

CHRIST'S ALARM

TO

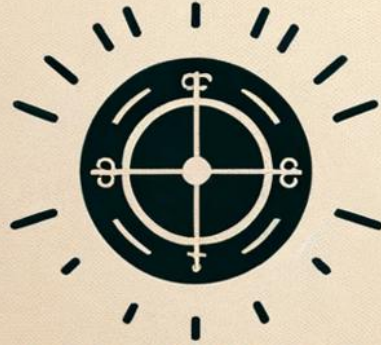


DROWSY SAINTS

WILLIAM FENNER

CHRIST'S ALARM

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Christ's Alarm to Drowsy Saints

Or, Christ's Epistle to His Churches.

Parts I & II

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REVEL. 2:7. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit
saith unto the Churches.

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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 READER.

The author of these ensuing Sermons was a Minister of God, famous in his Generation, a burning and shining light, one, to whom, if ever to any, God had given the Art of winning of Souls, whom I have often heard Preaching, and always in the demonstration of the Spirit and power, and not in the enticing words of man's wisdom. He was (as Nazienzen saith of John the Baptist) Tota Vox, all Voice: A voice in his habit, in his gesture, and in his life and conversation, as well as

his Doctrine; and being now dead, he is still a voice by his Works, which he hath left behind him. And in particular, by these Sermons (Printed according to a Copy written with his own hand) which handle a Subject very necessary for these times, wherein there are many that have a name to live, but are indeed dead, and many that are spiritually alive, but yet full of deadness, and inactiveness to that which is good. Now this Treatise will be useful (if God give a blessing to it) to make the dead Christian, living; and the living Christian more active and lively in all godliness; which that it may effect, is the prayer of;

Thy souls friend in Jesus Christ, CALAMY.

PART I.

THE FIRST PART TO CHRIST'S ALARM TO DROWSY SAINTS.

SERMON I.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars, I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. - REVEL. 3:1.

Saint John being banished into the Isle of Patmos, though the persecutors of the Gospel thought to do him a displeasure, yet the Lord turned it unto his great good: For the place of his exile was like Paul's third Heaven unto him, he was ravished in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and had abundance of revelations vouchsafed unto him, of the things that should occur in the Church, and out, from thence unto the end of the world. Before which he hath a charge given him to write to the seven Churches of Asia, chap. 1, the Church of Ephesus, the Church of Smyrna, and of Pergamos, and of Thyatira, these four are written unto in the second Chapter; the other three are written unto in this: the Church of Sardis, and the Church of Philadelphia, and the Church of Laodicea. Now that which I have chosen to handle, and if God afford liberty, I desire to go through it, is the Epistle unto the Church of Sardis; wherein we may consider four things.

First, The Inscription, containing a specification whom the Epistle is specially directed unto. And to the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write.

Secondly, the Subscription, containing a description of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Church: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. I call it a subscription, because in our letters we use to subscribe our names, or to write our names beneath at the latter end. But it may be called rather a superscription, as Kings write their names above for honors sake, so does Christ the King of Zion, write his Name above.

Thirdly, the substance or matter of the Epistle, I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God, &c. verse. 1,2,3,4.

Fourthly, the conclusion, He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, &c. v. 5,6.

First, I say, the Inscription, And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write. In which words Saint John is directed whom to inscribe this Epistle unto, and that is, unto the Church which is in Sardis: but especially unto the Angel of it, that is, the Minister, or Ministers of it: for that's the meaning of Angel in this place.

Secondly, for the Subscription, or rather superscription, that contains the description of the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the Epistle is sent, and he is described by two Royalties, the first is, in having of the seven Spirits of God. These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, that is, that hath power to send the holy Ghost unto all the Elect: for so the holy Ghost is called the seven Spirits that are before the Throne, Rev. 1:4. He means there the holy Ghost, not

as though there were seven holy Ghosts, but he is expressed in the plural number in regard of the abundance of graces that he infuses into his Churches; and the number seven is rather taken than any other number, partly because this number is put for a perfect number, as implying the perfection of his influence, and partly because of the present business in hand, for here he writes to the seven Churches of Asia. Now the Lord Jesus Christ hath Spirit enough to send forth into them all. This is his first Royalty, that he hath the seven spirits of God. Another Royalty of his is, that he hath the seven Stars, that is, the seven Pastors of these Churches, Christ hath them all in his hand, it is he that preserves those Ministers that are faithful; he hath power to raise them up, to gift them, to protect them, to defend them; and they are called Stars, because they are to shine in the firmament of the Church.

Thirdly, for the substance and matter of the Epistle, it containeth three parts.

First, a Reproof, and the reproof is in these words, I know thy works; that is, I know them all, and they are stark naught for the most part, whatever they seem; they may seem to be very good, but I tell you plainly, I know them all what they be, q.d. generally they are stark naught; and then he instances in particular, as for example, thy deadness of heart in Religion, Thou hast a name to live, but thou art dead; that is, thou goest for an excellent Minister, and excellent Church, ye do profess Religion very fairly, and in a goodly manner, that to see to thou art alive, and thou art taken so too of all thy Neighbor-churches, they all think and hope thou art alive; but the truth is, thou art dead, the grace of life is hardly in thee at all. This is the first, the Reproof.

Then secondly, here's a remedy annexed: for he does not reprove them out of any ill will, but for their good, and so he prescribes them a remedy, and the remedy is twofold. The first is, To strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die. q.d. as many of you as are not quite and clean dead, stir up yourselves, quicken up your hearts: and this is amplified by showing how they should do thus: O, be watchful, says he, q.d. that is the reason why ye languish in this fashion, and ye will languish more and more because ye are not watchful: therefore Be watchful: and also by rendering a motive to press this remedy; For I have not found thy works perfect before God; that is, thou art hardly sincere a jot, thou art full of hypocrisy, and rottenness, and formality, and thou wilt lose all thy labor if thou dost not look well about thee: therefore shake up thyself, and strengthen the things that remain. This is the first remedy.

The second remedy is, to repent, and this is amplified by showing how, and that is two ways: First, Remember how thou hast received and heard; that is, consider how thou hast been taught, and bewail thy declining's: for thou art horribly departed from what thou hast learned in the Ministry of the word.

