faith, as ever he gave any evidence of, in the whole time of his life, from the first day of his Conversion, to the time of his Death. So that incestuous Corinthian, his sorrow was so deep, that he was in danger to have been swallowed up by it.

Thus the Lord is pleased to work; as we have heard that skillful Physicians, according to the rules of Art, can temper poisonous ingredients into wholesome Medicines. But this is proper for them only to meddle withal, that are skillful in their Art. So this is a divine skill proper only to the great Physician of Souls. But this we may not apply ourselves unto: I mean, not to give way to sin in hope that Faith and Repentance may thereby be set on work, and our Souls prosper the better after it. No: No Man ought to give way to the least sin, though he had the greatest ground of hope that might be, that he might be preserved thereby from a greater sin. It's true, in respect of the evil of suffering, when there is no remedy, but one of them must be chosen, the less may be chosen to avoid the greater. But in respect of the evil of sin, we ought not to swallow a Gnat, in hope thereby to avoid a Camel. Not to take up a Moat, in hope thereby to shift off the Beam, but stand out against all, and leave the success to God, Rom. 3.8. I once met with a godly Man, who being in great heaviness under the sense of the hardness of his heart, was tempted to adventure upon some great sin, and then his heart would melt, and break presently: But the Lord graciously preserved him, and wrought in him that tenderness, in a great measure, which he desired; whereas yielding to that temptation, had been the way, to have been hardened, by the deceit of sin; as that young Man Dr. Preston speaks of, who being in much anguish of spirit, for his wicked course of life, and often resolving upon a course of Reformation, was tempted to do but once more as he had done, and then he should never be troubled more: He yielded to the temptation, and he was never troubled anymore as he had been, but was given up, to work all iniquity with greediness. We see then, it is God's sole Prerogative to bring Good

out of Evil; and (as I said) Soul-health, out of Soul-sickness. But this way we ought to abhor: Only, when this comes to be our sad condition, we ought to do as Manasseh did, 2 Chron. 33.12, 13, When he was in Affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly, —And prayed unto him. He besought the Lord, and he prayed, that is, he prayed, and he prayed, and humbled himself greatly. So did Peter, Matth. 26. ult.

Thus ye see, there are some means we ought not to adventure upon, in hope to make use of them, for the prospering of our Souls.

2. There are some other means, which ought immediately, and daily (though at sometimes more solemnly than others) to be made use of, according as we find that we have contracted any guilt, or defilement upon our Souls, either great, or small, more or less, and that is in the renewed exercise of Repentance, and Faith, to apply ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, that he would wash us, and purge us both from the one, and the other.

(1.) In the renewed exercise of Repentance, and godly sorrow, realizing the sad consequences, that may possibly follow, and are very likely to follow the least sin that is slighted, and indulged. Thus Job 42.6, Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust, and ashes. He was no vile person, he had not committed any gross sins; but guilty he was of many unadvised speeches; of some mixture of that corruption, which is contrary to that grace, wherein he was so eminent, I mean of impatience; and of distrustfulness, as to God's delivering him. These were his failings, and for these he renewed the exercise of his Repentance, even to abhorring himself, so as he was vile in his own eyes, whilst he was precious in the eyes of God. This is a great Purger, 2 Cor. 7.11, For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, &c. Jam. 4.8, Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

2. In the exercise of Faith, that draws, and purges. Hereby virtue is drawn from Christ: As that Diseased Woman said, and found it by experience, when she touched him. It was the touch of Faith, by which her fountain of blood was stopped, Mark 5.28, 29. Thus faith also purifies, Act. 15.9. That which we have Mal. 4.2. is very considerable to this purpose. Christ is said to be the Sun of Righteousness: And when he ariseth, and shineth, upon the Soul, he ariseth with healing in his wings. What are these wings? The wings of the natural Sun, are the beams of the Sun, whereby light and heat are conveyed from the Sun. And the wings of the mystical Sun, the Sun of Righteousness, are the Gospel of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ. These are the healers, Ezek. 47.8. There were the waters of the Sanctuary, which healed the waters of the Sea. When these waters have free course (according to what the Apostle prayed for, 2 Thes. 3.1.) so as they meet with no stop in the mouths of the Ministers, nor in the hearts of the people, their healing efficacy will evidently appear. It is said indeed in the fore-mentioned chapter of Ezekiel. v. 11. that the miry places were not healed. In such places, where the water hath not its free course, but stops, it mingles with the softer parts of the Earth, and makes Mire. So the truths of the Gospel, though they meet with no stop in the mouths of the Ministers; yet if they meet with obstructions in the hearts of the hearers, so as the motions of the Spirit are not observed, and the operations of the Spirit resisted: Then corruption mingles even with the word itself, turning the freeness of the grace of Christ into wantonness, and the efficacy of his grace into laziness. This makes a miry, polluted, dirty Soul. Therefore as ever we desire that our Souls should prosper, and thrive as a watered Garden, according to that promise, Jer. 31.12. See that these waters have a free passage: Let faith be exercised upon those truths, which hold forth the freeness, and riches of the grace of Christ: For those are the truths, the Prophet saw in his Vision, represented by those waters. And let this be in conjunction with the exercise of Repentance. This is the way, by the Spirit of grace, working with these truths, whereby Souls are healed and purged, 1 Pet. 1.22, Seeing ye have purified your Souls, in obeying the truth,

through the Spirit. These were the truths, by obedience whereunto, their Souls were purified.

This is the way, whereby the Lord first begins to heal, and purge the Soul. For this I shall give you but one place of Scripture, but it is a place to be taken notice of. It is 2 Corinth. 5.19. Wherein note three things.

(1.) God intending, according to his Eternal purpose, to heal some sick, quicken some dead, save some lost Souls, declares his purpose to do it, by way of Reconciling them to himself. This he will do, before they shall be possessed of that Salvation, he hath chosen them unto. His method is first to purge their Souls, mortifying that enmity that is in their hearts, both against his ways, and their own good, and so to reduce them to terms of Reconciliation with himself, and make them willing to be Reconciled unto him.

(2.) How God will do this, [God was in Christ.] The Divine Nature assumed the Human Nature, and so in, and through Christ, God-Man, in one Person offers terms of Love, and Peace to them, as the most effectual way to prevail upon them, and to bring their Souls about to him.

(3.) But in what peculiar way will he more transcendently manifest this grace, and mercy? The Text tells us, he will do it [in not imputing their iniquities;] proposing, and promising a full, and everlasting pardon, of all sin, never to be called in, if his terms be accepted of: And the sinner being made willing to be Reconciled unto God. Thus he subdues the heart, conquering it by Love. And thus the work of purging, and cleansing the Soul is begun, Luk. 7.47, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. And as thus it is begun, so upon a failure, it is renewed, and continued. When a Soul that is Diseased, and polluted, is awakened to apply himself to Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, in the exercise of Faith, and Repentance, making way, that the waters of the Sanctuary, the Spirit of grace, and the Gospel of grace may not be stopped in their course, but have a

free passage into the Soul, the hope of Reconciliation with God is raised greatly, and that stirs up the Soul to purify himself, 1 Joh. 3.3, Everyone that hath this hope, purifieth himself. Observe that [He purifies himself.] This is necessary: For as Physic is most effectual to purge out corrupt humors, when Nature works with it (for it is to no purpose to give it to a dead Man, and when Nature is quite spent in a sick Person, it comes too late.) So it is here. The Soul that thus applies itself to Christ, will find his blood to be a healing, purging, sin-mortifying blood. But in applying ourselves thereunto, our own thoughts, and affections; our own endeavors, and resolutions against all occasions of sin, against the first risings of sin; and we must apply ourselves to what mortifying means we find prescribed, and have been found to be of use to others. All these we must set on work, and then the Spirit of God, will work with us, Rom. 8.13, — if ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the Body, ye shall live. And doing thus, we may be said, To purge ourselves, as 2 Cor. 7.1. 2 Tim. 1.21. If we do thus, We shall be Vessels of honor, fit for the Master's use: That is, our Souls shall prosper.

This is the first thing, that I have to commend unto you, as ye mind the well-fare, and prosperity of your Souls, to mind this. There is another kind of Physic, to be made use of, as the matter requires, and that is Cordials; for the healing of a fainting Soul. This may be spoken unto hereafter; when I have first spoken unto what is, most times, to be made use of, betwixt this of Purging, and that of Cordials.

SERMON VIII.

2. The next thing that I shall take notice of, as necessary for the health, and well-fare of the Body (which as the Lord shall enable me,

I shall apply to the point in hand) is the observing of a good Diet; with respect to the choice of meats, such, as by experience, have been found, best agreeable to the Nature, and Constitution of the Body; and in proportion, suitable to the natural heat of our stomachs, for Concoction, and Digestion. This is a great means of health, especially for such as are naturally weak, and infirm. For, usually, as is our Food, so is our Blood; as is our Blood, so are our Spirits; and as are our Spirits, so are our Bodies for health, or sickness; for strength, or weakness. Now, as I told you, what in a natural way is for the health and well-fare of the Body, is, in a spiritual way, applicable to the health, and well-fare of the Soul. I showed you, that it was so, in that which I spake last unto. I am now to show, it is so in this. In order hereunto, we must take notice, that as God hath provided (and that, with great variety) Food and nourishment for the preservation of the Natural life of our Bodies: So he hath, for the preservation of the Spiritual life of our Soul; and that suitable to the degree that our Souls have attained unto. Heb, 5.13, 14, Milk for Babes, Meat for strong Men. Food that endures to Eternal life, Joh. 6.27. Such Food as is a Feast, whereupon the Soul may feed, and fare deliciously every day, Isa. 25.6, — a Feast of fat things, a Feast of Wine on the Lees, &c. This is a matter we are much concerned in. That we know both our Privilege, and our Duty herein, something must be said to each of these four Particulars.

1. What that Food is, which God hath provided, for the health, and prosperity of our Souls.
2. What those Means are, whereby that Food is conveyed unto us.
3. Something, by way of argument, to quicken our Spiritual Appetite after it.
4. Something by way of Direction, how to feed upon it, so as to receive that nourishment from it, which our Souls stand in need of.

1. For the first of these. That Food which God hath provided for us, is Jesus Christ himself; but Jesus Christ especially as Crucified.

(1.) This Food is Jesus Christ himself. For the proof of this, consider, that Jesus Christ is said to be The tree of life, Revel. 2.7. And the Hidden Manna, verse. 17. Both which were Types of Christ.

(1.) He is said to be The tree of life, in allusion to that tree, Gen. 2. which was called the Tree of Life, not for any Natural, or Physical excellency in it, to preserve life, more than other Trees, but only as it was a Seal of the Covenant of works; a conditional Seal of that Eternity of Life, which Adam might with all fullness of confidence have expected, if he had persevered in faithfulness to what was required of him. But it is upon another account, that Jesus Christ is called, The Tree of life, because he hath life in himself, and quickeneth whom he will, Joh. 5.26. And with the Food that he affords, nourisheth, and preserveth that life (where he hath quickened it) unto Eternal life, so that it never runs into death. Revel. 22. He is said to be a Tree of Life, on both sides of the River of the Water of Life. But one Tree, yet reacheth to both sides of the River; so that all, from what quarter soever they come, may receive Food, and nourishment from him. And though but one Tree, yet it bare twelve kinds of Fruit, which setteth forth the variety of Spiritual privileges, and graces, which Jesus Christ hath to give forth for the prosperity of the Soul, according to all its concernments. Thus as he is the Tree of Life, he is for the Food of our Souls.

(2.) He is so, as he is said to be, The hidden Manna, Rev. 2.17. Manna, ye know, was their Bread in the Wilderness forty years together. It is said, Psal. 78.25. to be Angels Food, whether for the excellency of it, that it was for them to have fed upon, if they had stood in any need of it: Or whether it was prepared for them, by the ministry of Angels; This need not be disputed. This is certain, it was a Type of Christ, who saith of himself, That he was the living Bread that came down from Heaven: And he is said to be, The hidden Manna; possibly alluding to that Pot of Manna, which was hidden in

the Ark of the Testimony, pointing at Christ, as hidden Food, altogether unknown to the unbelieving World, who never had so much as a real taste of the unsearchable riches of his grace, of the efficacy of his Death, or the power of his Resurrection. But as it was in reference to Manna: All those that in the exercise of Faith did eat of it, under that consideration, as a Type of Christ, it was spiritual meat to them. So the water out of the Rock, to all those that in the same manner, under the same consideration, did drink of it, was spiritual drink, 1 Cor. 10.3, 4. Even so is Jesus Christ, at this day, and will be to the end of the World; his flesh will be meat indeed, and his blood will be drink indeed, to all those that feed upon him by faith. And this leads me to the second Particular.

(2.) That Jesus Christ is this Food, which is appointed for the nourishment of the Soul, as he is a Crucified Savior. Even as we read of the Manna, Numb. 11.8. that it was prepared to be eaten, by being first ground in the Mill, or beaten in a Mortar, and so baked in a Pan. And as the Rock was smitten with the Rod of Moses, before the water gushed out, so it was, at first, by God's appointment, Exod. 17.6. And the Paschal Lamb was roasted at the fire, before it was eaten. Even so Jesus Christ was wounded for our transgressions, smitten of God unto death, that so he might be spiritual Food for Souls, according to the Father's appointment. This was the ground of Paul's resolution, He determined, to know nothing, (i.e., to make known unto them nothing, comparatively) but Jesus Christ, and him Crucified. And indeed the first comfortable sight that a humbled sinner hath of Christ, when his heart works after him, for the life and Food of his Soul is, as he was clothed with his Garments of Blood, made a Curse for sinners, as obedient unto death. This was always the scope of Paul's preaching, first to set forth Christ as Crucified, Gal. 3.1. So he preached him, and so he desired that those who were his hearers might receive him. So the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, wherein spiritual Food is administered to a believing Soul, the scope thereof is to show forth the Lord's death, till he come, 1 Cor. 11.26. And this upon the highest ground of reason, for as Jesus Christ, by his blood redeemed our Souls from a state of spiritual death, to a state of

spiritual life, breaking down the partition-wall, not only between Jews, and Gentiles, but also between God and Sinners, Eph. 2.13. So he purchased thereby, not only a full discharge from the guilt of sin, by the imputation of his own righteousness, but power to communicate, from his own fullness, continual supplies of spiritual life, for the daily progress of Soul-prosperity. For whatever we receive for our All, is to be received from Christ, as rising again from the dead, as ascending into Heaven, as making intercession for those that come to God by him, and whatever influence Christ in his Offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet hath into the life, and nourishment of our Souls, the foundation of all was laid in this, that Christ was a Crucified Savior. His intercession is effectual, because his blood speaketh, Heb. 12.23. As the great Prophet of his Church, he reveals the counsel of his Father, in all that is necessary to be known, to make us wise unto salvation, for that he merited this by his blood, Rev. 5.5, 6. Because the Lion of the Tribe of Judah was the Lamb slain, therefore he prevailed to open the book of God's secret Council, which no man else was found worthy to open, or to read, or so much as to look upon, so Rom. 4.24. His resurrection is for the declaring of our justification; but that is, because he first died for our sins.

Thus you have the second particular under the first head, proved unto you. That as Jesus Christ himself is appointed for the food of our Souls, so Jesus Christ specially as crucified. Even as at this day, those living creatures, which by God's allowance we feed upon, must first lose their own lives before they can be for support to ours; Even so it is here. No life from Christ, but by the death of Christ. Therefore saith Christ, Joh. 6.53. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

I now proceed to what in the second place, was proposed, which was to show.

2. What are the ways and means, by which Jesus Christ conveys this spiritual life unto the soul, that it may live and prosper.

ANS.

It is by the powerful working of his Holy Spirit, sprinkling all Ordinances, all Providences, and the Soul itself that receives nourishment from Christ, with the merits, and efficacy of the blood of Christ.

(1.) All Ordinances, in the use of them he is said, to set meat before us, Hos. 11.4. Meat which is compared to those things that are nourishing to the Body, Isa. 55.2, 3, Wherefore do ye spend your Money for that which is not Bread? &c. The word is compared to Honey (Psal. 119.103, How sweet are thy words to my taste? Yea sweeter than honey to my mouth) and preferred before it. Solomon saith, Prov. 24.13, My Son, eat thou honey because it is good, and the honey-comb, which is sweet to thy taste. And it is found by experience, that Honey is good, and the Honey-comb is sweet to the taste. But the word is sweeter than the Honey, which of its own accord drops from the Honey-comb, without any pressing, which is reckoned the sweetest of all. What is particularly, is said of the Promises, in a sense, is true of all the Ordinances, Isa. 38.16. In these things we live, in them is the life of our Spirits. The whole word is said to be The word of life, Act. 5.20. Thus the Lord feeds the Soul, according to that promise, Isa. 58.14. I will feed them with the heritage of Jacob their Father. What was that? It was the good things of the Land of Canaan; but not with them alone, but with that whereof they were a Type, the Heavenly inheritance, together with all things relating thereunto; the Promises, not only of this life, but also of the life to come. They were part of Jacob 's heritage, Psal. 147.19, 20, He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes, and his ordinances unto Israel, &c. This is one way, whereby food for the Soul is conveyed from Christ. Therefore it is, that Pastors, in their administrations, are said To feed the Church. It is upon that account, that they are called Pastors. Jer. 3.15. Act. 20.28. But this is only so

far, as they are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Otherwise, as there is a vanity in the Creatures, when God withdraws himself from them; so there is in Ordinances, Isa. 1.13, Bring no more vain oblations. As the merits of Christ purchase our Spiritual life, so they purchase a blessing upon that food, which is for nourishment of it: Rebecca may dress the Venison, but Isaac gives the blessing. So it is here, Exod. 20.24, In all places, where I record my Name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee. Gal. 2.8, He that wrought effectually in Peter, to the Apostleship of the Circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.

2. As in all his Ordinances, so in all his Providences, when sprinkled with the blood of Christ, there is likewise meat laid before us, even in every one of them, of what sort soever. Observable to this purpose, is that which we have Joh. 10.9, They shall go in, and out, and find pasture. Going in, and out, according to Scripture expression, set forth all the turnings, and various passages of a Man's life. So we understand that promise Deut. 28.6, Blessed shalt thou be, when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be, when thou goest out. Which is renewed again, Psal. 121.8, The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in. There is good feeding to be had in all these, even where it might be least looked for, Mic. 7.14. God promiseth, That he will feed the flock of his heritage with his rod. This is hard feeding; but blessed be the Lord, it hath proved, and will prove again, good and wholesome nourishment, when sprinkled with the blood of Christ: for thereby he hath purchased a fruitful, and sanctified use of the Rod. Christ being a Mediator in reference to the rod, as well as in reference to the word: when it is so, then dark and cloudy Providences falling down in showers, which (as we say) wet a Man to the skin, nay even reach the very heart, coming near unto it, and cutting deep into it, yet they drop fatness, and though they make the way foul, yet they make the Land fruitful, Heb. 12.10, God chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. Then meat is found in the eater, comfortable nourishment in the cross, when we can say, as Psal. 23 4, — thy rod, and thy staff comfort me.