Secondly, Hold fast, that is, so bewail thy warping's, and waning's, and degenerating's, that thou mayst get up again, hold thee fast there when thou art up. Now lest they should neglect the using of this remedy, the Lord Jesus sharpens his speech with a threatening, telling them the danger, if they will not be awakened: If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. This is the second part of the matter of this Epistle, the Remedy.

Thirdly, another part of the matter of this Epistle is, a commendation of some particular persons in the Church, that were not carried away

in the deadness of the times, and these he does praise very much, and he gives them an excellent promise; the praise is in these words: Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; that is, there be some among you, though they be but a few, that have not been suttled and soiled with others bad examples; though others be dead, yet they are not dead too for company: and then the promise is to them in these words, They shall walk with me in white; that is, I will give them the grace of repentance, and I will keep them unspotted unto my heavenly Kingdom and glory. And he adds a reason in these words: For they are worthy, not as though they did merit repentance and glory; no, but they are worthy in Christ, and Christ hath made them meet to be made partakers of this mercy. Thus you see the matter of the Epistle.

The fourth and last thing is the conclusion of the Epistle; and that is in the fifth and sixth verses, He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment, &c. In which words we have the conclusion of the Epistle, and it consists of two parts:

First, a promise to everyone that overcometh, He that overcomes, &c.

Secondly, a precept to command every gracious Saint to attend to these things. The promise:

First, it is to be considered to whom it is made; it is made to him that overcometh: that is, ye know there is to be a holy war against all manner of sin, and all temptations, and all the policies of Satan, and all the alluring baits of the world, and all the inclinations of the flesh. Now he that overcomes all these, which is no other but one that is born of God, who alone is able to overcome, He that overcomes, this is the party to whom it is promised.

Secondly, what it is that is promised. Here be three things that are promised to him that overcomes: First, White raiment; He shall be clothed in white raiment; that is, he shall be preferred to everlasting blessedness, and he shall walk in triumph in a conquerors robe. Secondly, a permanent and lasting name in the Book of life, I will not put out his name out of the Book of life, that is, there be many hundreds that are written in the book of life in the judgment of men, and in the hope of men; but in the end the Lord blots them out, he makes it appear, that their names are not there: But this man shall never be blotted out thence. As he hopes his name is enrolled there, so it shall for a certain appear to be enrolled there, and it shall never be crossed out. Thirdly, Christ's confessing of that man's name before his Father and his holy Angels: And I will confess his name before my Father and his holy Angels; that is, I will acknowledge him to be mine. Thus you see the first thing, the promise which is made to him that overcomes.

The second part of the conclusion is a precept to command every gracious Saint to attend to these things, and that is in the sixth verse; He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

Of these in their order, and first of the Inscription.

And to the Angel of the Church of Sardis, write.

By the Angel he means not the Angels of Heaven, no nor the Angels of the bottomless pit: he does not mean the Angels of heaven, because they are perfectly holy, they have no sin in them. Now the Lord Jesus speaks of such an Angel here as hath much sinned; for he reproves him exceedingly. Neither does he mean any Angel of the bottomless pit, because they are perfectly evil, they have no spiritual goodness at all in them. Now the Lord Jesus speaks of such an Angel

here, whom though he reprove for many things amiss, yet he commends him too for some gracious things; and therefore he can be Angel of the bottomless pit. It remains then, that a Metaphorical Angel is here understood, and that is the Minister of the Church. Now as the Angels are called Ministers, Bless ye the Lord all ye his Hosts, ye Ministers that do his pleasure, Psal. 103:21. So the Ministers are called Angels, An Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, &c. Judge. 2:1, that is, a Minister, Phinehas, or some Prophet or other, as it seems, came and preached unto the people. The point then is this,

That Ministers are to be Angels, as it were.

They are Angels in some sense.

1. Angels are Spirits, ye know they are spiritual substances, as the Psalmist speaks: He maketh his Angels spirits, Psal. 104:4, they are spiritual creatures, their communion is spiritual, their food is spiritual, their delights are spiritual, their affections and minds are spiritual: so a Minister though he be a Body as well as his people, yet he should be a spiritual man. I confess every true Christian is spiritual, as the Apostle says: If any man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such a man in the spirit of meekness, Gal. 6, he speaks to every true Christian, he is a spiritual man: But a Minister should more especially be spiritual; nay, our own phrases will rise up in judgment against us, if we be not spiritual. Do not we call ourselves the Spirituality, as though the people were carnal in comparison of us? Now if we should be more carnal than they, out of our own mouths the Lord will condemn us. The truth is, many of us may be called spiritual men, if we will: but we are mad spiritual men, as the Prophet Hosea speaks, The spiritual man is mad, Hosea 9:7. Mad spiritual men indeed, when we are nothing less then what we

profess ourselves to be, when we are spiritual men in a mockery: ye know what a mock is brought up upon this name; people call a spiritual Pig, that is, the poorest of all the ten, that hath no substance in it, that is given to the Minister: so many of us are spiritual in a mockery, having no reason why we should be so termed, but only because there is no substance in us, no goodness, no holiness at all in us; whereas we should exceed others in it. We should be spiritual in a special manner, we should be like *animae separatae*, like spirits sequestered from bodily things, taken up with spiritual affairs, holding forth the fruits of the spirit; we should be as Angels in our Parishes, laboring to draw people from all their carnal courses, endeavoring to breed in them a savor and a relish of all the things of the spirit of God: our Sermons should not be only moral, but spiritual; our carriage should be a spiritual walking; where we come, our discourse should be spiritual, we should be like a company of spirits, for so the Apostle calls us, Try the spirits whether they be of God, 1 John 4:1, that is, try your Ministers whether they be of God, yea or no; whether their doctrine be the doctrine of life, that will make the soul live: whether their conversation be after the spirit, lest ye follow a false guide: whether their Ministry be the Ministry of the spirit. If any man think himself to be a Prophet, or spiritual, 1 Cor. 14:37. We cannot think ourselves Prophets, except we be spiritual men. When our courses are carnal, we sin against our callings: for we are to be as Angels by our places in this sense, lest our own profession hit us in the teeth at the last.

Secondly, the Angels are creatures of another world, not of this world, though they walk up and down on God's errands here, yet they are creatures of another world; and therefore they are called the Angels of Heaven, Matth. 24:36. Heavenly soldiers, Luke 2:13. True, every child of God is a heavenly creature, but a Minister should be in a more special manner, a creature of another world, crucified unto

this, as Paul says, I am crucified to the world, and the world unto me. The preaching of the word is called the Kingdom of heaven, so we that are the Preachers of it, should be of heaven too, not only in regard of the news we bring, but we ourselves that bring it, should be heavenly ones. When our Savior Christ had told Nicodemus, that he must be begotten from above, O, says he, art thou a Teacher in Israel, and knowest not these things? How beautiful upon the mountains! The Ministers of the Gospel should be men aloft, the world should be a valley to them beneath, they should not be Secular men. What care Angels for fine houses, or great livings? They had rather be in the prison with Peter, then with Herod at the Court. Do Angels care for outward things? No, no more should Ministers. Paul was all for Jesus Christ, I determined not to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified, 1 Cor. 2:2. He cared not though the great Philosophers of Corinth took him for a Dunce in all human learning; Jesus Christ and him crucified, Paul included all his learning in that.

Thirdly, the Angels stand before God, as Daniel says, Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, Dan. 7:10. So the Ministers of God are to stand before God, as God saith to Jeremy, Thou shalt stand before me, Jer. 15:19. The Ministers of God are to stand before God, to know what his pleasure is unto the people, what message he hath for them. Again, the Angels are Ministering spirits, sent forth for the good of them that are heirs of salvation, Heb. 1:14. So Ministers, they are to minister unto them that are the heirs of salvation, to watch over their souls, to be useful unto them in all their ways. Again, the Angels pitch their tents round about them that are good, as the Prophet speaks; so the Ministers, they are the Churches Angels. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are yours, they are not their own: But as they are Christ's, so next under him, they are theirs that are Christ's, they are Ministers by whom they believe, helpers of their faith; they are God's servants to bring Jacob again to

him. Angels are God's messengers, they never come but when they are sent from God: so it is said of Ministers, There was a man sent from God, whose name was John, John 1:6.

The use of this is, First, Here we see that the Ministry is no base Office; the world makes a matter of nothing of God's faithful Ministers; vile men will Sirra them at their pleasure, and take them up as if they were their dishcloths. But beloved, here we see they are as it were Angels of God. Christ himself the Apostle makes bold to call him a Minister, Rom. 15:8. Now I say (says he) that Jesus Christ was a Minister: the Apostle knew it was no disparagement unto him. Solomon when he would choose him his Title, and might have called himself, The King of Israel and Judah, yet he rather takes this as honorable enough, The Preacher; Thus saith the Preacher, Eccles. 1:1. The office of a Minister is an Angels office. When Zacharias perceived that his child should be a Minister, though yet he were a little babe lying in the cradle, he admires him: And thou child shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation for the remission of sins, to give light unto them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet in the way of peace, Luke 1:76,77. The Angels of heaven never go on greater errands then these. When they came to the Shepherds, what did they do? They did but tell them of the birth of Christ, of peace on earth, and good will towards men. Now this is the Ministers duty, let the world think what they will of us, as though our calling were mean, and they care not much whether they hear us or no, they will not regard what we preach. O beloved, consider what an office we have, we are God's Angels unto you, to declare unto man his righteousness, Job. 33:23, to pray men in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 5:20, to gather together the saints, Ephes. 4:12. These are no small things, no mean employments to treat between God and Man about eternal

life, to be Christ's Paranympths, and the friends of the Bridegroom, to deal about the getting of a wife for the Lamb, to cater for heaven, to bring in custom for the Kingdom of God. The whole world hath not a greater office in it; ye cannot despise neither our persons nor our message and be saved, as Paul says, Let a man so esteem of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and the stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4:1, q.d. O take heed how ye slight us, or our Ministry, ye cannot have the mysteries of grace without us, ye cannot have saving knowledge, nor regeneration, nor faith without us. I do not speak what God may do extraordinarily; but this is God's ordinary way: How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a Preacher? Rom. 10:4, and therefore our office is no mean office, we are as the Angels of God unto you, and people should honor our Ministry when a Minister comes into the Pulpit, even as if an Angel did appear. It is said when Samuel came to Bethlehem, the Elders of the town trembled at his coming, 1 Sam. 16:4.

Secondly, are Ministers Angels? Then they must be holy; ye know the Angels are holy: When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy Angels with him, Matth. 25:31. They are holy all of them: so should the Ministers be holy; otherwise they may be Angels indeed, but they are evil angels, angels of darkness; they are Devils if they be not holy. Every ignorant, graceless, and unconscionable Minister is ready to press the dignity of his calling, and what an honorable office he hath; but he never considers what a Minister then he must be. If we be Angels, brethren, why then as we like this honorable Title, we must have a care to be holy, or else, I say, we are Devils. Those Angels that are not holy, are Devils. Nay, our very calling supposes us to be holy, Let thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy holy one, Deut. 33:8, so that our very calling will testify against us, if we be not holy: We of all men should labor to be holy; What, a Minister, and

yet a drunkard? A Minister, and yet a whoremonger? A Minister, and yet without the fear of God? A Minister, and yet have a dead heart? O consider what God says, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant within thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee? Psal. 50:16,17. With what face can we here stand in a Pulpit, and preach against sin, and teach our hearers to make conscience of all their ways, and denounce the judgments of God against them that do evil, if we that condemn another do the same things or as bad? How inexcusable are we, if we can preach the straightness of heaven's gate, and the narrowness of the way, and the strictness of the account the people shall be forced to give at the last day, and lay heavy burdens on other men's shoulders, and we ourselves not touch them with one of our fingers? Teach precisely, and live loosely, teach graciously, and walk broadly? This is gross hypocrisy; act zeal and goodness in the Pulpit, and be heartless and luke-warm in our private duties unto God.

Again, we can never look to do good, if we be not holy; as Jet will not draw if it be not clean: For how can we hope our people will follow our exhortations, if they see we do not follow them ourselves? When S. Luke had showed how Barnabas exhorted the Christians to cleave close unto God, Acts 11:23, presently he gives a reason why he might well exhort them to do so, For he was a good man, full of the holy Ghost and of Faith, v. 24. When our hearers are met with for any of their sins, when we rub their consciences with our Sermons, presently their eye is at us, and if they see us to be vain and worldly, this heals them again; though the word wounded them, yet this is an ease to them, O think they, he is as bad himself, and we see no such holiness in him, and we are as fair for heaven as he, he loves his penny as well as we, he is as ready to quarrel as we, he is as proud, and ambitious, and fearful, and idle, as we; he loves to sleep in a

whole skin, what will not he do rather than lose his living? He'll break the Sabbath, and teach others to do so. Now, my brethren, how should we abhor this! O it should prick and spur us up to study holiness of life, that so our Ministry may be powerful.