3. As both in Providences, and Ordinances thus sprinkled, nourishment is conveyed to the Soul: So the Soul that receives this nourishment, must be sprinkled with the same blood. There must be (as Heb. 12:23.) a coming to the blood of sprinkling, in the exercise of Faith; for thereby it is, that food, or virtue to feed, is distributed into them all, and so conveyed unto the Soul. Even as the Root of the Tree draws sap from the Earth, and then concocts it, and sends it forth to all the boughs, and branches, which if they receive not, they wither; so it is here. It is not any one Providence, or Ordinance; no, if we take them all in conjunction together, that either in whole, or in part, convey any nourishment to the Soul, but as sprinkled with the blood of Christ; and made use of, as subordinate means in his hands, and as made effectual by the exercise of Faith, drawing in all our expectations of any Spiritual nourishment, from any of these, into Christ alone, 1 Cor. 10.4, They all drank the same Spiritual drink (for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ) They did all eat the same meat. Some had the food, but not the nourishment; they had not this sprinkling, for ver. 5, With many of them, God was not well pleased. So it may be with any of us, at this day: Though we have cause, with all thankfulness, to acknowledge, as David did, in another case, Psal. 23.5, Thou preparest a Table before me, in the presence of mine enemies. To their great grief, and vexation, who thought they had shut the Door, so as no Man should have opened it: but God hath opened it, so as none of them can, as yet, shut it; so that we are not scanted in provision for our Souls; yet as Pharaoh 's lean Kine did not prosper ever the better for their feeding in a Meadow, and eating up the fat Kine: Even so will it be with our Souls, unless we feed upon Christ. In the use of Pasture, and all other means of feeding, they will still be lean, and ill-favored. So that, if we were sensible of it, we should see cause to complain, as Isaiah doth, My leanness, my leanness, Isa. 24.16. God will deal with us, as he did with them, when he gave them the food they lusted after, though they had it, yet he sent leanness into their Souls: Instead of nourishing them, a deadly consumption came along with it, as Num. 11.33. Pray that we may be delivered

from this Judgment, that we may not (as it is said in our common Proverb) starve in a Cook's shop. And this leads me to the;

3. Third Particular: What arguments are there to quicken our Spiritual appetite to this food? Of many that might be given, I shall only mention these three.

(1.) This is food, that may easily be compassed. Many are put hard to it, for a subsistence for themselves, and their Families. Eccl. 6.7, All the labor of Man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. But it is not so here; this is prepared, ready for us, Matth. 22.4. I have prepared my Dinner: mine Oxen, and my Fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. And freely offered, it is but, Come, and eat, Isa. 55.1, 2. 'It is true, we are commanded to labor for this food, more than for anything else that the World affords, what need soever we stand in of it, Joh. 6.27, Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you. But it is with a labor like that of Adam in Paradise, sweet, easy, and delightful. The very laboring after it, affords more content, and satisfaction to the Soul (truly so called) than any Creature-comfort whatsoever, Prov. 3.15, 16, 17.

(2.) There is no other food for our Souls but this; we must feed upon it, or starve. Anything that God appoints, may supply the want of bodily food. Deut. 8.2, 3, — Man doth not live by Bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth Man live. But nothing can supply the want of Christ. They that feed upon anything else, expecting any Soul nourishment, do but (as they Isa. 44.20.) feed on ashes. And indeed the complexion of some Men's Souls, shows what their diet is, so Earthly, &c. As young folks under some bodily Distemper, eat Chalk, or Lime, &c. How ill do they look? Make the best of it, To feed upon anything else is but perishing food, Joh. 6.27. And as well may we think that fishes of the Sea may live in the Air, or the beasts of the Field in the bottom of the Sea, as that the Soul may live, and prosper by anything, either Providences, or Ordinances, without feeding upon Christ in them.

(3.) There needs no other food, Joh. 6.55, For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. And as all the sweetness, desirableness, and matter of nourishment that is in the meat, is for the health, and welfare of the Body: So whatever is in Christ, and whatever Christ is, (and Christ is altogether lovely) quantus, quantus est, all is for the life and health, strength and prosperity of the Soul. Joh. 10.10. It is said, He came into the World, that is to live, and die in the World, to do and suffer, what was to be done, and suffered, that dead Souls might live, and living Souls have life in abundance; that is, might live, and prosper.

Whether we consider Christ in his Person, or in his Offices, we shall see in both, that there, and there alone, food is to be had for our Souls.

Before I mention either of these, I shall first lay before you this Proposition.

That whatsoever may encourage a doubting Sinner, experimentally under clear convictions, that there is no possibility of Salvation, in an Unregenerate state, and fully satisfieth him, that all Salvation is to be had in Christ, and without him, no Salvation at all; whatsoever I say, may encourage such a Person, under great uncertainties, whether Christ will accept of him, or no, to come unto him, to cast himself down at the footstool of his grace, into the arms of his mercy, to depend upon him, and abide in him for all, that may give him a Title to, and a fitness for Heaven. And,

(2.) Whatever may establish such a Person, having thus adventured his Eternal estate in the hands of Christ, in a good hope, through grace, that he shall receive such help and assistance from the Spirit of Christ, that he shall persevere unto the end, both in the love that God bears unto him, and in the grace that he hath wrought in him, so as the good work begun in him, shall be perfected: Where that is to be found which hath an influence into all this; there, certainly, food

is to be had, for the life, health, and prosperity of our Souls. This needs no proof, ye will all assent to it.

Now, that all this is to be found in Christ, and in him alone, will appear, whether we consider him in his Person, or in his Offices.

(1.) In his Person, as God and Man in one Person. This is the great mystery of Godliness, as hath been, heretofore, at large opened unto you, from 1 Tim. 3.16, Of all Gospel-mysteries, this is the greatest. That a lost sinner should have such a Savior, that is as verily Man, as God, and as verily God, as Man. That the Divine and Human Nature, that were, at first, at such a distance, should meet in one person. The serious consideration of this, hath much of Spiritual nourishment in it. It will appear to be so, when we have weighed these two things.

(1.) What the work was, which Christ came into the World to do. It was to be a Mediator between God, and Man. A Mediator of Reconciliation between a most holy God, most highly provoked: and Rebellious sinners, still continuing in their provocation. This was his great work, that was upon his hands, 2 Cor. 5.19, To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

(2.) That this affords great encouragement, so to come to Christ, as being, upon this account, able to save to the uttermost. Hereby we see, that what he either did, or suffered, though but in his human Nature, though but for a little while, the whole time of his continuing visibly in the World, being but 33 years (rather to speak exactly, but 32 years, and a half) was of infinite value and efficacy; which did arise from the Union of his two Natures; because the Person, though in the form of a Man, was the mighty God, that Did such things, and Suffered such things. Now this is a great relief to Faith; yea such may be the temptation, that a humbled sinner may be under, that nothing else can relieve, or afford any nourishment, so much (as we use to say) to keep Life, and Soul together. For suppose this to be the case, as once it was, of a godly Minister in this County, who died but this

last Summer. I had the Relation of it from himself, who was, for a time, in a great Agony, and this was his temptation: Why, said Conscience (and Satan too, who stood behind the Curtain) Thy sins deserve an infinite punishment, for thou hast sinned against an infinite God, and thou deservest Eternal death. And that Christ, in whom thou trustest, he being Man, and suffering only in his human Nature, he could suffer only that which is finite. And the time of his suffering was but short. How then can he by suffering so short a time, deliver from infinite suffering, and Eternal death? This, as he told me, was the temptation that lay upon him, and how he was relieved. Even thus; The Lord brought it to his remembrance, and set it home with a Divine impression upon his Spirit: That though Christ suffered only in his Human Nature; and though therefore all his sufferings were but finite; yet because the Human Nature was United, in one Person, to the Divine Nature; hence, what the Human Nature did suffer, though but for a time, was of sufficient value to ransom from Eternal death. In such a case, nothing else could have done it. Nothing else can support any Soul, in such a condition. But this may, and this will, if believed, and wrought upon the heart, that the Lord hath laid help upon one that is mighty, Psal. 89.19.

2. Consider Christ, in his Offices.

(1.) In his Priestly Office. He is a great High Priest, Heb. 4.14. Great, both in respect of his Satisfaction, and of his Intercession; which are the two special parts of his Priestly Office. From both which, much Spiritual Food, for the nourishment of the Soul, unto the highest degree of prosperity it is capable of, may be received.

1. From the satisfaction he hath made, to the justice of God, for all the wrong that sin hath done him, by the sacrifice which he offered, which was Himself, unto death. With this, God was well pleased, Eph. 5.2. And for this, he shall see the Souls of all his Seed to prosper, Isa. 53.10. Hereby his flesh became meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. This clearly manifests, that Christ is such an object for Faith to rest upon, as we may safely adventure our Eternal

state upon. For let any Man conceive himself in as sad a condition, as the fears of an awakened Conscience can suggest. Suppose he sees the guilt of all his sins before him, with all their aggravating circumstances, and apprehends God coming out against him, to require satisfaction, to his justice, for them all. This is a dreadful sight, but in the midst of all the height, and depth of that terror, which this may impress upon his Spirit; if God give in a sight of Christ, as the great High Priest, as he made his Soul an Offering for sin; this is enough to draw forth a hearty act of dependence upon him, as able to save to the uttermost. This supported David, when he was in great depths, that he had a sight of him, that in the Lord was plenteous Redemption, Psal. 30.1, 2. with verse. 6, 7. This was the relief of the hunger-bitten Prodigal, That in his Father's house was bread enough, Luk. 15.17. And it was the speech of a gracious Woman, of whom I have heard not long since, that upon her Death-bed, being under great uncertainties, as to her Eternal condition. Did not ye tell me, said she, to those that stood by her, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sins? And with that her Spirit Revived, and she slept sweetly in the Lord. This, indeed, may well satisfy Conscience, for it satisfies God himself; yea so far satisfy Conscience as to go boldly to the Throne of Grace, for what grace, or mercy soever is necessary, for the life, and health, well-fare, and prosperity of the Soul, Heb. 4.16, Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

2. As from Christ's satisfaction, which he made to the justice of God, whilst he was upon Earth; so from the other act of his Priestly Office, his Intercession which he makes in Heaven for sinners, much Spiritual Food for the nourishment of our Souls may be had. What should hinder the receiving of it, but our daily repeated failings, and often renewed infirmities? But against the guilt of these, Christ's appearing in Heaven for us, prevails, that even when the Law is broken, the Covenant is not broken; so that what Food for our Souls may be had from the Covenant (and there it is all to be had, 1 Joh. 2.1, 2, If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even

Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins.) His intercession is as effectual as his satisfaction, for he intercedes in the merits of his blood, Heb. 12.24, The blood of Christ speaketh.

2. To show further, That all in Christ is for the food and nourishment of the Soul, much, yea very much may be said of that, which his Kingly Office affords, and likewise his Prophetical Office.

For his Kingly Office, he hath an absolute Sovereignty over all, both Men, and Devils, Eph. 1.21, 22. Far above all Principalities, and Powers, &c. He hath all things under his feet. He is head over all things to his Church. Understand it of the Invisible Church especially, which is his Mystical Body, whereof he is the head. Eph. 5.23, For the Husband is the head of the Wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: And he is the Savior of the Body. This is full of Spiritual Food. I will instance only in three things, by which the prosperity of the Soul is exceedingly furthered.

(1.) As he hath power over Satan. This affords great relief to a conflicting Soul, that he both can, and will break the Serpents head, and tread him underfoot, Rom. 16.20. That in Manlius is memorable to this purpose, Satan (as he tells the story) appeared to a godly Man that was sick, in the habit of a Priest, with Pen, Ink, and Paper in his hands, and told him that he must confess all his Sins to him, he would write them down, and then he would absolve him. The Sick Man was stricken with fear (and no marvel) but recollecting himself, and perceiving who he was; If thou wilt write, saith he, write this first, The seed of the woman shall break the Serpents head, and with that, the Devil vanished.

(2.) As he hath Sovereignty over the Heart. He can take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, Ezek. 36.26. A great relief this, when the Soul is mourning over the hardness of his heart, to remember that Christ is exalted to be a Prince, to give Repentance, Act. 5.31.

(3.) As he hath the Keys of Hell, and Death, Rev. 1.18. A great relief to a troubled Soul, that is under the fear, first of Death; and then of dropping into Hell, when he is dead. Those that have obeyed the call, and are still obeying the call of Christ, they shall none of them die, till it be better for them to die then to live, for death is theirs, 1 Cor. 3.22. And for dropping into Hell, Christ hath secured them against that, Joh. 6.39, 40. Everyone that believeth on him shall have Everlasting life, and Christ will raise him up at the last day.

3. The Prophetical Office of Christ, is likewise a fruitful, food-bearing Office. He is engaged by Office, to make all his Seed wise unto Salvation, Isa. 54.13. All thy Children shall be taught of God. And he is faithful, who hath promised it, 1 Joh. 2.27, But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any Man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. Joh. 17.26, I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it.

This affords sweet, refreshing nourishment, I will instance only in two Cases.

1. When many things are heard, something at one time, and something at another from the word. And it may be something at this time, which is not understood, at least, not so understood, as that the heart is affected with it. Here is relief to be had; he can, and undertakes to teach the heart, Jer. 24.7, And I will give them a heart to know me, —for they shall return unto me, with their whole heart. Thus he taught David, Psal. 51.6.— In the hidden part, thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

(2.) When a Person walks in darkness, under many sad fears, whether ever the foundation be well laid for Soul-prosperity, whether ever he were brought into a state of Union with Christ, so as to receive the first principles of Spiritual life from him. Here from this Office of Christ, which is to reveal his Father's mind, in all things that we are concerned to know, there is relief to be had, Joh. 14.19, — but

ye see me. They were in Christ, their Union was begun, but they did not know it; but Christ undertakes, so as they will leave it to him, to take his own time, that one day they shall know it.

Thus I have showed you more largely, then at first I intended: That there needs no food for the Soul to feed upon, so as to prosper, but Christ alone. For as all that is nourishing in the meat, is for the health and well-fare of the Body; so all that is in Christ, is for the health, and well-fare of the Soul. I have very few words more to speak.

4. Of the fourth and last Point. Something by way of direction: How to feed upon this food, so as to receive that nourishment, which our Souls stand in need of. I shall only mention these four Particulars.

(1.) We are to apply ourselves to this Spiritual food, with a Spiritual appetite. Natural life desires Natural food. Appetite unto it, is called Hunger, as it desires meat, and Thirst as it desires drink. So it ought to be, where there is Spiritual life, after this Spiritual food, wherein we have both Spiritual meat, and Spiritual drink, Joh. 6.55, For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. And our appetite after it ought to be quick, and strong: We should be able to say as Isa. 26.9, With my Soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my Spirit will I seek thee early. i.e., I have most affectionately desired thee, in my most retired thoughts, and so I resolve to do. That's the sense: For when the Soul is said to do that, which nothing else but the Soul can do, it imports the strongest and highest acting's of the Soul in doing it. Now, though that which hath been said already might be sufficient thus to quicken this appetite. That there is no other food for our Souls but this; That they must feed upon it, or starve: Yet I shall farther add this: That we deliberately consider with ourselves, What work God requires of us, every day; and that we labor, with our hearts, to do it as we ought. The work of every day is great, in respect of the inward exercises of grace, when not clothed with any outward duty: As, To live by faith: To sanctify God in our hearts: To walk in the fear of the Lord: And when we awake, to be

still with God; setting the Lord always before us, &c. The external work of every day, is great also: The duties of Religion: The duties of our particular Callings, and Relations. All these ought to be done, so as to approve the sincerity of our hearts to God, and find acceptance with his Majesty. 2 Cor. 5.9, Wherefore we labor, that whether present, or absent, we may be accepted of him. The Apostle speaks of Epaphras, that he labored earnestly in his Prayers; Col. 4.12. And we are required, To do with our might, whatsoever our hand findeth to do, Eccles. 9.10. Now hard labor gets a Man a stomach, makes him both hungry, and thirsty. It will do so, in a spiritual sense, when we set ourselves to make something of Religion: To work, and walk with God every day, as we ought; we shall be even constrained to cry out, Who is sufficient for these things? We shall see, we need more spiritual food, for the nourishing, and strengthening of our Souls. This will quicken our spiritual Appetite after Christ, That we may be more and more strengthened in our inward Man by his Spirit, Eph. 3.16. That we may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, Eph. 6.10.

(2.) That in applying ourselves to this food, we manage the matter for our Souls, as discreet persons do, in making provisions for their Families, when the Market-day comes: They consider whether there be Bread-corn enough in the House, or whether anything else that is necessary be wanting; and so, according to their ability, they provide. So ought we to do in this case, we ought to consider what our Souls stand most in need of, that they may prosper. Some days we may find, we most of all want strength against one corruption; some days more strength against another. Some days we stand in more need of one grace, and sometimes of another: suppose of Faith, or Repentance, Meekness or Patience; and accordingly we ought to apply ourselves to our spiritual food, the Lord Jesus, for nourishment, and strength in that particular. Christ expects this, that we should be sensible of our particular wants: We read Luk. 18.35, 36. that a blind Man hearing that Christ passed by that way, cried out, Have mercy upon me, O Son of David. And verse. 40, 41. Christ asks him, what he would, that he should do unto him. Christ knew

what he would desire; but he would have him to particularize his wants. Thus we ought to apply ourselves to Christ, with a sense of what we want in particular. And because (as I told you) all in Christ is some way or other, for our spiritual food, both Christ in his Person, and Christ in his Offices: We should apply ourselves to that in Christ, which may most of all relieve our faith in seeking after that particular supply, which, for the present, we see we need, whether it be in his Person, or in his Offices, either as Priest, or Prophet, or King. When we know there is such a thing in such a Cupboard, when we go to it, the next way to find what we seek for, is to go to the Box, wherein it is.

(3.) What dispensation soever we are under; what mercy soever we have received, or are receiving; what cross soever we are exercised withal, or is likely to come upon us; what Ordinances soever we address ourselves to God in, we may spread the matter before God, and tell him our case, and our dependence upon him; and pray most for the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon all, that for the merit of his blood, it may be blessed unto us, so as it may afford some spiritual nourishment for our Souls; the power of his Holy Spirit working with them, and in them, and by them. It is he alone that teacheth to profit, Isa. 48.17. David knew this, and therefore he prayed, That he might feel the power of God in all, Psal. 62.1, 2, 3.

(4.) Do this daily, as the matter requires; Nature will decay, if not daily repaired. The Egyptian who had eaten nothing for three days, and three nights, was faint, but when he had eaten, his spirit came to him, 1 Sam. 30.12. So it will be with the new Nature, as Rev. 3.2. The things that are ready to die, if not fed with fresh supplies, Phil. 1.19. It was a sore affliction, which made the Church forget to eat her bread, Psal. 102.4. It is some strong corruption, that makes us forget our spiritual bread, as they did forget their resting place, Jer. 50.6.

I conclude all with this. Our needs, if we be sensible of them, we cannot but acknowledge, are very great, every day. That invitation, and encouragement is for every day, which we have, Prov. 9.5, Come,

eat of my bread, and drink of my wine: And Cant. 5.1, Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved. Therefore, come and eat every day, as we desire that every day our Souls should prosper.

SERMON IX.

A Third thing which I shall take notice of, as necessary for the health and well-fare of the Body, which I intend now (as the Lord shall assist) to apply to the Point in hand, is this; That we be well clothed. God hath given to every living Creature some kind of clothing, or other: Even to the Birds of the Air, and the Beasts of the Field. They could not endure the extremity either of heat, or cold without it. Adam and Eve when they were at first created, needed no clothing, but their own innocence; when they needed it, God provided it for them, before they did for themselves, Gen. 3.22. Cold, if extreme, is very prejudicial to Man's health, and may be so to his life. Paul reckoneth it among his great sufferings, 2 Cor. 11.27, — in cold, and nakedness. Therefore up and down in the Scripture, we find it spoken of, as a commendable act of charity, To cloth the naked, Isa. 58.7. Act. 9.30.

This is one thing then we ought specially to mind, as ever we desire our Souls should prosper, that (as the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. 5.3.) we may not be found naked. Now, the Scripture tells us, what the Garment is, wherewith the Soul that prospers, must be clothed, Rev. 19.8, And it was granted unto her (the Bride, the Lamb's Wife) that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the Saints. This fine Linnen, this Righteousness (<H&G>) comes under a double consideration.

1. The Righteousness which is wrought for the Soul by Jesus Christ himself, in his own Person, and is imputed to every Believer.

2. The Righteousness that is wrought in the Soul, by the Spirit of Christ, and is inherent in every new Creature. The one may be called, The outer garment, the other, The inner garment of the heart. So far as the Soul is clothed with this double garment of Righteousness, so far it prospers, and no farther.

Something must be said to each of these.

1. Of that garment of Righteousness, which Christ hath wrought for the Soul. This is that White garment Rev. 3.18. I counsel thee to buy of me, —white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. This is the only garment that gives a title to Heaven, Isa. 61.10, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. This is not like Saul 's Armor, that was not fit for David; it will fit every Soul, that really feels the want of it, and indeed, and in truth, is willing to put it on; and therefore, we are exhorted, Rom. 13.14, To put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In prosecuting of this Point, a few words to each of these Particulars.

1. Consider the materials whereof this garment is made.

2. That it is of absolute necessity that it be put on, else the Soul cannot prosper.

3. How it is to be put on.

4. What influence it hath into Soul-prosperity, when it is put on.

(1.) For the first of these, the materials whereof it is made, briefly thus. It is the Obedience of Christ, as Mediator, in doing, and suffering what God the Father appointed, and which he accepts in the behalf of all those, who are clothed with it; so as, upon that

account, they are delivered from the sentence of Eternal Death, which they had righteously deserved; and are accepted as righteous, unto Eternal Life, of which they were utterly unworthy.

Observe then these two things.

1. That God the Father accepts it, as full and perfect satisfaction to his Justice, for what ever was appointed for them to suffer by way of punishment, and curse for sin. It is said, 1 Pet. 2.24. That Christ his own self bare our sins in his Body, on the Tree. i.e., The punishment and curse due for sin. With this God the Father is well pleased, so that the Sentence of Condemnation shall never be executed upon the Soul that is clothed with it. And this he accepteth as a valuable consideration for all the wrong that their sins have done him, Eph. 4.32, — forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. It is said, 1 Pet. 4.8. that love to our Brethren covers a multitude of sins. i.e., It doth not strictly take notice of, but in silence passeth by many failings of others; especially those that concern ourselves. But this covers All, so that no notice is taken of them, so as (according to the sentence of the Law) to curse, and condemn such a Soul, Jer. 50.20, In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, shall the iniquity of Israel be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve. The book is crossed, all the black bill, that otherwise would have been brought in against it, whereof it could not have answered one of a thousand (i.e., none at all) is crossed. Well then might David say, Psal. 32.1, Blessed is the Man whose iniquity is covered.

2. God accepts it, in the behalf of all those that are clothed with it, for all that is required by way of perfect obedience to the Moral Law. It is said, Rom. 10.4, Christ is the end of the Law, for righteousness. Christ, i.e., Christ, and his Righteousness is the end of the Law, i.e., the perfection of the Law. Now the end of the Law was, to invest those that perfectly fulfilled it, with a Righteousness that would give a true right, and title to Eternal Life. But this the Law cannot do, by

reason of Man's weakness, being utterly unable to fulfil it; so that it is become a killing Letter, the ministration of death, and condemnation, 2 Cor. 3.6, 7. Now Jesus Christ by his obedience, hath brought about this perfection of the Law, perfectly fulfilling the Righteousness, which the Law required; for love is the fulfilling of the Law. Now Jesus Christ loved the Lord with all his heart, and with all his might, and his neighbor as himself. He failed not in the least of what was due either to the one, or the other. This he did, and none but he could do it; For though one sinful act in thought, in word, or deed, did break the Law, yet it is not fulfilled, but by perfect conformity unto it; and such a conformity there was in the obedience of Christ, Joh. 8.29, — I do always those things that please him.

This is the first Particular. The Materials whereof this garment of Righteousness is made; with which, if the Soul be not clothed, it cannot prosper, as we shall see by and by.

2. The Soul that is not clothed with this Righteousness, cannot, while it remains so, possibly ever be in a capacity of prospering. For sin hath made such a dreadful breach between God and Sinners, that he stands upon this: That though he will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy; the motive is only from the good pleasure of his own Will. Eternal Life, with all that is antecedent to it, and preparative for it, is his own gift: Yet, I say, God is absolutely resolved upon this, that he will have his Justice satisfied for all the wrong that sin hath done him. He hath also magnified his Law, and made it honorable, Isa. 42.21. Therefore he will have all the demands of the Law fully answered; and obedience thereunto perfectly fulfilled; else no spiritual good shall be given forth to any Soul, so as to make it live, much less to prosper, Isa. 59.2, Your iniquities have separated between you, and your God. Jer. 5.25, — your sins have withholden good things from you. Now this is done, by Christ's Righteousness alone. Therefore, it is of absolute necessity that it be put on, else the Soul cannot prosper.

3. The Garment of Righteousness is put on, only by a believing Soul, Rom. 3.22, Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe.

(1.) Upon every believing Soul, that being acquainted with the way of God, in bringing Sinners into a state of grace, and mercy; and knowing that God is just, and Righteous, as well as Merciful; knows that he cannot find acceptance with God, but he must be righteous, Hab. 1.13, Thou art of purer eyes then to behold evil —

(2.) Upon every Soul that knows, that every righteousness will not serve the turn, but it must be such, as the pure eyes of the glorious Majesty of God can see no defect in, Gal. 3.11, That no man is justified by the Law, in the sight of God, it is evident.

(3.) Upon every Soul that knows and bewails the imperfection of his own righteousness; and knows he hath reason to do so; though he were sure he had as much of all the graces that accompany Salvation, as ever Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob had. If this were all, this Soul knows, it would not avail him to stand before the Righteous God. No, his infinite wrath would come upon him, for all that, and consume him, Job 15.14, What is Man, that he should be clean, or he that is born of a Woman, that he should be righteous? 1 Sam. 6.20. Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?

(4.) A Soul that knows all this in some measure, and that the Righteousness is such a Righteousness as God will accept of, and so adventures his Eternal state upon the merits thereof; resolving, however Christ deal with him, in his strength, to keep fast his hold there, and to live and die adhering unto, and depending upon him. This Righteousness is upon every such a believing Soul. This Faith (though it may be more than a believing Soul knows) hath put on this righteousness, therefore it is called. The righteousness of faith, Phil. 3.9. The sins of a Believer are put upon Christ's account, and Christ's righteousness upon his, 2 Cor. 5.21. Faith being the only grace that receives it, as being peculiarly fitted for it; for no Man was ever

accepted as righteous before God for that, which he did himself; but by receiving that which Christ did for him. And Faith is the only receiving grace. Love lays out, but Faith receives, Joh. 1.12, To as many as received him, &c.

4. The clothing of the Soul with this Righteousness, hath a great influence into Soul prosperity. For consider,

1. This is that Righteousness alone, that answers all doubts, and fears, for want of such a righteousness, as might give acceptance with God, as to Eternal Life, so as to that, how vile soever they have judged themselves, yet being clothed with it, they stand without blame before God, Col. 1.22, In the Body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight. This alone satisfies Conscience; and well it may, for it satisfies God himself. In this, all the Scripture-Saints, in all Ages, have rested, being clothed with it. Abraham before the Law, Rom. 4. David, under the Law, Psal. 32. And Paul under the Gospel, Phil. 3.9.

2. This is that garment alone, in which there may be access with boldness, into the presence of God, even at the last day, 1 Joh. 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. Therefore much more in this day, Eph. 3.12, In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him. For this is a Righteousness wherewith (we may warrantably say so) God is more highly pleased, and which (of the two) finds more acceptance in Heaven, then the righteousness of the blessed Angels, that never sinned. For theirs is but the righteousness of a Creature; This is the Righteousness of God, Jer. 23.6, — This is his Name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.

3. This is Everlasting righteousness, Dan. 9.24. In this, Christ ever hath appeared, and ever will appear in Heaven, in behalf of all those, that come to God by him; and remains still of the same Eternal efficacy, for the applying, and forth-giving of all the price of his

Blood, all that thereby is purchased, for the health, well-fare, perfect and Eternal prosperity of the Soul, 1 Joh. 2.2. And he is the propitiation for our sins, &c.

Now lay all these together, and let them be well weighed, and it will be granted, because it will be found, that when once the Soul comes to have any degree of good hope, through grace, of its interest in it, and that it is clothed with it, that Soul will experimentally find, that this, above all things else, hath a powerful influence into its spiritual well-fare, and prosperity. For this keeps life in faith, and heart in hope; and enables the Soul to live in the exercise of them both, and in the exercise of Repentance, and keeps the heart warm with love to Christ. In the exercise of which graces (as hath been showed) Soul-prosperity doth consist, and is much promoted, 1 Joh. 3.3, And everyone that hath this hope, purifieth himself, as he is pure. Zech. 12.10, I will pour—the spirit of grace, and supplication, and they shall look on him, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him. —Luk. 7.47, — Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. 2 Cor. 5.14, 15, For the love of Christ constraineth us, &c.

Therefore, as ever we desire that our Souls should prosper, let us be much in the meditation of the Materials whereof the garment of this Righteousness is made, that we may distinctly understand it; and let every humbled Sinner, wrestling against the workings of his unbelief, and making out after an interest in Christ, adventure to apply it, and to receive it, as that which is freely offered unto him, Rev. 22.17, And the Spirit, and the Bride say, Come: and let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the Water of life freely. And so put it on, though by a weak and trembling faith; and continue still to do it, that so in due time, when the only-wise God sees it best for us, we may know we have it. This is the way to find rest to our Souls.

For consider but these two things.

(1.) That as the imputation of Adam 's sin, was the original of all ungodliness, and the undoing of all our Souls; so the imputation of this Righteousness to the Soul, and the clothing of the Soul with it, is the original of all the principles of godliness, which are the life, and prosperity of the Soul; for by the merit of his death, Christ purchased them all; and by his intercession, and pleading this, he applieth them all.

(2.) Consider this: That it is as great, yea and greater satisfaction to Christ himself, to see an humbled, conflicting Soul receive it, put it on, apply it, and plead it, for what grace and mercy soever it stands in need of; I say it is a greater satisfaction to Christ himself to see such a Soul do it, then it is to the Soul itself, that doth it; though he know he hath done it, so as is accepted, Isa. 53.11, He shall see of the travail of his Soul, and be satisfied. He accounts all the travails of his Soul, all his sufferings, all his obedience to the Law satisfied for, in this.

And thus much of that Garment of Righteousness which is wrought for the Soul, by Christ himself.

2. The Soul that prospers must be clothed with the Garment of Righteousness, wrought in the Soul, by the Spirit of Christ. The righteousness wrought in the Soul, is the same with that which is called Saving grace, and true holiness. It is called Righteousness, because it is the impression of God's Righteousness upon the Soul, in the exercise whereof, the Soul works unto God, as the chiefest good, and utmost end, by a right rule set in the Word: and therefore often expressed by Uprightness, and Sincerity. Every Soul that is clothed with the outward garment, the Garment of Righteousness wrought for him; is also clothed with the inward Garment of Righteousness wrought in him; though all are not so well clothed with it, as some are; but in some measure All are. For these two garments though they are distinguished, yet they are always worn together, and never divided. Where Christ is Righteousness to the Soul, he hath wrought this Righteousness in the Soul. He that puts on Christ, puts on The

New Man, which after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness, Eph. 4.24. Hence it is, that when those, whose Souls did prosper, are said to be righteous Persons, as Noah, Gen. 7.1. Abel, Matth. 23.35. Abraham, Isa. 41.2. Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luk. 1.6. And Lot, 2 Pet. 2.8. his Soul is said to be a righteous Soul. And when it is said, That the righteous shall shine as the Sun in the firmament, Matth. 13.43. And enter into Eternal Life, Matth. 25.46. We must understand it, that they were clothed with both these Garments, both that of Righteousness wrought for them, and that of Righteousness wrought in them. And whereas it is said, 1 Cor. 6.9, That no unrighteous person can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. We must understand it of those, who have not the double clothing of Righteousness: He that hath not both, hath neither: And he that hath the one, hath the other. And so far as a Man knows, that he is clothed with the One, so far he knows that he is clothed with the Other: and he that questions either, will question both. He that is in doubt that he hath not the One, is in doubt that he hath not the Other.

In the prosecuting of this point, something had need to be said to each of the four Particulars.

1. I shall show what the garment of Righteousness wrought in us, is; The materials whereof it is made.
2. I shall show, that without this garment, whatever profession is made of interest in that other Garment of Righteousness, which is wrought for us, the Soul cannot prosper.
3. That the better the Soul is clothed with this garment, the more it doth, and the better it will prosper.
4. Some Directions in reference to the clothing ourselves with, and well using of this Garment.

(1.) What this Garment of Righteousness wrought in us is, or the Materials whereof it is made. Ye may take this brief description of it.

It is that Heaven-born Principle of spiritual life, which contains in it, the whole seed of God, the universal principle of godliness, inclining the heart seriously to endeavor, that every known truth may be heartily submitted unto; every gracious principle exercised, every corruption mortified, every duty performed, every infirmity bewailed, the conversation in all things rightly ordered, every Providence improved, and all as in the sight of God.

Ye see this garment is made up of several pieces, I can do no less, and I shall do more than speak a little to each of them.

(1.) It is that Heaven-born principle of spiritual life, which contains in it the universal principle of godliness. As Original sin is a universal principle of Corruption, leavening throughout the whole lump of Man's nature: So this principle of Righteousness wrought in the Soul, graciously renews the whole Man, though not wholly. The new Creature is born at once, though it grows by steps and degrees: Therefore everyone that thinks, or desires to be clothed with it, must put on the whole Armor of God, Eph. 6.10. 2 Pet. 1.5, 6, 7, Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, &c. Col. 3.12, 13, Put on as the elect of God, —bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, &c. That's health, when the whole Body thrives.

2. It is such a principle, as inclines the heart seriously to endeavor to submit to every known truth, though contrary to former apprehensions, Act. 11.18, When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, &c. Joh. 1.47, — Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Weigh it well, and I suppose you will find the reason of it to be this, why Christ so highly honors him. Philip came and told him, We have found the Messiah. Nathaniel being possessed with prejudice, argues against it: Can any good thing come out of Galilee? Come, and see, saith Philip; and he did so. He took the right way to be informed: And notwithstanding his prejudice, is glad to find out the truth; and accordingly acknowledged it. That Christ indeed was the Messiah. This was a

Man in whom the Heaven-born principle wrought according to its nature, endeavoring to submit to every known truth.

(3.) That every grace may be exercised in its season. Herein, as in all things else, it willingly complies with the whole Will of God, which when the principle is infused, commands the exercise, 1 Joh. 3.23, And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another. It is the exercise of faith, and love that is there enjoined.

(4.) Every Corruption mortified, Gal. 5.24, They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affection, and lusts. They are said, To have done it, because it is part of their every days work.

(5.) Duties performed: Of our general Calling, what relates to the worship of God, so as God may be served acceptably, Heb. 12.28, — Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence, and godly fear. And Duties of our particular Calling, and that with diligence. The same principle that inclines, To be fervent in Spirit, (in duties of worship) inclines not to be slothful in the business of our Calling, Rom. 12.11. And not only with diligence, as some are; They work hard, but do not pray hard. This is not diligence upon principles of Conscience. But this Heaven-born principle we are speaking of, inclines to diligence, upon a Religious account, that we may abide with God, in our Calling, 1 Cor. 7.24, Doing the work thereof heartily, as unto the Lord, Col. 3.23.

(6.) Conversation rightly ordered. When the root of it is in the heart, but the fruits of it are to be expressed in our conversation, Phil. 1.11, Being filled with the fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, &c. Those that have this principle within, have this character, That they are upright in their conversation, Psal. 37.14,— to slay such as be of upright conversation. This is that which the Apostle means, by walking with a right foot, Gal. 2.14. Ordering our steps aright, Prov. 4.26, Making even paths for our feet, Heb. 12.13. That is, that one action bear proportion to another, and all good, according to the

rule, Gal. 6.16. Not turning aside to any crooked path. Psal. 125.4, 5. In order to this, those that do indeed mind their Soul-prosperity will, or should propound to themselves these three questions.

1. An liceat? May I do this, and not sin?
2. An deceat? Is this becoming a Christian? May I do this, and not wrong my profession?
3. An Expediat? May I do this, and not give offense to others?

This Heaven-born principle, let it have its full liberty of working, it will incline the heart to this. And this is the way to order the conversation aright: So as to inherit that promise, Psal. 50.23, To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God.

(7.) Providences improved. Psal. 107.43, Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. Puzzled, and astonished such a Soul may be sometimes, at the strange dispensations of God, but not offended, so as to face about. Still he holds on his way, in the paths of Righteousness, Mic. 6.9, The Lord's voice crieth unto the City; and the Man of wisdom shall see thy Name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

(8) All this in the sight of God, 2 Cor. 2.17, But as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ. That God may be pleased, 1 Thes. 4.1. And we approve ourselves to God, 2 Cor. 5.9.

2. It is impossible the Soul should prosper, or be indeed in any capacity of prospering that is not clothed with it: For where this Inner is not, the other Outer garment is not. It is so, as I told you, that this Garment of Righteousness wrought in us, and that the Righteousness wrought for us, are never separated the one from the other, so that the Soul that is altogether destitute of it, is in a Christless state, naked, and destitute of all spiritual clothing, Rev. 3.17. God, at first, sent forth Man into the World completely

appareled with it, being created in righteousness and true holiness: but Satan, by his subtlety, stripped him of it, and he became naked, Gen. 3.7. And thus he continues, till by the powerful Word and Spirit of Christ, his heart is made willing to come unto Christ, to receive him, rest upon him, and abide in him. Till then, he is utterly destitute of all the materials of this garment. Some indeed, of whom there may be some hopes that they have obeyed the Call, and are come to Christ, are but poorly clad, even half naked, which is a sad sight. But these have none at all, they are naked all over, though insensible of it. They have no life at all, nothing of this principle, 1 Joh. 5.12, He that hath not the Son, hath not life.

3. The better the Soul is clothed with this garment, the more it doth, and the better it will prosper. For consider.

(1.) The more we have of this Garment of Righteousness, the more the Soul is brought into and preserved in its right temper: The health of the Body consists much in its right constitution, when it is not so oppressed with corrupt humors, but that it can relish its ordinary food, and can do that work that is to be done, by God's appointment, wherein it is set, and is not indisposed, by sickness, or weakness. Into such a right temper, this righteousness, when the principles of it are exercised, doth bring the Soul. This prevails against the ill humors the Soul is subject unto. It prevails against those noisome lusts that war against the Soul, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Pet. 2.11. It is compared Eph. 6.14. to a Breast-plate, which if it be good, preserves the principal parts of the Body; the Breast, wherein the vital parts of Man are closely couched together. So this righteousness preserves the principal part of a Christian, it keeps the Conscience pure, the Soul undefiled; so far as it is exercised, it will keep a Man from his own iniquity, Psal. 18.23. That which by nature he was more prone unto, then to others.