Thirdly, are Ministers Angels? Then they should be apt to teach, ready to preach, and to labor in Word and Doctrine. It is said of the Angels, that they have wings, One of the Seraphim's came flying unto me, Isa. 6:6. They are ready pressed to do anything that the Lord gives them in charge; so should we be, or else how should we bear the name of Angels? We must labor, that we may be fruitful in our labor among our people. You know the Angels are called Reapers, and so are God's Ministers, I sent you to reap, John 4:38. When a man reaps he gathers; nay, Christ chooseth good Ministers for this end, that they should bring forth fruit in their places, I have ordained you that ye should go and bring forth much fruit, John 15:16. Nay, our Savior Christ supposes that all his true Ministers are fruitful upon some. Every sower though he have some high-way ground to sow in, and some thorny ground, and some stony ground, yet he hath some good ground or other.

For first, a good Minister it is the desire of his soul to see the fruits of his labors; As a Hen, many a Hen will hardly ever off from her eggs, till she see a young chickens bill peep; nay, she will sit still till she die before she will off. What made Paul so desirous to come to the Romans? Was it only to see them, and to be among them, or to take his tithes or his maintenance? No, it was that he might have some fruit, Rom. 1:13. And certainly, this is the study of every true Minister, that he may see his preaching fruitful in the conversion and salvation of some, that some are awakened by his means, that some are quickened, some are made to leave their sins, and to become new creatures unto God.

Secondly, does not every man count it a misery to be unprofitable? The Lord names it as a brand upon wicked men, that they are unprofitable, Rom. 3:12. What a woeful brand is this, when we can live two, three, seven, ten, twenty years in a place, and our services are unprofitable, no man delivered out of ignorance, no man purged from his filthiness by our means; when our Ministry is a dead letter, we preach without life, and no man is translated from death unto life by it? I say, this is to be unprofitable, like salt that hath lost his savor. I confess the best Ministers may have little takings, as the best tradesman may have little vent for his wares when his trading grows dead.

Nay thirdly, this is the end of our gifts, that we may profit with them; as the Apostle says, The manifestation of the Spirit is given unto every man to profit withal, 1 Cor. 12:7. Hath he given us knowledge? He hath given it us that we should profit others with it. Hath he given us skill in the opening and applying of the Scriptures? He hath given it unto us, that we may do good with the same. And therefore, O how earnest should we be that our Ministry may profit, that our pains may be profitable and successful, that we may say with the Prophet Isaiah, Lord, behold I and the Children whom thou hast given me.

Fourthly, this is the best argument that God hath of a certain called us to be Ministers in his Church. If we have called ourselves, and run without sending, then no marvel if we be fruitless, and do little or no good. But if we find that God blesseth our labors, this is the best seal of our ministry: as if the arrow hit, it's a good sign it was sent out of the bow; it may fall out of the bow of it own accord, but then it never hits: but when it is sent out of the bow, ye know he that sends it, will aim; and therefore now when it hits, that's a sign it was sent indeed: so when a Minister converts people's souls, this is a good sign that God sent him; when a Minister can say to his people, as Paul to the

Corinthians, The seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord, 1 Cor. 9:2, though I be not an Apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am unto you: For the seal of my Apostleship are ye in the Lord. So the seal of us Ministers are ye in the Lord: though I have not converted others, yet doubtless I have converted you unto God, as he says, Truly, the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you, 2 Cor. 12:12, &c.

Fifthly, this is that which will give us comfort, when we lie upon our death-beds, when we can say, we have been faithful in our callings, and can show a token of it too, by blessing of our faithfulness in the gaining of souls, as Paul saith to the Thessalonians, What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy, 1 Thess. 2:19,20. This is a pledge of our glory. The promise is clear, They that turn others unto righteousness, shall shine as the stars, Dan. 12:3. I do not deny, but a wicked Minister that hath parts, and is gifted of God with an Art of speaking to the conscience, may convert; and therefore it is not a naked argument. But when a man hath had this success by his faithfulness, and hath set himself to do it in God's way indeed; what an unspeakable comfort is this! He is not the wisest Minister that can plot most for preferment, or can preach best for applause, or the like: No, no; but he that can most compose himself to do good, He that winneth souls is wise, Prov. 11:30, that is, as he had need to be a wise man, and to go wisely to work, that would do it: so he is a wise man, he is wise to himself, he lays up to himself a good foundation of comfort against the world to come.

Sixthly, and lastly, if we can endure to be unprofitable, not to stir up ourselves, not to point and sharpen our Ministry that it may pierce into men's consciences, nor never study how to do good, what a heavy woe will lie upon us? You read what was done to the unprofitable servant, he was bound hand and foot, and cast out into

utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matth. 25:30. O then how careful should we be to do good, and to be effectual Preachers, that we may say, these and these I have been an instrument of good to; by the mercy of God these and these I have begotten through the Gospel, then are we Angels indeed, that are sent out for the good of God's elect. I confess it is good to civilize our people, to abate their wickedness, to make them Professors, and I would to God we could see more of these effects rather than none. But to gather in God's elect, this is an Angels work, the conversion of one soul is better than the civilizing of a thousand. And therefore let us be diligent and industrious, and preach in season and out of season, let us con the skill of preaching, not to tickle men's itching ears, not so much to make our people say, our Minister is a fine Scholar, a good Churchman, as to rouse up the consciences of our hearers, to pull down their hearts before God, to feed their souls with divine meat, with the good knowledge of the Lord, to show them the several wiles of Satan, as Paul says, Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine, that the aged men be sober and grave, &c. Tit. 2:1, that is, so preach, as to good, to old men, to old women, to young men, to young women, to Masters, to servants, to all, as it follows there; we must look unto our life, that we defile not our Angels place, that we do not undo what we preach. Alas! If we do not sincerely practice all that we do deliver, if our lives do not answer our teaching, we are like unto kine that give very good milk, but then put their feet into the pail, or throw down the pail when they have done. This is to make our preaching of no effect: and therefore as the Apostle says to Timothy, Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee, 2 Tim. 4:16. They are the best Ministers, that carry people unto heaven; when men think to send people to heaven, and not go themselves, suppose this should do the deed, yet what will it profit us, if our people go to heaven, and we stay behind, and never

come there? Nay, we cannot look they will go, except they see us go before them; and therefore let us do nothing that may hinder the fruitfulness of our Sermons. Thus shall we be Angels indeed.