(2.) The more we have of it, and the better we are clothed with it, the more the Soul will be carried after God. It raiseth the heart above all worldly enjoyments, so that it cannot settle upon them, as others do,

Psal. 4.6, 7, There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. When David's heart was brought into its right temper, he could really, and truly, and with much warmth, and strength of affection, say, Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth, that I desire besides thee, Psal. 73.25, 26.

(3.) The more we have of it, the more the Soul is fitted for Communion with God. By the first principles of it, a man is brought into a saving relation to God: but by their exercise and increase of it, it is fitted for a more sensible Communion with God. There must be a suitableness between neighbors that enjoy Communion together. Now the more we have of this, the more suitableness there is in us, to the holy nature of God, 1 Joh. 1.7, But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

(4.) The more we are clothed with it, the greater worth and excellency is put upon all natural, and civil righteousness. Every action, so much as of this principle is exercised in it, so much it turns to the welfare, and prosperity of the Soul. Duties of the second Table are turned, as it were, into duties of the first, as Heb. 13.16. To do good, is a duty of the Second Table; and Sacrifice (whilst it was a part of God's worship) a duty of the First. But when in doing good to others, we act upon principles of Religion, and what we do to Man, is out of love to God, and out of respect to his authority over us, and to testify our thankfulness for his goodness unto us; it is through Christ, acceptable to God, as an act of Religion, and so as advantageous to keep the Soul, in a thriving, prospering frame, Jam. 1.27, Pure Religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the Fatherless, and Widows in their affliction—

(5.) The more we have of it, the better evidence we have for Heaven; True, though we had as much as any Man living, it could not be our Plea for Heaven. The honor of that is reserved to the righteousness which Christ hath wrought for us: But it is our evidence, 2 Tim. 4.7, 8, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept

the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness. And when we are under the apprehensions of death, next unto the Righteousness of Christ; this will be of greatest use unto us, when all things else fail us, Isa. 38.3, Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart —

4. A few words of the last part. Some Directions in reference to the well-clothing of ourselves with, and well using of this garment. Consider:

1. The desires of our Souls should be working still after this clothing. There is a blessing promised to them that hunger, and thirst after Righteousness, Matth. 5.6.

(1.) These desires ought to be unlimited. Our desires should be stinted as to what is necessary and comely for the clothing of our Bodies, but not so, after this clothing for our Souls, we should be filled with the fruits of righteousness, as the phrase is, Phil. 1.11. This is the most genuine property of this principle, To desire (as we are still under the command) to grow, 1 Pet. 2.1, 2, — That ye may grow thereby.

(2.) These desires ought to be ruling desires. Whatever in the World the Soul desires with greatest earnestness, our desires after this Righteousness must rule it. If desires after anything else be prejudicial to these desires, they ought to be mortified, as irregular desires. Yea a gracious heart will bless God, if he cross them in it, as heartily as ever David did, 1 Sam. 25.32, 33, Blessed be the Lord— which hath sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood —Still maintaining that resolution, that we ought not, we cannot, we dare not do anything against this Righteousness; but for it, 2 Cor. 13.8.

(3.) These desires ought to be constant, and not as some (as we say) when they are in a good mood; but as David saith, Psal. 119.20, My

Soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments, at all times. The righteousness of many is but like the morning dew, Hos. 6.4.

2. This garment should be put on, and worn every day; otherwise, the moths will eat it; the corruption that is in the heart, will spoil the beauty, comeliness, and usefulness of it. Therefore, though it was a vanity in that rich Man to cloth himself in Purple and fine Linnen every day; yet it is our duty, that our Souls be clothed every day, with the best garments we have, Luk. 1.75. That we should serve God, In holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life: And then, every day to our dying day; that so they may be best at last: For this garment is like the garments of the Children of Israel in the Wilderness, which were never the worse for wearing; no more is this: For to him that useth well that which he hath, more shall be given, Matth. 25.29.

3. If at any time there be any rent made in this garment, it must be immediately stitched up, and mended, else the rent will be made worse. Thus understand me. If there be any rent made in our humility by pride; in our meekness by our passionate Distempers; the like may be said of every piece of this garment, of every particular grace; this must be made up, by humbling ourselves before God; applying ourselves to Christ both for pardon, and more supplies from his fullness. So David, when his faith failed in the exercise, as he confesseth, Psal 73.2, My feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped. He had lost his standing by faith, and judged by sense, ver. 2. For this, (immediately upon the discovery) he humbles himself, ver. 21.22, Thus my heart was grieved— so foolish was I — And this made up the rent, and then his heart was carried out, as strongly after God, as ever, verse. 25.26, Whom have I in Heaven but thee, &c.

4. By way of encouragement, To get all we can, and to preserve all we get, and to make the best use of it, every day, consider,

(1.) Though this garment be not such a covering, as that garment of righteousness, which Christ hath wrought for us, for that covers from the guilt of sin, yet this is a covering garment too.

(1.) From that dis-respect, which meanness of Birth, or breeding, which deformity of Body, or a poor, and low condition in the World, may, and often doth, expose a Man unto, especially with those that value Men by the outside. See what a covering this is, Prov. 12.26, The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor. Heb. 11.38, Of whom the World was not worthy; though they were worth little, or nothing in the World.

(2.) Though this garment covers not the guilt of sin before God, yet it covers the nakedness caused by sin, before Men. Sin makes a Man naked to his shame, in the eyes of Men: as Exod. 32.25, And when Moses saw the people that they were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame, before their Enemies.) As whatever deformity there is in a Man's Body is seen by those that see him naked. This garment when it is worn, as it ought to be every day, covers this nakedness. As Humility covers the nakedness of Pride; Meekness, the nakedness of rash, and unadvised Anger, stirred up, either without cause, or when there is cause, without measure. Sobriety, the nakedness of Intemperance; A free, and liberal disposition, the nakedness of Earthly-mindedness, and Covetousness. Self-denial the nakedness, of Self-seeking, &c. Rev. 16.15, Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and Men see his shame.

(3.) In some sense, it covers the nakedness caused by sin, from the eyes of God; so far, that though he hates the sin, and often corrects severely for it, yet when he sees this garment, he is not extreme to mark against such, Psal. 130.3, The most righteous Soul sins in many things. Yet, If any Man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous, 1 Joh. 2.1. It is this righteous Soul, clothed with the garment of this Righteousness wrought in us, over which Christ will cast the Garment of that Righteousness, which he

hath wrought for the Soul, Psal. 32.2, Blessed is the Man, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. But, who is this Man? The next words tell us, In whose spirit there is no guile. i.e., That hath this righteousness, which Christ works in the Soul. Therefore as we desire, that our Souls should prosper, let us gird this garment close about us; and follow after this righteousness while we live, and we shall be able to lay hold upon Eternal Life, when we die, 1 Tim. 6.11, 12. And then Soul-prosperity will be perfected.

SERMON X.

4. There is yet one thing more for the preservation of Bodily health; especially for those that lead a sedentary life, and that is moderate exercise, for the motion, and stirring of the body. For thereby Natural heat is stirred up, and increased: Ill humors abounding, are lessened, and spent: Concoction, and distribution of meats furthered. The contrary evils, by excessive neglect thereof, coming upon many, like an armed Man.

Answerable to this, there is an exercise, which is exceeding profitable, and every way much more necessary for the well-fare, and prosperity of the Soul. It is the exercise of godliness, that is good for all things: upon that account, the Apostle exhorts Timothy unto it, whose Soul he desired might prosper, even as his own, 1 Tim. 4.7, — Exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

I have, several times, touched on this point, already, since this subject was entered upon, and somewhat largely, in the third Discourse upon it. And very often heretofore (as there hath been occasion) for several years by-past, as possibly, some have taken notice of. And to use the words of the Apostle, 2 Pet. 1.13. I think it

meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance of it: For this, in a manner, is all in all, for the well-fare, and prosperity of your Souls: which I should rejoice to be, in the least, instrumental, to promote, among you. I think I may say it (and say it truly) that if anything, at any time, saddens my thoughts of death, which my age, and many infirmities give me warning of, and command me to prepare for; this is like to be it, To think that I leave no more of you (for ought can be discerned) to be spiritually alive; and therefore in no present capacity to be prospering in your Souls. And of those that are (as it may be hoped) spiritually alive, they are so few, that mind this, as the one thing necessary, that the principle of Spiritual Life in them, might be lively, active, and vigorous, that so their Souls might prosper, one day after another, one day as well as another, and most of all at last. Ye may think of this, when I am with you no more. Ye will pardon this short digression, and not take that with the Left Hand, which is offered with the Right;

But to speak to that, which is now to be spoken to, I mean, The exercise of godliness; which (as I said) will be really found to be all in all, for the promoting of Soul-prosperity. Though something hath been said to it, since I entered upon this Text: yet the fuller handling of it, I reserved on purpose till now, conceiving it would most properly fall under this head.

The Particulars to be spoken to are these.

1. What the exercise of godliness is, and wherein it doth consist.
2. Wherein it ought to be exercised.
3. Wherefore we ought to be so much in the exercise of it, if we desire our Souls should prosper.
4. Then a few things by way of argument, to quicken us, to be up, and doing in this matter, as we desire the Lord should be with our Souls, either while we live, or when we die.

1. For the first of these. What it is.

ANS.

It is the setting of every principle of godliness about, and keeping it close unto its proper work, that so it may bring forth its proper and peculiar fruit in the season thereof. As it is said of every Man, that God appoints him his proper work, Mar. 13.34. So he hath for every principle of godliness, and the highest acting thereof, is the perfect work of that grace.

I shall give you some instances.

1. In Patience, Jam. 1.4, Let patience have its perfect work. The proper work of that grace, is quietly, willingly, and cheerfully, to submit to the holy, and righteous will of God, in all afflicting Providences. Where, and when there are no trials, nothing to be suffered, nothing to be endured, there is no work for patience: As there was none in the state of Innocency, and will be none in the state of Glory. But in this present state, God hath several ways to exercise, and several ways doth exercise this grace in his people; so as there are few or none, but fall into divers trials, and temptations, as is more than intimated, Jam. 1.3. As that poor youth in the Gospel, fell sometimes into the fire, and sometimes into the water. So God changeth his dispensations: The trial is sometimes in this, and sometimes in that. Now, I say, the proper work of Patience under them all, how many soever they be, of what kind soever they be, how near soever they come, how deep soever they cut, and how long soever they continue, is to keep silence before the Lord, to sanctify his name in all, as holy and righteous, faithful and gracious; believably waiting for a blessed issue to all. This is the proper work of patience, and in doing this consists the exercise of patience as we see it exemplified in Job cap. 1, &c.

(2.) Faith hath its peculiar work, 2 Thes. 1.11, The work of faith, with power. And the proper work of faith, is to receive Jesus Christ, and

rest upon him, and his righteousness, for a full discharge from the guilt of every sin,, and for acceptance with God as righteous, unto Eternal Life: And to carry the Soul to Jesus Christ daily, for supplies of grace, for strength against temptations from the World, the Flesh, or the Devil; and for ability to perform what is daily required of us, in those relations wherein we stand, and in that condition, wherein we are, so as we may be enabled to hold on cheerfully, and comfortably in the race that is set before us, notwithstanding all the difficulties, we meet with in our way: Thus it was Prophetically promised of, and to the believing Jews, Hab. 2.4, The just shall live by his faith; and to all believers to the end of the World: Still keeping heart in their hopes, for the accomplishment of whatever God hath promised; notwithstanding all the real improbabilities, and seeming impossibilities, that be in the way. This is the proper work of faith, and in doing of this, consists, the exercise of faith. Thus did Abraham, Rom. 4.19, 20. For we walk by faith, not by sight, 2 Cor. 5.7. We do not enjoy all that is in the promise but in the exercise of faith, we wait for it.

(3.) Repentance hath its proper work too; which is to bring forth fruits meet for Repentance, suitable to the nature of such a gracious principle, Matth. 3.8. Such as heart-humbling, and afflicting the Soul with godly sorrow, for sin; joined with the turning of the heart against every known sin, so as we may attain to the sense of God's reconciliation with us, and keep our hearts in a reconciled frame toward his holy Will in all things. This is proper work for this grace, and in doing hereof, consists the exercise of Repentance. See this exemplified, Jer. 31.18, 19, — turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after I was turned, I repented, &c. And Psal. 51.

(4.) Self-denial hath its proper work. To deny self-will, self-ends, self-interest in all worldly concernments whatsoever, and how far soever they stand in opposition unto, or in competition with, the command, interest, and glory of Jesus Christ. And are inconsistent with the Conscience of that duty, which we owe unto his Majesty.

This is the work which God hath appointed unto this grace, Luk. 9.23, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself. And in doing of this work, this grace is exercised. See it exemplified in Moses, Heb. 11.24, By faith Moses, when he came to years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh 's daughter.

(5.) The grace of Fear, hath its proper work, to keep the heart in a holy awe of God, sensible of his all-seeing eye upon us, regulating all our thoughts, words and actions, as becomes the presence of so holy a God. This is the proper work for the fear of God, Prov. 8.13, The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. And in doing of this work, consists the exercise of this grace, 2 Cor. 7.1, — Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. i.e., In the exercise of this grace. See this exemplified in Joseph, Gen. 39.9, How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God. And in Nehemiah, chap. 5.15, But, so did not I, because of the fear of God.

(6.) The grace of Meekness hath its proper work: And that is in the just moderation of the passion of anger; preventing, or quickly cooling, and subduing, all undue heats; so as this unruly passion may never be moved without cause, or when there is cause, not without measure, to walk in the exercise of this grace. And because there are so few examples of it among the proud, froward, unbroken-hearted generation of Men, we are called upon to learn it of Christ, Matth. 11.29, Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of heart. This being such a grace, as no Christian, without the exercise of it, can possibly walk worthy of his Calling, Eph. 4.2, I—beseech you, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness, and meekness.

(7.) The grace of Charity hath its proper work: Ye have it described, 1 Cor. 13.4, 5, 6, 7. In doing this work, the grace of Charity is exercised, and the command of Christ so far fulfilled, who commands us, To walk in love, Eph. 5.2. And requires it of us, 1 Cor. 16.14, That all our things be done in charity.

These few instances show, what it is to live in the exercise of godliness. Ye see, here are gracious principles in the heart, and gracious acting's, suitable thereunto, and issuing from them. And these are the things wherein the prosperity of the Soul consisteth.

2. Wherein ought we to exercise ourselves unto godliness?

ANS.

In everything we do: Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we ought to do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10.31. Though we are necessitated often to change our Actions, yet we ought never to change our End. This must be always the highest, and most supreme End. And this can never be done, but in the exercise of the principles of godliness. It cannot be expected, that I should instance in everything. I shall instance in those things that may be most comprehensive. Consider then,

1. That these principles ought to be exercised in those spiritual outgoings, and holy acting's of the inward Man, which are immediately acted upon God, and raise the heart Heaven-ward; though not drawn forth in acts of instituted worship.

(2.) As they are drawn forth, exercised, and, as it were, clothed with the external duties of Religion; or anything else, wherein the visible part of Religion (as far as it may be visible to Man) doth consist.

1. For the former. In the spiritual outgoings, and holy acting's of the inward Man. So as to do something toward the performance of that great duty enjoined, both in the Old Testament, and in the New. Isa. 8.13, Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 1 Pet. 3.15, But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. But how is this? That God, who is the God of all grace, should sanctify all those whom he sets apart for himself. And that he should sanctify his own name, in vindicating it, from those low, and unworthy thoughts that Men have of him: This is somewhat easy to be apprehended: But how shall a poor Creature loaden with many

infirmities do it? For the present, I cannot think of any better way than this, even in the spiritual out-goings, and acting's of the principle of godliness, immediately upon God himself, so as to compose our affections, thoughts, purposes, desires, resolutions, and all the inward workings of our hearts in a suitable proportion to those glorious discoveries, that God hath made of his name, as infinitely holy, wise, just and gracious, present everywhere, seeing all things, observing all things, ordering all things according to the counsel of his own will. The instance, the Prophet Isaiah gives, makes for this: For when he had called them to their duty, To sanctify God in their hearts, he directs them how to do it. [Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.] Thus the Prophet Habakkuk sanctified God's Name, in his heart, drawing in all his hopes, and all his comforts, into God alone, resolving to rejoice in him, when he had nothing else to rejoice in, Hab. 3.17, 18. according to Phil. 4.4, Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. This is that which is required in the first, and great Commandment; wherein indeed (if we consider it well) we shall find all the other Commands wrapped up; for always before we do anything amiss against God, we either think amiss of God, or think not of him at all. Therefore as ever we desire our Souls should prosper, let us be careful, at all times, in all places, thus to sanctify God's Name in our hearts. And whatever our condition be, how sad soever it be with us, still both think well, and speak well of God, as such a God ought to be spoken of, and thought of. Satan hath baffled many eminent Persons, when they have been under trial, with temptations contrary to this. Jeremiah, in his distress, lets fall such sad words as these, Chap. 15.18, Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? Wilt thou be altogether unto me, as a liar, and as waters that fail? And David being (as we say) under hatches, said in his haste, (though upon second thoughts, he called in his words again) that he had served a hard Master, and that all his exercising himself unto godliness, had been in vain, Psal. 73.13.14. It concerns us therefore, (as we desire our Souls should prosper) so to exercise the principles of godliness, we have received, that even when the dealings of God with us, are most contrary to our desires, and hopes,

to think of God according to that representation which he makes of himself, Exod. 34.6, 7, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, &c. We may observe, that David, (when he acted like a Man after God's own heart) did so, Psal. 119.68, Thou art good, and doest good: Yet how it was with him, in his outward condition, we see verse. 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me: and verse. 28. My Soul melteth for heaviness. So Psal. 31. after he had expressed his sad condition, verse. 9, 10, I am in trouble; mine eye is consumed with grief: My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: Yet he breaks out into admiration; verse. 19, O, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them, that fear thee? And yet he saw but little of it laid out upon him; Psal. 52.1, — the goodness of God endureth continually.

This is the first way proposed, wherein we ought to exercise ourselves unto godliness.

2. I proceed to the second thing proposed. How these principles of godliness ought to be exercised, as they are to be drawn forth, and clothed, as it were, with the External duties of Religion, or anything else wherein the visible part of Religion (so far as it may be made visible to Men) doth consist.

And here note two things, as to External duties of Religion.

1. That we ought to exercise ourselves in them all.

2. That these principles of godliness ought to be exercised in them all.

1. For the former. Those that really mind, as we all ought to mind the prosperity of our Souls must compass them all, and take them all in, in their walk, though not all at once, nor all, it may be, every day, but all in their Season. It is a dangerous, yea a desperate thing, To perform one duty, that we may dispense with ourselves in the neglect of another. As to perform duties in conjunction with others; and give ourselves, on that account, a dispensation to neglect personal, and

private duties. It is our duty (as 1 Tim. 5.21.) to do all things without partiality; especially all things in Religion. This I desire may be considered. There is no Duty or Ordinance of God's own appointment, which he hath not blessed at one time, or other; to someone or other, of his People; so as sometimes they have found him in one, when they have not found him in another. As for instance, God hath been found in Prayer, private Prayer, Psal. 34.6, This poor man cried unto the Lord, and he saved him out of all his troubles. In praying with others, Act. 4.31, And when they had prayed, the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. In private reading of the word, as the Eunuch, Act. 8.27, 28. In hearing the word, Act. 2.37. 1 Cor. 14.24, 25. While the two Disciples that went to Emmaus, were discoursing of Christ, Christ himself drew near to them, and went with them, Luk. 24.15. And their hearts burned within them, while he talked with them by the way, and opened the Scriptures to them, verse. 32. So in singing, 2 Chron. 20.22, And when they began to sing, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, &c. That is, He cut them off suddenly, as when Men are cut off by their enemies that lie in ambush against them; and so accomplished what was foretold, verse. 17, Ye shall not need to fight in this battle, stand still, and see the Salvation of the Lord. Memorable is that story of the Protestants of Mountaban in France, who, when they were besieged (being compelled to take up Arms in their own defense) always when they went out to fight, went out singing of Psalms, which was so terrible to the Enemy, that, in the end, when they heard them singing, which they usually began, before the Portcullis was drawn up, and the Gates opened, their hearts failed them, and away they would run, crying out, They come, they come. And as this is true, that there is no duty, but that at some time, or other, God hath been found in it, by some or other; so they have sometimes found him in one, when they could not find him in another. Cant. 3.1. compared with ver. 4, She sought him in private duties, and found him not; then she went to the public, and found him whom her Soul loved. Daniel was, certainly, a Man of much prayer, Dan. 6.10. and no doubt found very frequently, sensible acceptance with God; but yet it seems God

reserved the fullest manifestation of his love to him, till, to his daily prayer, he added extraordinary prayer, with fasting. Dan. 9.3. compared with verse. 23. And it was so with Cornelius, as ye may see, Act. 10.39.

Thus we see the encouragement is great to take up every duty in its Season. Experience tells us, that the efficacy of co-ordinate means is in conjunction. As for the preservation of bodily health, there must be both Food, and Raiment, and Rest, and the use of Physic sometimes, as the matter requireth; no one of these is sufficient. So it is here. Let none think, his Soul will prosper, though he use this, or that Duty; if any one known to be a Duty, be willingly neglected in the season thereof. It is the policy of Satan to separate one duty from another, that so we may not be uniform in our endeavors. Few are so bad, as to use no means at all, and few are so faithful to God, and their own Souls, as conscientiously, to use All. This half-doing, proves many a Souls undoing. Therefore as we desire that our Souls should prosper, we should, as Caleb, follow fully after God. And in all, as Psal. 63.8, Follow hard after God. As thriving Children do suck, and draw hard sometimes at one Breast, and sometimes at another.

2. As we ought to exercise ourselves in them all; so we ought to exercise the principles of godliness in them all. A few words to this.

1. In general thus. The principles of godliness ought to be exercised in them all, so far as God's gracious ends, and purposes in, and by them (so far as they are revealed to us) may be answered, and attained. I shall instance in these two.

(1.) This God hath revealed as one great end to be carried on, in and by them all, that this holy and blessed name may be sanctified in them all, Lev. 10.3. This is done, when the inward frame of our hearts is such, when we address ourselves unto God, as that God himself may thereby see that we believe him to be a great God, a gracious God, a God in all respects infinitely glorious. This is due unto him,

Psal. 89.7, God is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of the Saints: and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. And this David resolves upon, Psal. 5.7, But as for me, I will come into thy house, in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear, will I worship toward thy holy Temple. So far as our hearts attain this temper, so far we answer God's end. This is to serve him acceptably, Heb. 12.28.

(2.) This likewise God hath revealed as his intent, and purpose, that thereby he may communicate unto the people of his choice, those spiritual gifts and graces, whereby they may be enabled, to that work he hath appointed them, and be prepared for that happiness, he hath promised them. Exod. 20.24, In all places where I record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. Psal. 133.3. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, and life forever-more. The attainment of this end should be so deeply engraven upon our hearts, that as the Bee moves from one flower to another, to gather materials for Honey: So should we from one Duty to another, for supplies of grace, suitable to our present necessities. This was David's end, Psal. 63.1, 2, 3, O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee, &c. For this end, principles of godliness should be exercised to attain the fore-mentioned end: And if so, we are so much the more likely to attain this end, the more grace we bring in exercise to a duty, the more grace we are like to receive in, and by that duty, Matth. 25.29, Unto everyone that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance. Thus, in general.

2. As we desire our Souls should prosper, principles of grace should be exercised in all the fore-mentioned duties. I will instance only in one, and that is the duty of Prayer; both because that is, and ought to be our every day's work: We ought in everything, both great and small, to make known our requests to God, believing his universal Providence; that as there is nothing so great that is above his Power, so there is nothing so little that is below his Care. This we are enjoined, Phil. 4.6, Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; let your requests be made known unto God. And also, because the better this duty is

performed, the better all other duties will be performed: It hath an influence upon them all, and is often put for the whole worship of God, Rom. 10.12, 13, Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. And besides, all the Providences of the day are sanctified by it, 1 Tim. 4.5, For it is sanctified by the word of God, and Prayer. But then we must know this, that if we desire prayer may be a sanctifying duty to us, our hearts must be sanctified for it, and grace must be exercised in it. I shall not mention now, what graces must be exercised, but only in general, so that the heart may be wrought off from all evil frames, and composed, and fixed, the inward thought thereof gathered in, and the affections raised, so as feelingly, and awfully, believably, fervently and sincerely we may pour out our desires unto God, and be able to say, as Lam. 2.18, Their heart cried unto the Lord. And Psal. 119.145, I cried with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord. This is one thing intended in that expression of Praying in the spirit, Eph. 6.18. The spirit of a Man is an active thing, and whatever it doth, good, or bad, it doth to purpose. Such gracious workings of the Soul in prayer, are the very Soul of prayer; and then the Soul prospers by prayer, Jude, verse. 20, And ye, Beloved, building up your Souls in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Then are our Souls edified, when we thus pray, in the exercise of the graces of the Holy Ghost.

This is all I shall say to the former of the two last things proposed. That in order to Soul-prosperity, grace ought to be exercised, in all the External Duties of Religion.

I now proceed to the latter. As ever we desire our Souls should prosper, the principles of godliness ought to be exercised in all other things, wherein the visible part of Religion, so far as it may be made visible to Men, doth consist.

And here I shall only speak a little to three particulars.

1. In all Providences. It is seldom or never seen, that any of the people of God continue in the same condition, as to the things of this

World, any long time, without some alteration, more or less. God is pleased, many times, to bestow many good things upon them, which he never intended they should always enjoy, Psal. 102.10, — Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. Now, as we desire our Souls should prosper, principles of godliness should be so exercised, as to bear all such changes, so as to avoid the snares, and temptations accompanying them. To this height St. Paul attained, that he could thus manage all conditions, Phil. 4.12, I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, &c. Want, or no want; having nothing, or possessing all things, make no change of the frame of my heart. So he saith, I am instructed in everything. This is the excellency of the principles of godliness, That though truths, and falsehood; things morally good, or morally evil, are at such a distance, that the same principles cannot turn to either side: yet Poverty and Riches, a full Estate, and a poor and mean Estate, liberty or restraint are not at such a distance, but that the same gracious principle can apply itself to both the one, and the other; and may be exercised so as the Soul may prosper, and may be spiritually a gainer, both by the one, and by the other. And as we desire our Souls should prosper, these principles ought to be exercised, that we may find it so. For so far as corruption mingles with the Providences we are under, so far, if there be any grace in the heart, it will be so far from thriving, that it will wither, and decay. It is observed, that when things go well with a Man in his outward condition, if corruption be not kept at a distance from it, the Man will grow proud, and passionate; high, and self-conceited: Earthy, and Selfish, impatient of being crossed in anything; having, as he finds, wit enough for everything else, and that therefore everyone must stoop to him. And so, when things go cross, and, as the usual phrase is, The World frowns upon him; if his corruptions be not kept at a distance from his condition, the Man will grow fretful, discontented, unthankful for what he hath, envious at those, with whom it is better than with himself: And (to speak all in a word) sin will sit light, when crosses fit heavy. Therefore, it is of absolute necessity, that, as ever we desire our Souls should prosper, this (with the uttermost of our care) should be looked unto.

1. That when the good hand of God is for us, so as all our Goings out, and Comings-in, the beginning and ending of everything we undertake, succeeds well, according to our desires, that then these principles of grace ought to be exercised, that nothing come betwixt Jesus Christ, and our hearts, but that the more we have of the World, the more our hearts may be in Heaven. As Jacob was then desirous to be in Heaven, when God had given in the unexpected sight of his lost Son, his best Son, and that as great as he was good, Gen. 46.30, And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face. Jam. 1.10, Let the rich Man rejoice in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. [when he is made low.] i.e. When his heart is low and meek, humble and patient, when his condition is full, and high; though perhaps not so in itself, but as compared with others, who had the same opportunities for the World, that he had; reckoning of all that he hath, but as food that perisheth; but as a flower that fadeth: accounting this as the chiefest excellency of the plentifulness of his Estate, that he hath a larger opportunity of doing good; and of doing more for God, then he could have had, if his portion had been as little, as once it was. Thus to exercise grace, To bear such full a cup without spilling, argues not only the truth, but also the strength of grace; and is the way to make the Soul prosper, as fast as the Estate.

2. In all our civil converse with Men, principles of godliness must be exercised, with righteousness, and sobriety, Tit. 2.12, Yea with all courtesy, and kindness. 3 Epist. of John, v. 6. Gaius is exhorted, in his kindness to the Brethren, that travelled up and down, about the affairs of the Gospel, when he brought them onwards on their Journey, to do it after a godly sort. That which the Apostle presseth on aged Women is the duty of all, both old, and young, Tit. 2.2, That the aged women be sober, grave, temperate. Zech. 14.20, 21, In that day shall be written upon the Bells of the horses, Holiness to the Lord: And every Pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness to the Lord. This was written upon the High-Priests Mitre, as he was a type of the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, who was holy, and undefiled. That which Men are thereby taught is this, That the meanest things of

common use, should be holily used: In all we do, we should act as persons consecrated to God; that are not our own, and therefore we ought to glorify God, with our Bodies, and with our Spirits, which are God's, 1 Cor. 6.20. Even in our natural actions, Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10.31. Now I have told you already (and I told you the truth) that God is not glorified (it will appear so one day) but when the principles of godliness are exercised. Neglect hereof, even in these natural actions, is charged upon Men, as their sin. Jude, ver. 12. That they did feed without fear.

3. In all company's: So as where ever we are, we always keep our hearts under the awe of God, Eph. 4.29, Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your mouth. Col. 4.6, Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with Salt. But of this, more under another head, in the next use of this Point.

SERMON XI.

I Come now to the third Particular; The reasons why these principles of godliness ought to be stirred up: So as to be set about, and kept close to their proper work; that they may bring forth their proper, and peculiar fruit, in due season, and that in order to Soul-prosperity.

1. This is that which specially falls under the authority of Command. Observe it, and you will find, that when the Scripture speaks to professing Christians, the principles are supposed to be infused; and the exercise is specially required, as Eph. 4.24, Put on the new Man, saith the Apostle. Not by Conversion, that is supposed; for he owns them as faithful Brethren in Christ, Ch. 1. verse. 1. But put them on,

for operation, for exercise. The new Creature, the first day of its birth, is a new Man: It is born at once, though it grows up by degrees; and every particular principle of godliness is a member of this new Man. Put them on so, as ye may have them ready, and nothing may be wanting, when Providence calls for their exercise; so that Your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, Luk. 12.35. Thus also, Eph. 6.10, Put on the whole armor of God. Be ready furnished to break through whatever snares, and temptations ye may meet withal, in running that race, which God hath set before you. Several instances were given, wherein this is required of us, in the third exercise upon this subject.

2. They are given for this very end, Ezek. 36.27, I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. Therefore that inference is rational, Gal. 5.25, If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. These spiritual principles are that spiritual stock, which God hath given us, to drive on our spiritual trade withal, for converse with God, which cannot be attained, unless they be exercised. As unless principles of Reason be exercised, which are for making human society useful, there can be no dealing, nor profitable converse between Man, and Man. 1 Sam. 21.14. What shall I do with a Mad-man, said Achish, for so David feigned himself to be; and therefore he drove him away. This should be seriously considered of, for these two things we find.

(1.) That for neglect of this, in not answering God's end herein, that those that have lived most highly in the favor of God, have met with many a brush from the hand of God, Luk. 1.20, Thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak—because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. Num. 20.12, Because ye believed not me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel: therefore ye shall not bring this Congregation into the Land, which I have given them. It was not for want of faith, either in the one, or in the other, that the hand of God was so heavy upon them, but for want of the exercise of faith.

(2.) This we find, That though it be true, God will reward every good Man, for every good work: And he hath a Book of Remembrance, for that purpose, Mal. 3.16. Yet this is true, That how good soever, a Mans actions be, in their own nature, and for the kind of them, there is no reward to be expected from God, farther then grace is exercised in them. Alms-giving, Prayer, and Fasting's are good works, and commanded of God, but if these principles of godliness be not well exercised in them, see what becomes of them, Matth. 6.2, 5. And on the contrary, Whosoever shall give to drink, unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a Disciple; Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward, Matth. 10.42. This should have some weight with us, that God will call us to account, what spiritual Trade we have driven with our spiritual stock, Luk. 19.15.

3. The neglect of this exercise is that which Satan watcheth for, and will be sure to improve to his advantage, and our prejudice, Matth. 13.25, While Men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat. It seems he knows our slumbering fits, yea without doubt he doth: for he knows not only what orders Men observe in their walks abroad, what company they keep, what discourse they have with them, and how they spend their time, but also, much of what they do within doors: For though he have not a key to the heart (that is God's prerogative) yet he stands, as it were, in the Room by. Though he knows not our thoughts, yet when they are clothed with words, as when we are at Prayer, he observes our Petitions, and Confessions; and can make a shrewd guess thereby, what the frame and temper of our hearts are. It cannot be denied, but that he may know as much by us, as any Man may do, and more too. Now Solomon saith, Prov. 20.5, Counsel in the heart of man is a great deep. i.e. The thoughts, designs, intentions, and purposes of Men are a great deep, like deep waters, where it is a great way to the bottom; a Man cannot easily dive into them, to find out what they are; but an understanding Man, by prudent and constant observation of them; of what they do, and what company they keep, of the words that fall from them, and of their looks, and gestures, may give (and sometimes have given a

conjecture not much amiss of them. And if so; then Satan much more, who goes about continually, studying always as he goes, observing, and diligently considering Men's temper, and dispositions, Men's calling and conditions; and as he finds things, so he casts about what is fit to be done to such or such a Person; how to fit the Key for the Lock, and which way he may assault him so, as his temptation may take; and where he may have most advantage against him. And this he knows, that so far as he can discern that spiritual slothfulness creeps upon a Man, and that the exercise of these principles is neglected, so far the day is his own. He knows there is nothing but this armor of God, whereby he can be resisted; and this too as put on, and kept in exercise, Eph. 6.13. Upon this account, unless we are willing to betray our Souls unto him, that was a murderer from the beginning; we ought to be constant in this duty, and put on this armor of God, both on the right hand, and on the left, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 6.7.

4. It is in the exercise of these principles, each of them, in their season, that the protecting, supporting, comforting presence of God, may (upon Scripture-grounds) be expected, and enjoyed in every condition, so as our Souls may prosper in it, and by it, whatever it be. We read, Jer. 9.24. That the Lord exerciseth Loving-kindness, Judgment, and Righteousness in the Earth, and that, in these things he delighteth. Now those whose hearts are most busied in this exercise, have the clearest grounds from the word, that he will exercise them in their behalf, 2 Chron. 16.9, The eyes of the Lord run to, and fro, through the whole Earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them, whose heart is perfect toward him. His Providential eye is over them, Job 36.7, He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous. He looks to them by night, and by day, that no evil touch them, Job 5.19, He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea in seven shall no evil touch thee. i.e., So as to hurt thee. Psal. 105.15, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm. i.e., In their spiritual estate, and what concerns, the well-fare of their Souls. That's secured to them that live in the exercise of the love of God. That's the good that Text speaks of, Rom. 8.28, All things shall work

together for good, to them that love God. The good whereby their Soul prospers. But let a Man through the prevalency of his corruptions, disuse himself from this exercise, and suffer these principles of godliness to lie, as it were, Bedridden, choked, and oppressed by the principles of ungodliness, and his own Conscience (if it be awake) will give check to his hopes, if he expect that God should favor him with success, either in his goings out, or comings in, the beginning or ending of anything he takes in hand: God may do it, and often doth it; but it is more than any such person hath ground to expect, or can expect, with any good hope to speed, or plead with God for. It is observable, what we have in the fore-mentioned place, 2 Chro. 16.9. in the latter part of the verse. Herein, saith the Prophet to the King (to King Asa it is that he speaks) thou hast done foolishly: Henceforth, thou shalt have wars. Now wherein was it, that he had done foolishly? See ver. 7. It was in this, that he had not exercised his faith, that great principle of godliness, in relying upon the God of Israel, but had relied upon the King of Syria.

5. There is no way like this, for the growth and exercise of these principles, wherein, as I told you in the explication of the point, the prosperity of the Soul consisteth especially: It is well known, they do not always prove the richest Men, that set up with the greatest stocks, but those that exercise themselves with diligence, honesty, and integrity in their Callings, though they begin with little. And likewise, The best Wits do not always prove the best Scholars, unless their study be answerable to their parts. It is even so in this case: For certain it is, that less degrees of grace, well managed in daily exercise, will thrive and grow, when greater measures neglected will wither, and decay, Prov. 10.29, The way of the Lord is strength to the upright. *Via ad pietatem est intra pietatem.* But for this, I refer you to what was spoken in the third Exercise, on this subject. Only I add, that as Natural life becomes more lively by action, even so are the principles of spiritual life, Joh. 1.49, *Believest thou for this? Thou shalt see greater things then these,* said Christ to Nathaniel. This is according to Luk. 19.17. *Thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten Cities.*

6. The reality of the in-being of these principles in the Soul, is by this means best discerned; if ever they be sensibly felt, it is when they are most in exercise. When is a Man more likely to know that he hath faith, and that he hath Repentance, then when he is actually believing, and repenting? Consider well, 2 Pet. 1.5, 6, 9, 11. In the fifth and sixth verses, he exhorts not only to add more degrees, but also to exercise those principles they have received. In ver. 9. he tells them, that if they do not, they may, in all probability, in a little while, not be able to see anything of God, that is sanctifying and saving in their Souls; they may forget that ever they were purged from their old sins, and question all again. But if they add the exercise to the principle, then (as verse. 11.) an entrance may be administered to them abundantly into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is worth our noting, that the Scripture speaks of some that are far from the Kingdom of Heaven, touched with no care of Religion at all, but, like Gallio, care for nothing of that nature, Eph. 1.13; Ye who were sometime afar off, are made nigh. Of others, that come near, but never enter, taking up with a half-conversion, Mar. 12.34, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God. Of others that enter, but with great difficulty, 1 Pet. 4.18, And if the righteous scarcely be saved —they make a hard shift to get thither. But others, as ye see, in this of Peter enter in with full Sail, triumphantly laying hold on Eternal Life. They are those (though perhaps all those may not) that add the exercise to the principle. They know in themselves by what they find working, stirring, and acting in their Souls, that as it is said of those, Heb. 10.34,— knowing in yourselves, that ye have in Heaven a better, and an enduring substance: that they have a right and title to Heaven, and when they die, they go to take possession of it.