Fourthly, another use is, If Ministers be Angels, then let us know that we are mainly for God's elect, as the Psalmist says of every elect person, God shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, Psal. 91:11. Mark, the Angels have the charge of the elect, they are their main charge; may be they are to do many things towards others, but these are their principal charge; so it must be with God's Ministers, their chief charge is towards God's elect, as the Apostle says, I endure all things for the elects sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, which is eternal glory, 2 Tim. 2:10. We that are God's Ministers, have all our gifts and graces for their sakes; He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers. For what? For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Ephes. 4:11,12. And therefore if we have any that fear God in our Parishes, we should bend our main Ministry unto them, and for the adding of more to them; we should not be like those wretched Ministers that count such persons the worst of their flock, and they do most hate them, and oppose them, and jeer them: No, no, we should most dearly love them, and tender them, and bend ourselves unto them; nay, we should not altogether in these bad times, stand declaiming against drunkards, murderers, and so leave the Lord's Saints without their portion. The truth is, ye that live in your ungodly courses, ye that walk after your wicked lusts, and will not be gotten to forsake your cursed doings, we could be content to lay hell here before you in every Sermon, and spend our shot on you, all the hours that we have of preaching in the week, are little enough to tell you what a damned condition ye are in. But if ye will not enter in into the straight gate, we must not neglect them that

will; if ye will be filthy, be filthy still, and if ye will to hell, and we cannot persuade you to live out of your sins. Though there be but two or three that are well-minded in our Parishes, we are to bend ourselves chiefly unto them. Indeed as long as we have any hope of adding more to their company, we must preach points for them too. May be some of God's elect are among you, and if there be, the Word will find them out. I say, this is our main charge, to be groping for God's elect, and when any of them appear, to tender them most, so shall we show ourselves Angels indeed for the good of God's chosen. More uses I might make, and very many too.

But I will content myself with one more, and that shall be to you that are hearers. If God's Ministers be Angels, then how should you come to the hearing of the word of God? Even as if an Angel should drop down from heaven unto you. How should you receive the Ministers of God that desire to be faithful? Even as the Galatians received Paul, even as an Angel of God, Gal. 4:14, yea even as Christ himself; ye must not look up into the Pulpit, as seeing nothing but a poor mortal man there, but as though an Angel of God were standing there. How grave should our meetings here be? How reverently should ye sit in your Pews? How sacredly should we stand in our desks? How graciously should we deliver God's errands, and you hear them with fear and trembling? When a good Minister appears in the Congregation, it is as if an Angel of heaven appeared unto you to speak unto you. O what a homely manner do we come to Churches? The Majesty of the Word is not seen; nay, we may speak it with shame, neither by us the speakers, nor by you the hearers; we do not come to the Word as if an Angel from heaven had spoken it. But generally most people see little more than a poor mortal creature in the Pulpit, and so they deal with the Word accordingly, &c.

Thus ye have heard the first Doctrine; To the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write. I should now speak of the singular number, he does not say, To the Angels, though there were many Ministers in Sardis, yet he speaks to them all as if they were all one. From whence we are taught the unity that is between true and right Ministers, they are all as one man. And then whereas he inscribes the Epistle, To the Angel of the Church, though he write to all the Church, and blames and condemns all the Church, yet he names none but the Angel; here we are taught, That a Minister shares in the good and in the evil of his Parish: if they be good, it is to his praise; if they be evil, commonly he is guilty of it.

SERMON II.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, &c. - REVEL. 3:1.

I have made an entrance into the words: ye have heard the Analysis of the whole Epistle, and a short exposition, or a paraphrase upon all the verses. Unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write. This is the inscription or superscription of the letter that Christ would have written to the Ministers and Christians in the town of Sardis: Where first ye heard this point of Doctrine, That Ministers are as the Angels of God unto their Parishes. When God sends his Ministers unto a people, it is as if he sent his Angels from heaven unto them. But I will not trouble you with any repetitions.

The next point I foretold you of, that ariseth out of these words, is this, That all the true Ministers of the Church are all one as it were, there is or ought to be an unity between them all, even as if they were

all one Angel, Unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write, and yet the Town was a great Town, and there were many Ministers in it; so we may see it was in Ephesus, the text says, that Paul called all the Elders of the Church of Ephesus together, and said unto them, Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the holy Ghost hath made you overseers, Acts 20:28, he speaks to the Ministers there as to many, and yet S. John is to write to them all as to one Minister, Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, write, Rev. 2:1, noting thus much unto us, That Ministers should be all as one Minister; there should be a sweet harmony and a glorious agreement, and consent and unity between them all, even as if they were all one Minister; so that the doctrine is plain. So again, John prophesying of John Hus, and Jerome of Prague, and other godly Ministers in succeeding ages, that should mightily strive against the primacy and domineering of the man of sin, says, There followed another Angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, Babylon is fallen, Rev. 14:8, he calls them all one Minister, intimating unto us how that they all agree in one.

I do not mean, first, that if one Minister be a drunkard, that all others should be so too; if one be a man-pleaser and a dauber, that all others should be so too; that if one be an ignorant Sir John, all others should be so too; every unity is not good, there is unity as our Savior Christ shows, even among the very Devils in Hell. For if Satan be divided against Satan, how can his Kingdom stand? Mat. 12:26. There is a unity among rogues and thieves, Come, say they, cast in thy lot among us, and let us have one purse, Pro. 1:14. There was unity among Ahab's four hundred false Prophets, they all hung together in a string, Go up and prosper. All the Prophets prophesied so, 1 Kings 22:12, as the messenger said to Micaiah, All the Prophets prophesy good to the King with one mouth, let thy word be like theirs; be not thou singular, be not thou an odd fellow by thyself, they all agreed in one. There was unity among the Priests that were

met together in a Synod for the condemning of Christ, they all were in one note, That he was worthy to die. The Prophet observes that there was unity amongst all the blind watchmen of Judah: They are all ignorant, says he, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber, they all look to their own way, everyone for his gain from his quarter, Isai. 56:10,11. This is a unity the world is full of, nay and hell is full of, like the unity of Sodom against Lot, the men of Sodom compassed his house round, both old and young from every quarter, Gen. 19:4. This is a Devilish unity, this is no true unity. True unity is in Bono, no matter how many are of one mind, and of one heart, and of one accord, if it be not an union in good, it is faction and no union, as Tertullian told the Marcionites when they bragged of their Churches, forsooth they were the Church, saith he, Wasps have their swarms: so when wicked Ministers shall cry, The Church, the Church, I say, these are swarms of Wasps, I do not mean such a unity; when it is not in good, the greater the unity is, the less union is indeed.