Thus I have given you, what I had to say, as to the reasons, why we ought to exercise ourselves to godliness, and that by this exercise, Soul-prosperity is promoted, and that it cannot possibly prosper without it. I shall only add two words more.

1. For the time past, we may, if we look back, see the reason, why though these principles be of a thriving, growing nature, yet for all

that, they do not prosper as they ought. It is either because we deceive ourselves, and think we have them, when there is no such matter, or that we neglect the exercise of them, so as not to do that work, and bring forth those fruits they were given for; but we do with them, as that slothful Servant did with his Talent, Matth. 25.18. he digged in the Earth, and hid his Lord's money: For which he received his deserved doom, verse. 28, Take the Talent from him. Professing to live in the spirit, but walk only as Men, who have nothing but nature in them, as the Apostle chargeth it upon them, 1 Cor. 3.3. This is the great reason, if not the only reason, why they thrive no more. For to him that hath (i.e., useth what he hath) shall be given, Matth. 25.29.

2. For the time to come. If all that hath been spoken on this point, prove not like water spilled on the ground; if there be no cause to complain, as Isa. 49.4. I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught. But that some good impressions are made, and abide upon your hearts, as I hope there do, at least upon some; and that ye really and heartily mind your Soul-prosperity, then, in the strength of Christ, resolve upon this exercise: And that ye may make something of it, and have good success in your endeavors, resolve, every day, to apply yourselves to Christ, and pray as seriously, awfully, sincerely, affectionately, and believingly for ability to do it, as ye would do for Salvation itself; for the enjoyment of him in Heaven, whom your Souls love. Even as David (or whoever it was that composed the 137 Psalm) resolved to pray for Jerusalem, ver. 5.6, If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, &c. Better forget to pray for our daily bread, then for this. That's but for the well-fare of our Natural life, this is for the well-fare of our spiritual life.

Consider therefore.

1. That these spiritual principles, and spiritual ability to exercise them, are distinct mercies, and separable the one from the other; as ye have heard from the instances given of Zacharias and Moses. Moses so eminent for meekness, Job for patience, Abraham for faith;

though they abounded in the principle, yet sometimes they came short in the exercise.

2. That a heart, and ability to exercise them, is to be had from Christ; and from him alone, Joh. 15.5, For without me, ye can do nothing. We read Psal. 51.14. what David engageth unto; My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness: And ver. 15. we may see where he looks for strength to make good his engagement, O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. Here Paul had it, Phil. 4.13, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. And he exhorts all, that when they have put on the whole armor of God, and have every grace ready for exercise, yet then to Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, Eph. 6.10, 11.

3. Let this be thought on too: That though we ought to rest upon Christ, for his assistance herein, as if he were to do all, and we ourselves were to do nothing at all, yet we ought so to stir up ourselves, and exercise our most serious thoughts, and endeavors herein, as if no help at all were to be expected from him, Phil. 2.12, 13. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will, and to do.

Thus I have showed you (the expressions in the Text leading me that way) that what in a natural way is necessary for the health, and well-fare of the body, that, in a spiritual way, is as much necessary for the health, well-fare, and prosperity of the Soul. And this I have showed in four Particulars. I told you, when I entered first upon this use: That when, in the use of these means, all begins to be well within, the Soul begins to thrive and prosper. Yet it may, possibly, have its fainting fits; sometimes by reason of continued afflictions; sometimes from a deep sense of invincible infirmities. For the more of these gracious principles there are in the heart, and the more they are exercised, the more sad impression the least failing makes upon the heart. No marvel if it be with such as it was with Jonah, when the waters compassed him about, and the reeds were wrapped about his head; then, he said his Soul fainted within him, Jon. 2.5, 6, 7. And

David had like to have done so, when false witnesses were risen up against him. I had fainted, saith he, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living, Psal. 27.12, 13. Now, as when Nature is almost spent, and bodily strength fails, there is need of relief by some comfortable Cordials. As that poor Man, 1 Sam. 30.12. being faint, David 's Men gave him something, and then his spirits came to him, which, it seems, were departing from him. Now, as the Lord Jesus was very tender over those, that came from far to hear him, and had been three days with him, lest they should faint in their way homeward, and therefore he wrought a miracle to relieve them, Matth. 15.32. So without doubt, he is as tender to prevent Soul-fainting, Isa. 57, 15, 16, — to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me, and the Souls which I have made. Something therefore must be said to this. Therefore, though I cannot descend to particulars, (that would be too great a work) I shall only give some general rules, which may be indifferently applied to all cases. Let then every Soul that is ready to faint:

1. Do as Jonah did, in the place before quoted, chap. 2. ver. 7, My Soul fainted within, and I remembered the Lord. Remembrance implies dependence, Psal. 20.7, But we will remember the name of the Lord our God. This is prescribed for a fainting Soul, Isa. 50.10, Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Now we must know that the Name of the Lord, may have reference to that name, Exod. 34.5, 6, 7, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, &c. This is very cheering. For a fainting Soul may sometimes take encouragement from an Attribute of God, when he doubts whether he may touch with a promise, or no. Or it may have reference to that name, Jer. 23, 6, The Lord our Righteousness. Certainly, when a Soul seeth nothing in itself whereby it can challenge any interest, in any ground of comfort: yet because there is grace, and mercy enough in the name of God, and merit, and righteousness enough in the Son of

God; such a Soul may see ground enough to resolve, as Isa. 8.17, I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Psal. 34.5, They looked to him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. Though all the clouds were not presently scattered, yet they had some light. And a little Candle in a dark room, in a very dark night, though it do not make it day, as the Sun doth, yet it is some reviving, till the day do appear.

2. Let it be well considered, what God imposeth upon fainting Souls, as one great part of their work, in such a season, Psal. 55.22, Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. When thou art ready to faint under thy burden, cast it upon me, saith the Lord, Matth. 11.28, Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden. Do then, as David did, he hears the command, speaking in general unto all, Psal. 27.8. Seek ye my face; and seeth himself concerned in it, and therefore resolves, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. It is observable, that when Christ commanded the blind Man to come unto him, Mar. 10.49, Be of good comfort, say those that were by-standers, the Master calls thee. Such commands, in this case, may sometimes be of greater use then promises; and more effectual for the silencing of doubts, and discouragements. For the best are apt, when in the dark to dispute their interest in the promises, till they have disputed themselves out of all heart to close with them. But Commands are not to be disputed, but obeyed: See Luk. 5.5. There was discouragement enough: They had fished all night, and caught nothing; nevertheless, say they, at thy word, we will let down the Net.

3. Taking it for granted, that a fainting Soul, in obedience to the command of Christ, is willing, if able, to come to Christ, and to close with him: And if the question were put to him, as it was to Rebecca, Gen. 24.58, Wilt thou go with this man? He would answer, as she did, I will go. And hearing the terms, whereon he promiseth to be ours, can, and doth yield unto them, as heartily as Laban did to Jacob 's, and desire as he did, Gen. 30.34, I would it might be,

according to thy word. Then let every fainting Soul know his right, and claim it, and know his duty upon this account, and set about it.

1. Know his right, and claim it. What's that? Even the promises of God, as his inheritance; for those that yield to Christ's terms, are received into the number of his adopted Children, Joh. 1.12. And if Children, then Heirs, Rom. 8.17. Heirs of what? See Gal. 3.29, And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the promise. We read that Naboth would not part with his inheritance, neither for the good will, nor ill will of King Ahab. Let Souls ready to faint, do so in this case, with the Promises, which in Christ, are their undoubted inheritance, 2 Cor. 1.20, For all the promises of God, are in him, yea, and in him. Amen.

2. Let Souls subject to fainting, know their duty upon this account, and set upon the performance of it.

(1.) They ought to acquaint themselves with the promises. They are so great, and precious, as the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 1.4. that there is not one of those that really close with Christ, though they be of the lowest form, but may find that which is most suitable to their condition, in some promise or other that is within their reach, though some may seem to be above him. Though a little Man upon low ground cannot reach the top of the Tree, yet he may get hold on some of the lower branches, and there may find some fruit, which may somewhat relieve him. As suppose, he cannot find comfort in that promise, Rev. 2.7, To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life. No, he is afraid of being overcome, that promise is too high for him, it is above his reach; yet he may reach that, Rev. 22.17, And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely. If not that, Matth. 5.8, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Yet they may reach that, ver. 6, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. And that, Joh. 6.37. All that the Father hath given unto me, shall come unto me: and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. And let every fainting Soul know this, that so far as

he hath an interest in any one promise, so far he hath an interest in every promise, as to that blessing in it, which is absolutely necessary to salvation. For as there is a chain of duties, Matth. 22.37, 38, 39, 40, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God—This is the first and great Commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Not this or that; but this and that too. So there is a chain of Privileges, Rom. 8.30, Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. And a chain of Providences, Rom. 8.28, All things work together for good to them that love God. So there is a chain of Promises; they are all bound together in one bundle in the Covenant. That great, and precious promise [I will be thy God] comprehends them all. Therefore it is said, Rev. 21.7, He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.

(2.) Let them plead the Promises, Psal. 119.49, Remember thy word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. Especially that particular promise, which contains that particular blessing, which if it were as sure in their hand, as it is in the promise, the fainting Soul thinks, it would satisfy. Thus did Jacob, Gen. 32.9, 10, 11, O God—which saidst unto me, return into thy Country—Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my Brother —Thus every fainting Soul ought to do. The promise is that Bond, wherein God hath made himself a Debtor, if not to his Covenant-people, yet to his own truth, and faithfulness, which requires it of him, that what he hath promised, be fulfilled, and therefore they ought to plead them. This is God's method; he expects to hear from them, before they can expect to hear from him, Psal. 50.15, Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.

(3.) Let them patiently wait for the fulfilling of what is promised. If the thing be of absolute necessity, it shall be given in kind. And so it shall be, though in itself it be not, yet if God in his infinite wisdom sees it will be subservient thereunto, and will better promote it, then

the want of it will; it shall also certainly be made good. The Scripture speaks as if God had promised us nothing, but Eternal Life, 1 Joh. 2.25, And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even Eternal Life. But it is, because all things absolutely necessary unto Eternal Life are comprehended therein. Therefore wait for it, because it will surely come, Hab. 2.3. It's true, there may be silence in Heaven, and that for a great while, to the prayer of faith; as there may be a silence very often to the provocations of the generation that is abhorred by God. But as he will arise in due time to execute his vindictive justice upon the one, Psal. 50.21, 22. So he will arise to make good his promises of grace, and mercy to the other. For God never said to the Seed of Jacob, that they should seek him in vain, Isa. 45.19. I shall conclude this with that of the Apostle, 2 Thes. 3.5, The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. He had laid down great grounds of comfort for them, in the former Chapter, verse. 13, 14. And assures them, verse. 3. of this Chapter, that God was faithful, and would stablish them. They should not miscarry, nor fail of that which God had chosen them unto; but knowing the difficulty of waiting, when expected supplies were delayed, especially when Providences seem contrary to Promises, he prays that the Lord would direct them into the love of God, and patient waiting for Christ. This is the third particular, which it concerns fainting Souls to take special notice of.

(4.) Fainting Souls, or Souls often subject to fainting, should endeavor after a distinct knowledge of the great, and fundamental Doctrine of Justification.

(1.) In the Meritorious cause of it, which is the obedience of Christ, as Mediator, in doing, and suffering what God the Father appointed, and which he accepted in the behalf of all those, to whom it is imputed; so as to discharge them from the curse of the Law, which they had deserved to be executed upon them to the uttermost: and to accept them, as righteous unto Eternal Life, of which they were utterly unworthy.

(2.) That it is God which justifieth, Rom. 8.33, Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth.

(3.) That the moving cause is God's free love, Rom. 3.24, Being justified freely by his grace, through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

(4.) That the means of receiving it, is Faith, Rom. 3.22, Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Christ Jesus, unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. These things being well digested, are great Cordials. For whom he justifieth, he glorifieth, Rom. 8.30.

(5.) Let such also think of the nature, and efficacy of Christ's Intercession; and that with thought upon thought. He appears in Heaven for us, Heb 9.24. And who those are, ye find, Heb. 7.25, Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them: For what? To give forth unto us, and to apply what he hath purchased, 1 Joh. 2.1, 2. And we may be sure of it, that his Intercession is as effectual, and can no more be rejected, then his satisfaction, because both are acts of his Priestly Office.

SERMON XII.

I Now proceed to the third, and last branch of the Use, that hath been so long insisted upon. To exhort those (if there be any such, and I have reason to hope there are some such) whose Souls do prosper, with whom it begins to be better, with respect to the frame, and temper, of the hidden Man of the heart, then it hath been: To exhort them, to give all diligence, that it may continue so with them: That they may not lose the things they have wrought, but receive a full

reward, 2 Epist. of John verse. 8. But keep them in that holy frame, whereinto the exercise of godliness hath brought them.

But before I show what in order thereunto is our duty; I shall premise five things to be considered.

1. That an absolute settlement of the Soul in the same height and degree of this spiritual prosperity, that is by some attained, is rarely, if ever, preserved for any long time together. There is a tincture of that madness which Solomon speaks of, Eccl. 9.3, (yea, also the heart of the Sons of Men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live.) that remains, and always will remain in the hearts of the best, when they are at best. Paul found it so, Rom 7.21, I find a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. And Mad-men seldom continue in any one temper, any long time together. Therefore as it is with Men in respect of their outward condition, though all things may prosper with them, and that for some considerable time together; as it was with Job; He had his months wherein the Candle of God did shine upon him, and the secret of God was upon his Tabernacle; when the Almighty was with him; when his Children were about him, Job 29.2 3, 4. But in all these, we know, he underwent a great, and sad change; the clouds gathered upon him, and darkened all his Sunshine. David found it so; his fair weather (as we use to say) did not last always, Psal. 30.6, 7. He thought himself settled in his Kingdom, above danger of opposition, but he found it otherwise; God was offended with him, hid away his face, and then such troubles came upon him, as he never dreamed of. Even so it hath been, with most thriving and growing Souls, when they thought they could have said, as David, Psal. 108.1, O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing, and give praise: Yet they have found, that even then it was with them, but as with a Ship at Anchor, which though it be not driven into the Maine, nor split against the Rocks, yet it is often tossed up and down, and reels to and fro. Many sad instances we have of this in the Scripture, that the most gracious persons have not always kept their principles of godliness in exercise, at the same height; no not those, wherein they have been most eminent. Neither

Abraham his Faith, nor Moses his Meekness, nor Job his Patience. Even Abraham 's Faith, and Moses his Meekness, and Job 's Patience, had their ebbing's and flowing's. And at this day, the more any Man studies his own heart, the more he will tell you, that in his own experience, he finds it so; for many such changes are wrought by the hand of the most high: As in respect of our natural state, Job. 14.2, He cometh up as a flower, and continueth not: So very often in respect of his spiritual frame.

2. As many have experienced strange, and unexpected turns of Providence, in respect of their outward condition: So no less suddenly or unexpectedly have they experienced as great changes in their spiritual condition. There are those, no doubt, can tell you, That having been brought under the influences of divine grace, and love, so as they have found much inward longing after more and more enjoyment of God, even then when they found much sweet delight in what they did enjoy; and this joined with serious resolutions, of keeping more close to God; and have thereupon hoped, that the worst had been past, that it would never anymore be with them, as it had been. Never should they live (so they hoped) at such a distance from God, as they had done; nor should their hearts wander from him, as in times past: Yet after all this, very unexpectedly, like an instrument in change of weather, have they found themselves, as we say, out of tune again. As those that dwell by the Sea-side do see, that though the tide be now out, and it be low water, yet upon a sudden all is overflown again. Besides experience, we have sad instances of this in Scripture, Jer. 20.13. Having in the words before professed his assurance of God's presence with him, and protection of him, he now rouseth up his Soul, from his former damped, and dumpish condition, to a high degree of lightsomeness of spirit, praising God for his deliverance from the hands of Pashur, and the rest of his Persecutors (before he was delivered) out of an hopeful expectation of it, as if he had already received it. But how long doth this last? See ver. 14, Cursed be the day wherein I was born. A strange alteration, and sudden down-fall from such a height of confidence in verse. 12. and such a degree of comfort, verse. 13. to such a low dejection of

spirit, and strange distemper of mind, as inconsiderately to curse the day of his birth; and those that brought his Father the report thereof. A lively pattern this is, of the truth of that which we are speaking of. An instance not much unlike to this we find in Elijah. Compare 1 King. 18.18. where he told Ahab with so much resolution; I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy Father's house.] with 1 King. 19.3. when being threatened by Jezebel, He arose, and fled for his life.] What a sudden change was this? He that durst say to Ahab 's face, Thou, and thy Father's house have troubled Israel; that could fetch down both Fire and Water from Heaven by his prayers, that durst command the slaying of 450 Priests of Baal: yet he shrinks at the threats of a Woman, and wisheth to be rid of his life, because he was afraid to lose it. This was a strange turn in that holy Man's spirit. But so it hath been, and so it is, that the pulse of a sick Man, doth not more vary, then the temper of the Soul of a sound, and upright Man: This day, perhaps, some Communion with God, some drawings nigh in holy duties, some good hopes, through grace, of acceptance with God, unto Eternal Life: yet within a while, overcome again with deadness, and darkness, strange flatness and coldness growing upon the face of the whole Soul again, so as it is nothing the same it was. Thus we see, that though the state of grace be sure, 2 Tim. 2.19. yet the workings of grace are variable. The nature of it is unchangeable, but the degrees of it are subject to many changes, the operations of it to many alterations. So that though the principles of godliness be always like themselves, yet the most godly Souls, that prosper most, are not always like themselves.

3. As there may be such a sad, and sudden change in the most prosperous Soul that lives; so that may be lost in such a change, which will not be recovered but with very much difficulty. A Ship may easily be born down the stream, but it is hardly fetched up again. A Man may lose more strength in a few days sickness, then can be recovered in many days. I have read of Henry the First, King of England, a sober, and temperate Prince, that he surfeited with eating a Lamprey, which cost him his life. Thus one intemperate meal may overthrow the temperance of a Man's whole life: for the

same History saith of that King, that he did seldom or never eat, but when he was hungry; or drink, but when he was thirsty, yet thus he came to his end. Thus it may be in this matter, which we are speaking of. Even the Soul that mounts aloft, by the supplies of grace, as upon Eagles wings, if spiritual drowsiness creep by degrees upon it, and that it begins to dally with duties, or to dally with sin, it may cost much spiritual wrestling, and striving with God, much heart-humbling, and mourning in the sight of God, before it recovers its former height, and heavenly temper. If a Watch be let fall, and receive a bruise, it must be all taken asunder, before it be brought to its former exactness, and evenness of motion. Read the 5 ch. of the Canticles, at the beginning; there ye may perceive what hard work the Church had, in seeking after Christ, before she found him again: We read of David 's first days, as his best days, 2 Chron. 17.3. And though it may easily be proved that he recovered his former stature both in grace, and comfort: yet it may as easily be proved, that he found it no easy matter to recover either the one or the other. And this his 7 penitential Psalms do sufficiently prove.

4. Yet for all this, much may be done this way, so as a prospering Soul may continue in its prosperous state; more then the most careful Man in the World can do, for the continuance of the prosperity of his worldly estate: A Man may be looking to, and taking care for the well managing of his estate, and yet whilst his eye is upon it, he may see it upon the wing, and flying away from him, as the Eagle towards Heaven, far enough out of his reach. See Job 1.14. Job 's Servants with great care and diligence attended their Master's business, for the securing his Cattle, and improving his ground, each of them according to their place, and yet ye know, how suddenly all was lost, so that it came to be a Proverb, As poor as Job. But there is more certainty of God's prospering serious endeavors in minding Soul-prosperity. For if the occasions of sin be watched against one day as well as another; if the first risings of sin be checked, and suppressed; if grace be exercised suitable to the Providence of the day; and Communion with God, in the duties of Religion, be made our great business of the day, so far, and so long as it is so, so far and

so long the Soul will continue to prosper. And why all this may not be done one day as well as another, no reason can be given. The promise of the assistance of the spirit for all this, is ready one day as well as another: And God is a God hearing prayers for all this, one day as well as another. And therefore, what is done one day, may be done another. It is said of Enoch, Gen. 5.22. That though the age he lived in were very corrupt, yet he walked with God, and lived in some degree of eminency in the exercise of the principles of godliness, above others of the Servants of God, that were his contemporaries, and he had this testimony, the Spirit of God witnessing, together with his Spirit, That he pleased God, Heb. 11.5. And it is well known, that the blessed Apostle Paul, as he began, so he continued, fighting a good fight, finishing his course, keeping the faith, and living by faith, to his dying day, as he saith, Gal. 2.20. 2 Tim. 4.6, 7, And though his outward condition was, for the most part, very low, yet his spiritual condition was very thriving, and flourishing; though the one perished daily, yet the other was renewed, 2 Cor. 4.16.

5. Our labors, and endeavors, how much soever we abound therein, will not be in vain, but be abundantly recompensed, in the blessed fruits, and effects thereof. When a prospering Soul is carried on with a full gale in its holy course, the precious influences of the Spirit of God, in, and by the Ordinances of God, will be fixed, and the word will be an abiding word, and not like those human Ordinances, the Apostle speaks of, Col. 2.22. which perish in the using. And as the matter requires, the word which ye hear at one time, will be brought to remembrance at another time, as Joh. 14.26. and put the Sword of the Spirit into your hands, so as to resist the assaults of Satan, and discover a temptation in time of temptation, before the heart be ensnared by it.

(2.) To keep the heart humble, and heavenward, under a confluence of all worldly comforts. To keep it calm, and well-composed under all provocations from Men, and afflictions from God, so as to run with patience the race that is set before us; holding on, till our course be finished. To be much above distracting fears, in time of danger; all of

them being mightily subdued in the reverential fear, and awe of God; yea to have our thoughts of death full of comfort, and our hopes of Eternal happiness, full of well-grounded confidence: To be able to live to God, whilst we live, and to die to God, when we die. These, and many such like, are the effects, and blessed consequences of this, so far as it prospers. So as all such whose Souls do prosper, see cause daily, not only to bless their God, but also as it is Isa. 65.16. To bless themselves in their God, whatever their condition be: Therefore let not these consolations of God, seem small unto us; but engage us, according as we are commanded, Deut. 4.9. To keep our Souls diligently, lest we forget the things which our eyes have seen, and lose those things which our hearts have wrought. These things being premised, I proceed to the Directions, necessary (as I suppose) to be observed in this case.

1. Souls that prosper, being through the assistance of the quickening presence of the Spirit of God with them, well recovered out of that spiritual deadness, and benumbedness their hearts were sunk into, must take heed of Relapses. Sin (as ye have heard) is the Souls sickness. Therefore as ye ought to take heed, that there be not any unmortified root of bitterness in you, as Heb. 12.15. So take heed of relapsing into that sin, or those sins, whether of Omission, or Commission, whatever they were, which brought your Souls into, and kept them in that unprospering, and unthriving condition; under which ye groaned, and from which ye find yourselves now, in some good measure, so happily recovered. Those that are recovered out of a dangerous Disease, if they be not very careful, may relapse again. And Relapses, though they are not always mortal, yet they are always dangerous. It is so with the Soul. In Levite. 13.18, 19, 20. we read, that out of a bile that is healed, there may spring up a Leprosy, a Disease far more dangerous than the former.

It is a sad, but a true charge upon the Lord's professing People of old, Hos. 11.7. that they were bent to backsliding. And this proneness hath been, as is too often, reduced into the act. And no marvel, for whatever is naught, and reigns in the hearts of the worst Men, there

is still a remainder of it, in the best of Men. Now it is as certain, as that two and three make five, that if the most prosperous Souls be not well looked unto, according to the suitableness of the temptation, every old, ill quality will break forth again. For everything that is natural (as all ill qualities are to the Soul, and this of relapsing, and backsliding, as natural as any) will return to their state, if special care be not taken, to hinder it. As a stone that is thrown up into the Air, will fall down again, when the force of the Arm that threw it up, is spent: And water will have its course downward, when once the dam, that stopped it, is broken down.

This particular then is necessary to be spoken to, and that somewhat largely, which shall be recompensed in speaking more briefly unto those other Directions that follow. For if this be neglected, none of the rest will be observed.

Consider then,

1. That relapsing, and backsliding in its general nature is directly, and in a special manner contrary to the exercise of those principles of godliness, which have the same influence into the health, and well-fare of the Soul, as natural heat, and radical moisture have into the health, and well-fare of the Body; I mean Faith, and Repentance. By the exercise of Faith, we come to Christ, Joh. 6.37. All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me. And by the exercise of Repentance, we turn unto God, Joel 2.12, Turn ye unto me with all your heart. Now, relapsing and backsliding is a departure from God, Heb, 3.12. a drawing back, Heb. 10.38.

2. To bring this yet more closely to the matter, I am speaking unto, we must take notice, that this relapsing, or back sliding comes under a double consideration.

- (1.) There is a relapsing or backsliding which proceeds from the want of the principles of godliness. This is to be charged upon those that after illumination, and conviction, having given up their Names to

Christ, and engaged in the profession of Religion: Fall first from the practice, and, it may be, at last from the very profession of Religion. First from all appearance of exact and circumspect walking, to vanity, and looseness; and then, it may be, to open profaneness, as they, 2 Pet. 2.20, If after they have escaped the pollutions of the World, through the knowledge of the Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them, then the beginning. These do not fall from the grace they had, but do indeed discover, that they never had any. For everyone that hath the true principles of godliness in his heart, shall persevere in his gracious state: The Seed of God will remain in him, though he do not always remain, in his gracious frame. The new-born Christian is born a Conqueror; his victory bears date from his birth, 1 Joh. 5.4, For whosoever is born of God, overcometh the World—and shall at last be more then conqueror, Rom. 8.37.

(2.) There is a relapsing, and backsliding through weakness, or rather, as the truth is, for want of the exercise of the principles of godliness, whereby the heart is drawn sometimes one way, and sometimes another way from God.

(1.) Sometimes through violence of temptation, and the unmortified inclination of the heart, into some outward act of sin, which may come under the observation of others, as we may see in Peter: several times he was surprised with selfish fears, which brought forth sad effects. Once, when he tempted Christ, not to hazard himself at Jerusalem, Matth. 16.21, 22, 23. This was from his fear, lest if it should go ill with his Master, it would not go well with him. This appears by Christ's thereupon pressing upon him, and all that would be his Disciples, the duty of Self-denial, and the Doctrine of the Cross, ver. 31. And then after that, when Christ was arraigned, Matth. 26.70. And after both these, we find him falling into a grudging of the same Disease, Gal. 2.11, 12. So John, the beloved Disciple was twice surprised, so far to forget himself, as twice to give that worship to the Creature, which was due to God alone, Rev. 19.10. and ch. 22.8. There are other gross corruptions, which (as the Apostle saith) are

manifest works of the flesh. It would be an astonishing thing, if any that ever were alive to God, much more if any whose Souls did ever prosper, should back-slide so far, as into such dead works: This were a high degree of quenching the Spirit; for Gal. 5.16, This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

2. There is a backsliding through weakness, or rather through want of exercise of the principles of godliness, into many inward and spiritual evils, which no eye seeth, but the eye of the most holy God, who seeth all things, such as spiritual dullness, and listlessness unto that which is good, as Isa. 64.7, There is none that calleth upon thee, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: So as private duties are either omitted in their Season, or shuffled up in a slight, and formal manner. Though God be the object of the duty, yet the enjoyment of God is not made the end of the duty: when the heart grows vain, goes in and out, constant in nothing but inconstancy, assuming unto itself a lawless liberty, as if there were none to observe it, none to judge; easily drawn away to forgetfulness of God, sliding away, without any observation, from under the power of all obligations to the contrary. Relapses of this nature, though they do not presently make any great noise, in the World, yet it will not be long, before they will be seen in sad effects, and be discerned in more visible miscarriages. If they be indulged, they are great enemies to Soul-prosperity; and will prove the very bane, and break-neck of that thriving, and prosperous frame, the Soul was grown, or growing into. This is then seriously to be considered of, by all those whose Souls begin to prosper, and when it begins to be better with them, then it hath been, in respect of their inward frame, and temper of the hidden man of the heart; as ever they desire they may continue so, and lose the things which they have wrought, to beware of relapses. Ye have heard that ye are not exempted from them, nor exempted from a possibility, Heb. 3.12, Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the Living God. As if the Apostle had said; That which I speak to one, I speak to another, I speak to all; therefore let everyone take heed.

Now that which I find in Scripture pressed upon us, for preventing such relapses, is to have a watchful eye over, and a constant hand upon all the inward workings, and stirrings of the inward Man, for from thence they have their rise, as ye may observe in several sorts of Trees, their decay is first observed in the withering of the boughs, but it begins in the root, which fails in sending up sap into them, as formerly. Even so it is here; which way soever relapses, are discovered, they begin from within, Psal. 44.18, Our heart is not turned back: neither have our steps declined from thy way. Professors first fall from their apprehensions of the necessity of circumspect walking; their convictions of the goodness of the ways of God, wear off, and their affections decay: and the works of the flesh break forth, and manifest themselves by degrees. Therefore as ever we desire to hold fast what we have received, be sure to keep the heart with all diligence, as Prov. 4.23. Where,

(1.) Our personal care is required, Keep thy heart.

(2.) Our principal care, Keep it, with, or above all keeping.

As it is with the heart, naturally considered, if that begin to tremble, or be in fear, or apprehension of danger: the blood and spirits (as it is observed) will forsake the outward parts, and run to that, to guard and succor it, the least wound therein being mortal, if it be but with the pricking of a Pin. Thus the heart is kept in its natural capacity; but the matter we are speaking of, is touching the keeping of the heart in its spiritual capacity; and keep it we ought with all diligence; watch it by night, and by day; at home, and abroad; when we are in company, and when we are alone, at all times, and in all places; yea, as the Apostle presseth it on Timothy, Watch in all things, 2 Tim. 4.5.

Now this keeping, this watching the heart, hath special reference to the inward workings, and stirrings of corruption.

(1.) To prevent (in the strength of Christ) so far as may be prevented, in this state of imperfection, the first risings of them, of any one kind

whatsoever; however to prevent, if possible (and possible it is) that the Corruption, and the Temptation, may be kept asunder, Matth. 26.41, Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Otherwise, there will be sad work; and the prosperity of the Soul will begin to fade, and that upon the sudden. Though Hezekiah, as holy a Man as he was, and how much soever his Soul did prosper, (and prosper it did exceedingly) yet he had always a root of pride in him: which though it did not stir him to show his Treasures to everybody, yet when he fell into the temptation, by occasion of the visit he had, from the King of Babylon, by his Ambassadors; then the Corruption, and the Temptation did meet, and ye may read, in the history, how much the well-fare of his Soul was prejudiced by it. So it was with David; he had, though a Man after God's own heart, the same root of the same corruption in him, yet it did not break forth, so as to abate anything of his Souls prosperity, till the temptation met with it, To have his subjects numbered: neither had it then, if he had watched, as Peter did, to keep the temptation and the corruption asunder. See Act. 8.20, Thy money perish with thee, said Peter to Simon Magus. The temptation was suitable, for Peter was out of money. Act. 3.6, Silver and gold have I none. And Peter was not so perfect, as to be beyond the power of the temptation; but he kept the temptation from mingling with what corruption soever was in his heart; and so the gracious frame of his heart continued untouched by it. So David, 2 Sam. 16.10, And the King said, what have I to do with you, ye Sons of Zeruah? So let him curse, &c. He was subject to the same passions with other Men, but by the assistance (no doubt) of the Spirit of God, he kept the temptation, and the corruption asunder; and so his Soul prospered the better for that trial.

2. If there should be (as there is great danger there may be) a sad meeting (so it is, and so it will be found) betwixt the corruption, and the temptation, then endeavor, by the assistance of the spirit, that your own spirits may immediately rise up in indignation, against it, and after some hearty ejaculations for the present, with the first opportunity, with hearty loathing, and inward self abhorrency, bring forth the temptation, and the corruption to the law of God, and see

them there condemned, and to the blood of Christ, and see them there pardoned; and to the spirit of Christ, that thereby all may be subdued, and mortified. Really, a Soul that desires to prosper, and to continue to prosper, should as kindly work in a heart-melting, and a heart-humbling way, for these sinful stirrings of the heart, before God, as for sinful words, and sinful actions before Men, Psal. 73.22, So foolish was I, and ignorant, even as a beast before thee. It is, or should be with the Soul that prospers, as it is with the eye, if a small dust get into it, it will never leave twinkling, and watering till it be out, 2 Chron. 32.26, Hezekiah humbled himself greatly for the pride of his heart. Rom. 7.24, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death. He speaks of the law in his members, warring against the law of his mind. verse. 23. This is the way to prevent relapses into sin, which is the Soul's sickness, and if not prevented, or timely healed, will overthrow the prosperity of prospering Souls.

SERMON XIII.

2ly. AS Souls that begin to prosper, and have any desire to continue so, ought to keep themselves under the greatest obligations that are imaginable to beware of Relapses: So they ought with as great care, and constancy, to realize the presence of God with them, day by day. For it is, without all controversy, true, that the exercise, and so, by consequence, the growth, and increase of the principles of godliness, wherein Soul-prosperity specially consists, is founded upon, and preserved by the due consideration of God's presence with us, and his all seeing eye upon us. This is that which is specially comprehended in that expression of walking with God, and walking before God. And this is as specially to be observed, That those that did so, whilst they did so, their Souls prospered. We have it

exemplified in Enoch, Gen. 5.22. And he had this testimony, that he pleased God, Heb. 11.5. So Noah, Gen. 6.9, Noah was a just Man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. So David, Psal. 26.3, I have walked in thy truth. Psal. 119.168, I have kept thy precepts, and thy testimonies, for all my ways are before thee. This was the best testimony, that Solomon his Son could give of him, when he was dead, 1 King. 3.6, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my Father, great mercy, according as he walked before thee, in truth, and righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee. This is that which God gives in charge to Abraham, and that upon this account, Gen. 17.1, — walk before me, and be thou perfect. As thou desirest (and I know thou desirest) to hold fast thine integrity: Let me live in thy thoughts, and see to it, that thou so live, so think, so speak, and so do, as remembering thou art always in my sight. This is that which hath a very great influence, to draw, as it were, the draught of the Image of God, day by day in our Souls, in more and more lively colors. For in the state of glory, the glorified Saints that are with the Lord, and always behold his face are like him, and see him as he is, 1 Joh. 3.2. Even so it is in the state of grace, so far as this duty is conscientiously observed, and discharged, 2 Cor. 3.18, 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. It is true, it is not said of Moses, that his face did shine the first time, that he had been with God in the Mount, but when he had been with him the second time, Exod. 34.29. This then is that we ought to have deeply engraven upon our hearts, as ever we desire not to lose the things we have wrought, to do as David did, Psal. 16.8, I have set the Lord always before my face. [Always] that implies that we ought to make it our daily work: what a Man does every day, he is said to do Always. And [Always] i. e. one day as well as another, to our last day. This is no more than is expressly required, Prov. 23.17, Be thou in the fear of the Lord, all the day long. And 1 Pet. 1.17, — pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. It is the exercise of the fear of God, which hath a very great influence upon Soul-prosperity, 2 Cor. 7.1, — perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And it is this realizing the presence of God, which hath the great

influence into the exercise of the fear of God. Hence it is, that true childlike fear is said to be, fearing before God; that is, out of an awful respect unto, and due consideration of his All-seeing eye, Eccl. 8.12, — it shall be well with them that fear God, that fear before him. This is that then, which above all other things, ought not to be omitted, for the very sinews of all heart-godliness are, as it were, cut in sunder, so far as this is neglected. For there is nothing left then, which hath any power over the inward man, the hidden man of the heart, but it enjoys a lawless liberty, as if there were none to observe it, nor to judge it. 3 Epist. of John ver. 11, Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil, hath not seen God. Deut. 32.18, Of the Rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. All their wickedness is charged upon that.

I shall say no more to this Second general Direction, but only these Three things.

(1.) That until the Soul be spiritually alive to God, and so in a capacity of prospering, there is neither delight, nor desire to entertain any thoughts of God, Rom. 1.28, And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. They cast the notions of God out of their minds, as of no use to them, Psal. 10.4, God is not in all his thoughts. i.e., Not in his thoughts at all, Job 21.14, They say to the Almighty, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Some say so in words at length, and all of them say it in their hearts. Tho God saith, Woe unto you, when I depart from you, Hos. 9.12. Yet they think it best when he departeth from them; and the farther the better. This frame of heart is the very blackness of Hellish darkness. It speaks the very language of Satan, Matth. 8.29, What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus, the Son of God; art thou come to torment us before the time? Thus it was of old, Isa: 30.11, Cause the holy one of Israel to cease from us.

(2.) Though the Soul be alive to God, yet so far as the Image of the old Adam is unmortified, and any particular lust indulged, so far God

and the heart will be strangers. Not only the beam but even such a moat in the eye, will make such Souls, to shun, what they can, the presence of God, and the presence of those who, they think, will speak the mind of God unto them; as Ahab did the presence of Micaiah, 1 King. 22.8. Such Souls are far from prospering. This is the very image of old Adam, Gen. 3.8, He heard the voice of God, and hid himself from the presence of the Lord.

3. Even those whose Souls do live, and in some measure, may be said to prosper, though they dare not omit any external duty of Religion, yet they do too often, and too easily slip over this, without timely observation, till they take a review of their hearts, and then they see they have cause to say, as Psal. 36.11. Unite my heart to thee, that I may fear before thee, all the day long: Or unite my heart within itself, that it may not be diverted, or distracted, not carried this way, and that way, but that I may be able to say, It is fixed, it is fixed. Thus I say it is, and that too often with Souls that prosper according to their measure. Therefore we ought to charge ourselves with this duty, and renew the charge from day today. To set ourselves under the actual consideration of God's All-seeing eye; who hath absolute Sovereignty over us; to whom alone we must stand or fall; who can tell us all our thoughts, and will render to every Man according to his works; and therefore hath a Book of remembrance for those that think upon him, and fear his name, Mal. 3.16. And hath a bag for iniquity, wherein he doth, as it were, seal up men's sins to bring them forth as Evidences, and charge them upon everyone as the matter requires. And as God is said to have a Book, and a Bag, so he is said to have a Bottle, Psal. 56.8, Put my tears into thy bottle, are they not in thy book? This, I say, we should charge upon our hearts, and renew this charge from day today, till we have some power over them. For though it be true, that God alone hath the Sovereignty over, and is the great disposer of our hearts, yet under him, we may do much. What Man is there, whose conscience will not tell him, if he consult with it, that when his heart is flat, and dead, alienated from all serious thoughts of the presence of God with him, that this is his own neglect, his own willful neglect; for he knows that when he hath a

business to manage of any considerable concernment for his outward estate, he can easily command his heart to think on it, yea and cannot put it out of his mind, when he would; so that The abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep, Eccl. 5.12. Therefore let us not neglect any longer to exercise that authority, which God hath given us over our hearts, if we desire our Souls should continue to prosper: We must serve him in righteousness, and holiness all our days, and every day: But all we do will come very far short, not only of what it ought to be, but of what it might be, unless we do what we do, before him, as in his sight, Luk. 1.75.