Secondly, I do not mean neither, that Ministers should thus hang together in one, that if one be a Boanerges, a son of thunder, another should be so too. For Ministers may be different in different auditories. Husband-men sow their seed according to the diversity of their ground; the Physician tempers his Physic according to his patients constitution: as long as people are of sundry dispositions, so certainly the Ministers manner of preaching may be various. And therefore I do not mean such an unity neither, that all Preachers should be molded alike; nay, the same minister may and must differ from himself, sometimes come with cordials, sometimes with corrosives, to sing of mercy and judgment, to preach comfort to whom comfort, and vengeance to whom vengeance belongs, to some he must give milk, to others strong meat, Heb. 13:14. Paul had a rod as well as the spirit of meekness. Zacharias' Pastor was to have two

staves, the one called Beauty, and the other called Bands, and so he was to feed the flock, Zach. 11:7. A Surgeon hath aching tents as well as suppling oil. The Apostle Paul when he was to deal with Elymas the Sorcerer, he set his eyes on him, and called him the child of the Devil; but when he was to deal with Sergius Paulus, he was mild with him. Our Savior Christ preached the acceptable year of the Lord to some; and to other some as though he were not the same Preacher, he had nothing but woes in his mouth. There were two mountains in Canaan, there was the blessing on mount Gerizim for some, and the cursing on mount Ebal for others.

Again thirdly, we do not mean that all ministers should be the same in gifts and parts, and measure of knowledge and sanctification; for that can never be looked for, every Parish can never be provided for alike. Stars are of different magnitudes, some stars are greater, some lesser: The Angels are not all of one rank, some are ordinary Angels, some Arch-angels, some are Principalities, some are Dominions, some are Thrones, Col. 1:16, and may be, those that are meanest, so they be godly, and sent of God, may do as much good as those that are more excellent; nay more, convert more, awaken more, settle more: for it is not they that work, but God by them, who is not tied unto Organs, unity is not hindered by disparity. Paul calls Epaphroditus who was much inferior to him, his brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, Phil. 2:25. Though Clement were a minister much meaner then he, yet he calls him his fellow laborer, Phil. 4:3. Though Tychicus came never so much short of him, yet he terms him his fellow-servant, Col. 4:7. So that there may be unity for all this, and a gracious sympathy and agreement between ministers, though of never so different parts, so they be sincere and cordially minded to do good.

You will say then, What is that unity that must be among ministers?

I answer 1. They must be all competently endued with ability for the work of the ministry, all must agree in this, that they be able men in some measure. He hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, 2 Cor. 3:6, able to preach to the conscience, able to do it with power and might, able to divide the word aright, able to give everyone his portion in due season. They are none of God's ministers that are not able men, that are not able to teach and to apply, to be the mouth of God unto the people, and the mouth of the people unto God, that are not able to seek that which was lost, to bring again that which is driven away, to bind that which is broken, to strengthen that which is sick. Those that are not able to do this, they are blind guides, Idol-shepherds, and no ministers. Paul says, that a minister must be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers, Tit. 1:9. Faithful men, able to teach others, 2 Tim. 2:2. This was one of the ends that Christ ascended upon high, that he might give gifts unto men for the ministry, as one Apostle speaks, Eph. 4:8, and so as it follows, He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers. All Ministers should agree in this, that they be able.

Secondly, they must be all sent of God, though a man be never so able, yet if he be not sent of God, he is not a Minister. Private Christians many of them have excellent abilities, as the text says, I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another, Rom. 15:14, he speaks of private Christians: I say, they are able many of them, and there is very great use of their abilities too, for the good of their families, for the good of Christian communion, and the like; yea, it is a shame that private Christians living under good means of grace, do not grow able to teach. When for time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the Oracles of God, Heb. 5:12. Mark, he shames private Christians

that do not grow able to teach. But yet this is not enough to make ministers; true ministers agree all in this, that they are sent of God. How shall they preach except they be sent? Rom. 10:15. I have not thrust in myself for a Pastor, says Jeremy. They are intruders and not ministers that cannot prove their commission from God, as the author to the Hebrews says, No man takes this honor to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron, Heb. 5:4. Christ himself alleged this to bear out his ministry, He hath sent me to preach deliverance to Captives. Woe be to those of whom the Lord shall say, I have not sent these Prophets, and yet they run. It will be said to them one day, as to the man without a wedding garment, Friend, how camest thou in hither? The want of this is the reason that so many ministers make no more conscience of their duty, they make no conscience of taking pains, of strict preaching, of pressing the word upon people's hearts, of using all manner of means to root out sin in their Parish, because they have no dispensation from God committed unto them: if their consciences were charged with this, it would make them do otherwise then they do. The want of this is the cause that the ministry of many is impotent, they may preach all the days of their lives, and not one soul turned unto God, but themselves and their works perish together; whereas Ministers that are sent, make the Devils roar, and flesh and blood chafe, their Sermons are links of iron to bind Nobles and Princes, and stubborn hearts. The want of this is the reason why so many ministers are vile in the people's eyes, people care not a whit for them, dare drink and be drunk in their company, dare talk of their roguery before them; as Amnon before Jonadab, Jonadab asked him what he ailed he was so sad: O, says he, I would fain lie with my sister Tamar, 2 Sam. 13:4. He knew before whom he was; if Jonadab had been a godly man, he durst as well have eaten his own tongue, as have told him his base lust. A godly man the very presence of him would have made him ashamed, and to have bitten in his lips. When a minister is unsent of God, nobody

does respect him out of conscience, they care not for his words: whereas when a minister is sent, this makes him as an Angel of God when others call him all to naught, the conscience of many will plead for him, as we see there of Jeremy, O this man is not worthy to die, for he hath spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, Jer. 26:16. There's never a sent minister, but if he come in trouble, except people's consciences be seared with a hot Iron, they will speak for him in their bosoms: Alas! Why is he put down? Why is he imprisoned? Why is he opposed? He hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord. So that this is the second wherein all ministers should agree, they should be all sent of God, not contenting themselves with the calling of man, without being also called of God.

Thirdly, they must all agree in the matter that they preach; the same word is delivered unto all ministers to preach. Preach the word, 2 Tim. 4. The same Gospel, the same Truths, the same Duties, the same Commandments, the same Promises, the same threatening's: Ye know there is one God, and one Faith, and one Baptism, one Lord Jesus Christ; there is but one way of life, one gate to heaven, one salvation, one Bible: Now every minister must agree in this: You know all men are by Nature the children of wrath, in a damned estate; now all Pulpits should agree in this, every minister laboring to bring their people to a sight of their misery by sin; every minister should show his people what cursed creatures they are, until they be converted and renewed; every Minister should press the evil of sin, and open the wiles of Satan, the guilt of the conscience, the spiritualness of the Law, the necessity of humiliation, and repentance, and amendment of life, that there is no mercy but in Christ, no salvation but by Christ; except people take him to live in their hearts by faith. All ministers should let their people know the terror of the Lord, the strictness of God's judgments, the inseparable connection of mercy and a godly life, that no profane person can

enter into God's Kingdom; no hypocrite, no mere civil man; that a form of godliness will not serve turn, that none but Saints shall stand at Christ's right hand at the last day. All ministers should preach what a narrow path there is to Paradise, and how few there be that find it, that saving grace cannot stand with the reign of the least lust, that people must be pure and holy, whatever the world think of pureness, and preciseness, and strictness, yet without this no flesh shall be saved. If all pulpits sounded with these truths, and all ministers cried those aloud, and would lift up their voices like a trumpet, and not spare, what a land should we have? The want of unity in this matter, is the cause that wickedness does so much abound: a drunkard, a whoremaster, a muckworm may come to a Sermon, and go away with hope that he shall have peace. When ministers make the pulpit a scaffold, in which like Masters of Defense they play their prizes, blazon their own wits, descant upon their text, as though the Scripture were a Rattle for children and fools to sport with, tossing it to and fro, hither and thither, as boys at a Tennis: when they go about to amaze their hearers, to mount aloft, to be in their high phrases, and coined words, more like Mimics and Comedians than Ministers; when they search into mouth-eaten Friers, affect allegories, would fain be thought Linguists, and interlace a many of allegations of Latin and Greek sentences, which a School-boy might do with a Polyanthea: or if they speak plain, they skim the truth of the Scriptures, and never dive deep to the edifying of the soul. Maybe they will preach good moral matter. But a man may go to hell, though he do as they teach; people may hear them a thousand times, and no man made to cry out, What have I done? They preach of repentance, but then they open it so slightly, that a man may repent as they say, and be damned: they preach of faith in Christ, but they make it so broad, that thousands have it and sink into the bottomless pit with it: they preach that sin must be forsaken, and a good life must be led, but they handle it in that wise, that their

hearers may do as they say, and yet have no more grace then a reprobate, nor so much neither. Now beloved, the unity among brethren should be this, to agree in the right matter of preaching, that the word may be carved to all, as their need is, that they may see their own cases, that they may understand the wiles of the Devil, the fallacies of their own evil hearts, the counterfeits of faith and repentance, and new obedience, and that they may not be cozened with them. This is the third thing.

Fourthly, they should all agree in the true manner of preaching. That which our Savior says of hearing, Take heed how ye hear, Luke 8:18, he means of preaching too, let your Ministers take heed how they preach. Beloved, we that are the Ministers of God, we are to labor to turn Lions into Lambs, and to transform the heart of man, to breed new creatures unto God: and therefore it is not every kind of preaching will serve the turn.

1. Then Ministers should agree in preaching with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, as Paul says, not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of no effect, 1 Cor. 1:17, q.d. If we should preach wit, and learning, and eloquence, then the death of Christ would be of no effect, that is, no man would be converted, Christ would be offered to none; therefore we must preach nakedly, to flash the naked word into men's consciences, that they may see, Thus saith the Lord against their sinful courses, thus saith the Lord of their estates, this reproof is from the Lord, this threat is from the Lord, thus saith the Lord, you are a wretch, this is thy sin, and this is thy cursed condition, and it is the Lord and not I that does affirm it. It is said of Christ that he preached with authority, and not as the Scribes, Matth. 7:29. What is it to come with authority? When a man speaks from God to the consciences of men; as when a Constable comes in the name of a King, I charge you in the Kings name; this is

to come with authority. Therefore we should not come with the affectation of wit, or of reading, of fine and filed speaking. You will say, What, would you have us be foolish in our preaching? I answer, Never object so, for it is the foolishness of preaching, that saves them which believe, 1 Cor. 1:21, as one says, we must preach Christ crucified in a crucified phrase. The world would have gewgaws, and garish garnishing's: and why so? Because the naked Word is contrary to flesh and blood; like some eyes, they must have their silks and their cypresses to look upon the Sun by, forsooth the Sun beams are too glorious and shining otherwise. *Pedestris oratio*, as Jerome speaks, a Minister must have a foot-speech, and not speak a horseback, with trappings, and tassels, and decking's. Though this be foolishness unto some, yet it is wisdom to them that are of God. We speak wisdom to them that are perfect, 1 Cor. 2:6. Mark, they that are perfect will accept it to be wisdom it is foolishness only to children and sots, and such as are not able to discern. God will have his mercies hidden under homely out-sides, that men that will stumble at them, may; as men hide treasure under straw; as the woman of Baharim hid the two Worthies of Israel in a well under a course sack. Can gallant preaching make people pluck out their right eyes, and deny their own selves and ways? No, no, when the heart sees it hath to do with God, nothing but this will pull it down: away then with our own affections, let us labor to come with God into our pulpits, that people may see God dealing with them.

2. Ministers should agree to preach differentiating, to distinguish between the precious and the vile, the clean and the unclean; as we must not bruise the broken Reed, but deal gently with it: so we must not give children's bread unto dogs, Matth. 15:29, we must not cast our seed into fallow ground: but we must let the fallow ground feel our ploughs tearing: we must not fling pearls before swine, nor bitter arrows against Christ his Lambs. This were as if we should call for

snow in Summer, and rain in harvest. No, no, a whip for the Horse, and a bridle for the Ass, and a rod for the Fools back, Prov. 26:3. If people be like Mules, that will not understand, we must put in a Bit into their mouths: If people will have their own ways, our word must be fires, and hammers, and axes, and chesils, and swords, and spears, that their bellies may tremble, and rottenness may enter into their bones.