Thus of the Second Direction.

3. Spiritualize the Providences of every day: I mean, improve them to some spiritual advantage; so as thereby some gracious impressions may be wrought upon your hearts; that thereby the duties of the day may be better performed; principles of godliness more seasonably exercised; and the workings, and stirrings of corruption more timely checked, and thoroughly mortified. This will exceedingly help (scarce anything more) to preserve the Soul in its thriving, and prospering frame. Consider then, that every day, in respect of the Providences of God, it is filled up withal, is either one of those two days mentioned, Eccles. 7.14. Either a day of Prosperity, or a day of Adversity. Or else like that day, mentioned, Zech. 14.6. Neither clear, nor dark, but mixed; mercies given in, one part of the day, and crosses taking their turn in the other. Now, it hath been experienced to be a great means of promoting and preserving Soul-prosperity, to spiritualize both the one, and the other.

(1.) If the day be a day of Prosperity, i.e., if no evil befalls us, but that according to the promise, Psal. 121.7, 8, The Lord shall preserve thee from evil: The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in. When God blesseth the beginning, and ending of what we undertake; this hath enough in it, to raise up in our hearts, high thoughts of God, that he should load us with benefits, Psal. 68.19. Such as may be very effectual to keep us under those obligations, which his

bounty, and goodness lays upon us. Thus it wrought in David, Psal. 116. He is reckoning up the mercies of God toward him: Then ver. 5. He exalteth God in his heart: And ver. 7. His Soul retires into God, and takes up its rest, and satisfaction in him alone: And ver. 9. He heightens his resolution. Thus it was with David, and thus it may be with us: Especially, when the thriving prospering Soul hath ground and reason enough to see the present mercies, of what kind soever they be, as having relation unto, and being pledges of Eternal mercies. This sweetens them, and heightens them, how little soever, how common soever they be; that they may say as David, 2 Sam. 7.18, Who am I, and what is my father's house? This makes them more heart-melting, more heart-obliging, then otherwise they would be, or possibly can be to any Soul, that is either dead in sin, or in a dying, withering, languishing condition. Six pence received only as a six pence, doth not affect the heart like that which is received as an earnest of a greater Sum, which shall certainly upon such a day be given to us; so it is here, when we can conclude, that he who kept us this day from evil, that it hath not grieved us, as Jabes prayed, 1 Chron. 4.10. and hath given us quiet, and comfortable rest this night; can, and certainly will keep us by his mighty power, through faith, unto salvation: and this night's rest is a pledge unto us of Eternal rest, in those heavenly mansions above, in our Father's house. And this conclusion, though no Man else can, yet thriving, and prospering Souls may make.

2. If the day be a day of Adversity, a day filled up with sad tidings, or sad events, yet the Providences of such a day may be spiritualized, to the spiritual advantage of the Soul. By a believing consideration from what hand they come; as Job did ch. 1. ver. 21, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. For what cause? A man for the punishment of his sin, Lam. 3.39. What God aims at therein, sc. our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. From what principle? David believed, that it was in faithfulness to the interest of his Soul, that God afflicted him, Psal. 119.75. A believing consideration, I say, of these things, in such a sad and dark day, will conduce to preserve the Soul in a prospering frame: By melting down

the will into the will of God, and by raising up the heart in the exercise of faith, hope, and patience; quietly to wait for support under, benefit by, and, in due time, such a deliverance from them all, as they shall be able to say, to the praise of God's free grace, truth, and faithfulness, as Jacob, notwithstanding all his troubles in his life-time, which were neither few, nor small, did on his Death-bed: That the Lord delivered him from all evil, Gen. 48.16.

3. If the day be a mixed day, as most days are, some comforts, some crosses, some things going for us, and some things against us; these parti-colored Providences may be spiritualized for our Souls advantage; and be unto us as the side-wind to the Ship, that best fills all the Sails, variety of gracious principles may be exercised. In such a day we find enough to humble us, enough to make us thankful, and thoughtful what to render unto the Lord. That it is no worse, That it is so well, as the King of Spain said, when he heard of the miscarriage of his Fleet in Eighty eight, whether he said so, or no, depends upon the credit of the Historian. But I am sure the Prophet Jeremiah said, Lam. 3.22, It is of the Lord's mercy, that we are afflicted, and not consumed: cast down, but not cast off. Look to that place once again, Eccles. 7.14, In the day of adversity, consider. What should we consider? Why consider this, and mark it well, that both these days, with all their fillings up, are from the Lord. That it is he, who thus sets the one against the other; that we may see that his account will be so balanced, that our receipts when they are least, will balance our sufferings, when they are most. And that therefore we have enough to reason ourselves both into a submission, and into a thankful frame, Job 2.9, 10, Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil? And would not these, think ye, keep our Souls in a thriving, and prospering frame? It would sure.

4. Besides all these, we meet with daily passages, in what we hear, and see, which though they do not immediately touch us, yet may be thus spiritualized. Every Creature of God is a Text for our hearts to raise some Doctrines, some spiritual Meditations from. We have a Proverb, That there is never an outside, but it hath an inside.

Understand it thus: There is nothing that comes under our observation, but there may be extracted from it, some inference or other, to employ our thoughts about, and that to good purpose; even to keep our Souls in their good frame: For as a Bee can suck honey out of many a flower, where a fly finds no such thing as wanting a principle for it: So a prospering, spiritualizing Soul may, and therefore ought, to endeavor to extract some good out of everything; even out of its own, and other Men's failings, as we may read, Pro. 24.30, 31, 32, I went by the field of the slothful—I looked upon it, and received instruction. Upon this ground, among others, the principles of godliness are called, a partaking of the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1.4. For as God, according to his infinite power, and wisdom, brings light out of darkness; good out of evil: Even so may the principles of godliness much more, out of every good thing, though of a very mean concernment. And would not this help to preserve it in its prosperous frame? It would sure. That Man is like to thrive, who gains by everything he deals in: And that Soul is like to continue to prosper, which raiseth Earth into Heaven, and fetcheth Heaven out of Earth; as everyone doth, so far as he is faithful in the fore-mentioned particulars. And besides, it is one of the best helps that I know of, to make improvement of that portion of our time, which runs between one solemn duty and another, which otherwise would lie upon our hands, and be rendered useless, as to Soul-concernments.

4. Another great work which prospering Souls have to do, in order to the preserving of themselves in a prosperous frame, is this: To preserve a deep sense of their spiritual poverty, when it is best with them, in respect of Soul-prosperity. The Apostle Paul from the first day after his conversion, to the day of his dissolution (for ought we read, or have any appearance to suspect to the contrary) did thrive, and prosper in his spiritual estate. His inward man was renewed daily, 2 Cor. 4.16. Yet what he thought of himself, we find by what he speaks of himself, Rom. 7.23, 24, I find another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind—O wretched Man, that I am—. 2 Cor. 3.5, Not that we are sufficient to think anything as of ourselves

— Eph. 3.8, Unto me who am the least of all Saints, is this grace given—. This is as needful a direction, as any of the rest. For it is a hard matter to starve this sin of pride, and self-exalting thoughts, because it will feed almost, upon anything. Nothing so good, yea nothing so mean, but pride will feed upon it. Absalom was proud of his long locks, he wore his hair so long, that when he polled it, it weighed about four pound in weight, 2 Sam. 14.26. But I speak not now of this kind of pride: but of that kind of pride, which, without special care, may breed out of those excellent things, which are found in prospering Souls; as pride of gifts: There is the root of that pride in a prospering Soul, which Solomon speaks of, Pro. 18.2, A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself. Of that in the Pharisee, Luk. 18.11, God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are. Joh. 7.49, This people which knoweth not the law, are accursed. Pride of Grace: Though corruption that is in the heart, hates the grace, that is in the heart, yet it is apt to be proud of it, when it is taken notice of. Grace cannot be proud: but he that hath it, may be proud of it. As Paul was in danger of being lifted up, and exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, which were given unto him, 2 Cor. 12.7. Now, which way soever pride works, ye will find it like the wind, sometimes at one door, sometimes at another. Resist it, for God resisteth that Man, that doth not resist it, Jam. 4.6. He gives more grace to those that walk humbly with him, but he resists the proud, by abating, and lessening what he had given. So far as the heart begins to be lifted up, so far it is naught, how good soever it was before, Hab. 2.4, Behold, his Soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him. Therefore whensoever the inward man begins to be renewed, and that it begins to be better in the frame and temper of the heart, then formerly: Then watch, and pray that ye do not fall into this temptation. And consider, when it is at best with us, how much we come short of the holiness of that rule we ought to walk by, and of the holiness of that God which is proposed for our pattern; 1 Pet. 1.15, As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Let us compare ourselves with that Rule, and with that Pattern, and the bright-shining beams of the Sun will not discover more motes in the Air,

then the holiness of God, and his law, would convince us of sin to be in us. And when it is at best with us, would make us to see reason to complain of ourselves as Paul did, Rom. 7.14, The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin: And to pray as, Psal. 143.2, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no Man living be justified. And in the strength of Christ to resolve, as Phil. 3.13, 14, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before: I press toward the mark—. As knowing that the Soul never prospers so much, but it may prosper more; for no Man knows when he hath all the grace he shall have: And if we do not endeavor that we may prosper more, things will not prosper long, 2 Pet. 3.17, 18, Beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness; But grow in grace— If ye grow not, ye will fall from your steadfastness which ye have attained unto.

5. As we should realize the presence of God with us daily, and keep our Souls under God's eye: So put them over, and their well-fare, and prosperity into God's hands, to preserve them. We know that Job prospered in his outward estate, so long as God kept up the hedge about him, and all that he had, Job. 1.10. So it is with our Souls, They, and the gracious principles that are in them, are preserved in, and by his hand, Jude v. 1. Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus. 2 Chron. 32.26, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart. When David 's Soul was in a prospering frame; see how he prays, 1 Chro. 29.18, O Lord God— keep this forever in the imaginations of the thoughts of thy people— i.e. That those gracious impressions might not wear off. It is worth our observing, that the Lord Jesus knew what extraordinary gifts and graces the Apostles were to receive; yet all this would not do, if God should let them go out of his hand, Joh. 17.6.

6, And lastly: Because there will be remissness in observing this, and what other Directions ye may have from the word, whereby the well-fare of the Soul may be endangered, as by Communing with our own

hearts, we shall find, be sure, that ever now and then, as the matter requires, we set time apart for more serious examination, humiliation, and renewing the exercise of repentance, faith, &c. Such times are like scouring times, which Vessels stand sometimes in need of, though washed every day. This is the way, if there be any defect, to set all things right again, Rev. 2.5, Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.

Thus I have showed you, what the work is, that prospering Souls have to do, if they desire (and they ought to desire it with all their might, and all their strength) that they may prosper still. It is a work that never must be at an end, while the Soul is in the Body. I say no more to it, but conclude with that 1 Cor. 10.12, Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall. If any think that these Directions are too many, I suppose that upon farther consideration, those that do think so, may see reason to think otherwise: For so far as I can apprehend, not one of them can be spared; they one help another. Those that understand nothing of a Watch, may, possibly, wonder, what need there should be of so many Wheels, so near one another, and that they will but hinder one another; but those that have understanding in things of this nature, do know, that one Wheel helps forward another. It is so here.

This is all I have to speak upon this branch of the Use. I now proceed to a few words to each of those two Cases, mentioned the last day.

1. How a Man may manage the business of his calling, and all his worldly affairs, so as to promote his prosperity in the World, and not prejudice, but thereby farther his Soul-prosperity?

ANS.

1. It is, without question, not only lawful, but every Man's duty, to be diligent in his calling, and to manage it with honesty, and integrity to his best advantage, that he may prosper in the World; in reference to those ends, for which Callings were ordained. That he may eat the

labor of his hands, Psal. 128.1. and not eat his fingers ends, as it is said of idle persons. That with quietness he work, and eat his own bread, 2 Thes. 3.12. And be helpful to others, Eph. 4.28. Therefore, he ought to be diligent to know the state of his flock, and to look well to his herds, Prov. 27.23.24. Not to leave all to the care of his servants. Under this one particular, a provident care over Men's estates in every other Calling, is likewise enjoined, that so nothing be lost, Joh. 6.12.

2. But though this be true, yet everyone that desires, that above all things, his Soul may prosper, ought not to make Religion a complement, as too many do; but his chief business. The Lord Jesus owed, and paid respect, and subjection to his parents, Luk. 2.57. Yet he declared, that he must attend his heavenly Father's business, ver. 49. Thus David, Psal. 119.38, — thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. As a Scholar who devotes himself to his study, makes learning his business: So we ought to mind this one thing as most necessary, Luke 10.42. It's true, it may be with a Christian that seriously minds the prosperity of his Soul, as it is with Mariners at Sea, they are bound for such a Coast, but whilst they are sailing, they may meet with a cross Wind, which may drive them the quite contrary way: but as soon as the storm is over, they recover themselves, and get into the right way, wherein they Sailed before. So a Christian (one that is so indeed) is bound for Heaven, and the holy word of God is the Compass he sails by. Yet, a contrary wind of temptation blowing, he may be driven back; but he recovers himself again by the exercise of Faith, and Repentance, and sails on constantly toward his heavenly Port. Thus he that minds, above all prosperities, the prosperity of his Soul, ought to make Religion his business; he is devoted unto it: To him to live is Christ, Phil. 1.21.

3. Both these being true: That every Man hath, or ought to have a Calling to follow, which he ought with prudence, providence, and diligence to attend, for the support of his outward estate, according to the condition, wherein God hath set him. Every Man hath, or ought to have a Calling to follow, which he ought to manage with all

his heart, all his might, and all his strength, as that which is for the most desirable prosperity, the prosperity of his Soul, therefore he ought to manage the former, in subordination to this; God never intended them otherwise. Still he would have us to abide with God in our Calling, 1 Cor. 7.24. That a Man so drive his Trade for the World, as not to hinder his Trade for Heaven. His home-trade within doors, his Shop, his Ware-house, his Working-house, his Oxen, or his Farm, must not rob his Closet, nor indispose him, much less take him off from those private duties of Religion, whereby Communion between God, and his Soul, may be preserved, and increased. Nor yet must his foreign Trade hinder him from walking as becomes the Gospel, in all his converse with others, but that he may, as the matter requires, show forth the graces of Christ, 1 Pet. 2.9. 1 Thes. 5.14, 15, Be patient to all men, not rendering evil for evil to any man, but ever follow that which is good. So far as any Man doth thus manage his worldly affairs, for his prosperity in the World, he shall not prejudice, but thereby farther his Soul-prosperity.

And in order hereunto, consider these few things.

1. Remember that of Solomon, Pro. 28.20. Make not haste to be rich. Do not grasp more of the world into your hands, then ye may manage without distraction. This cannot anymore be for the prosperity of the Soul, then to eat more meat, then the natural heat of the stomach can well digest, can be for the health of the body. Therefore in such a case, it is a man's duty, interest, and wisdom to do, as the Sea-men do, when the Ship is overladen, cast out some of the burden, lest they hazard the loss of their lives. Otherwise, that will be found a truth, when it may be too late to prevent it, what the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. 6.9. They that will be rich (that are set upon it) fall into temptations, and snares, and into many foolish, and hurtful lusts, which drown men in a Whirlpool of destruction and perdition.

2. Remember that though ye ought to be diligent in your calling, yet it ought to be with a holy indifferency of Spirit, not as Rachel, Gen. 30.1. Give me Children, or I die, but as David in that great strait

wherein he was 2 Sam. 15.26. Let the Lord do with me, as it seemeth good in his sight. Thus it ought to be, and thus it may be, if we desire our care for prosperity in this world may not hinder the prosperity of our Souls. The strongest, and highest workings both of our heads and hearts, should be after our Soul concernments. Thus did David Psal. 63.8. My Soul followeth hard after thee. 2 Sam. 6.14. David danced before the Lord, with all his might. But when a man's eyes, and his heart (as the expression is concerning Jehoiakim Jer. 22.17.) are but for the world, i. e. he doth greedily affect it, and most eagerly pursue it, as if that Judgment were befallen him, which literally befell Korah, and Dathan, the earth swallowed them. However such may hold up, and rub on, in a formal profession, and that it may be with some seeming forwardness, yet their Souls can never prosper. It is impossible they should. Therefore, labor not for that meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, Joh. 6.27.

3. Remember this, That there is no absolute necessity of it, upon one account, or other, that a man should be as rich, as other rich men of the same calling. That is necessary which cannot be supplied, with something instead of it. As the light of the Sun is necessary for the day. All the Candles in the world cannot supply the want of that. No, it will be night, when the Sun is set, for all the Stars. Now, the wealth, and great things of the world may be supplied by something else; for neither man's life, nor the comforts of his life consists in abundance, Luk. 12.15. so Psal. 4.6, 7. There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time, that their Corn and their Wine increased. But all the world cannot supply the want of Soul-prosperity, Matth. 16.28. What can it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul. Therefore that is the only thing necessary, Luke 10.42.

4. Remember this, That we manage the business of our calling, with a holy fear, and jealousy, lest we should prejudice the welfare of our Souls. Job was afraid, lest his Children, whilst they were refreshing their bodies, should have wronged their Souls, Job 1.5. there is as

much reason to be afraid, in this case, for the world is defiling, Jam. 1.27. to keep himself unspotted from the world. It his hard to touch Pitch, and not to be defiled. This was in the thoughts of Jesus Christ, Joh. 17.15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil.

5. Remember this, That the ruling, predominant, chief, and principal end in laboring for the things of this world, should be in reference to the world to come, when David prayed for life, it was not principally that he might live; but that he might live and praise God, Psal. 119.17.175. So in laboring after all the things of this life, we should desire them; not as stops, but as steps in our way to heaven, and so accordingly use them, reckoning this, though not the only, yet as one of the chiefest advantages we have by them, that we have a price put into our hands, whereby we may be the more useful; and our light shine so much the more before Men, that they may glorify our Father, which is in heaven, Matth. 5.16.

6. Remember this, That it is our duty, and we ought to prepare for it, by keeping the things of the world at a distance from our hearts, to run the hazard of the loss of all, when the keeping of them is inconsistent with the conscience of that duty, and subjection, we owe to Christ; when it comes to that, we should suffer joyfully the spoiling of our goods, as they did, Heb. 10.34. though we should go as naked out of the world, as ever we came into the world. He that will keep what he hath, in a way that God doth not approve of, may keep the thing, but he will lose the comfort of it. Even as they, Exod. 16.20. that would keep Manna beyond the time, that God allowed them, they had the Manna, but it did them no good; it had worms in it, and did stink. Thus we have something toward the answering of that question; and I do believe, that ye will find that so far as these rules are observed, the world will not prejudice your Souls.

FINIS.

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