You will say, Why then belike we must have nothing in our mouths but hell and damnation.

I answer, No, nothing but hell and damnation for the naught.

You will say, that will drive them to despair.

Why then let it: it were well if we had our people there, they must despair before they come to mercy, as Hezekiah says, O Lord, I am oppressed, do thou comfort me, or undertake for me, Isai. 38:14. People must be oppressed with our Sermons, we must lay load and burdens on their consciences, or they will never be fitted for comforts and Christ's undertakings. True, the servants of the Lord must be gentle unto all men, 2 Tim. 2:24, and suffer the wickedness of all very patiently, praying if at any time the Lord will give them repentance, that the Devil may let them go. Nothing but hell and damnation is not good; we must not be like James and John, that would needs be calling for fire to come down from heaven to consume the Samaritans: no, we must be longsuffering, but yet we must not let a wicked man live, but we must give him his deaths wound by the stab of the Word, lest his blood be required at our hands.

3. Ministers should agree in preaching with all their strength constantly, and duly, not quadragesimal Sermons only, or the like:

but the Apostle commands Ministers to preach in season, and out of season, 2 Tim. 4:2. It is a wicked cavil of some, and it is the Devil that doth suggest it, It is not good to cloy the people, is it not fair to preach once a Sabbath? Must we have two, and a week day, too? This is overmuch, this is unseasonable, that people should trudge and trot to Sermons when they should be at their callings. Well, be it so, that it is out of season, we must preach out of season too, all will be little enough. I am sure the Prophet Haggai the word of the Lord came to him twice in one day, Hag. 2:10,20. Austin used constantly to preach twice a day, as appears in his 2nd Sermon upon the 88th Psalm, nay in one place he says he preached thrice. Do not wonder my dear brethren, si hodie ter sermonem, that I have preached three times this one day. And he adds this besides, that it was not without cause, in his 33rd Sermon to his brethren in the Wilderness. Nay, the ancient Fathers preached every day in the year, as it is well known to them that are used to read them. Chrysostom in his Homilies upon Genesis, shows this almost in the beginning of every Homily. And one time perceiving his hearers somewhat few: O (says he) every hour in the day is seasonable for you to hear, nay the night is not unseasonable. Paul prolonged himself unto midnight, says he, Acts 20. I pray did the time hinder him? No though he were for a journey the next day, yet he would not think much to break his nights rest. Another time preaching by candlelight, O, says he, do you see this same lamp? Take away the oil, you put out the light; even so it is with the gifts of the Spirit, the dullness of our hearing, the littleness of our profiting at once, our readiness to decline except we be pricked forward, our aptness to forget God, the commandment of having the word to dwell richly in us, the duty of meditating in it day and night, do plainly enforce this preaching.

You will say, If Preachers should preach often, it would be but prating; we cannot preach often and soundly.

I answer, it is false: for all that I see, the ablest Divines have preached the most often, as Calvin, and Luther, and Wycliffe, and others, and Mr. Greenham; nay, Austin preached extempore that Sermon of his upon the 95th Psalm; it seems that he expected his brother Severus to come and preach for him: but his friend failing to come, he preached himself, as Dr. Don relates the story: So Basil also preaching two Sermons upon the works of God that he made in the six days, Genes. 1, confesses he had no more premeditation, then that very morning when he began to preach them. Thus many holy men by setting themselves to be instant in God's harvest time, have had such a door of utterance opened unto them to speak the mystery of Christ, that like wise Scribes, they could, as occasion was offered, bring forth out of their Treasuries, new and old. Who are they that cry down often preaching, whatever color they would seem to have, be such as would cover their own shame by backbiting the diligence of any of their brethren. Like the Fox in the Fable, that because he wanted a tail himself to hide his own filthiness, persuaded the other beasts to cut off theirs too, pleading forsooth, O it is cumbersome, and weighty, and ye were better be without; but the truth was, it was only to hide his own deformity, which were it once in fashion to be without tails, should never be espied. A worthy Divine cites an excellent admonition of Jerome to Calphurnius, upon the like occasion to this, That if he wanted teeth himself, he should not be envious against them which were able to eat. Beloved, I do urge an equality of labor upon all; but this is most certain, that we are bound every one of us, to honor the Lord with all our strength, and to study the edification and salvation of our people's souls with all our might. It is a shame that ever our people should meet together at Church, and we not take compassion upon them, to quicken them with some word of exhortation or other. The Evangelists note of our Savior, that when he saw a company about him, he had compassion on them and taught them, Mar. 6:34. Whereupon was his Sermon in the mount,

but because he saw a company about him? Whereupon was that Sermon of our Savior, Matth. 13? It was because there was a company of people before him. Certainly, if we had compassion on our people, we would do so too: If we were not too worldly and dead hearted ourselves, as we are, we would never plead against it. Many talk much of the Fathers, O the Fathers, the Fathers, and they do not love these upstart Divines, but it were well they would learn of the Fathers. Tertullian says, there was never any public meeting in his days, but before the Congregation was dissolved, they were fed with a Sermon. Nay, Babington, a reverend Bishop among us, That a Minister can no more enter into the Congregation without a Sermon, and not be guilty, then Aaron could enter into the Congregation at any time without death, in case he sounded not his Bells when he entered. I might add many other particulars concerning the manner of preaching, wherein all Ministers should agree, but these shall suffice for fear I want time. 1. They should preach in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. 2. They should preach differentiating, putting a distinction between the precious and the vile. 3. They should preach constantly and to the utmost of their endeavors. This is the fourth thing wherein all Ministers should agree.

Fourthly, they should agree in seeking of the Lord for a blessing on their labors, they should be earnest with God in the behalf of the people. Alas! How else do they expect to convert any men unto God? For when we preach, what do we do? We do but as Gehazi, who brought Elisha's staff to raise the dead child. Poor man! He could not raise it: for though he had Elisha's staff, he had not Elisha's spirit: So, my brethren, we do but bring our Masters staff, and therefore we should entreat him to send down his Spirit; otherwise the dead cannot stand up. We trim up a Sermon, and put we trim it well, nevertheless what is this? But as the rigging of the sails, and what

will that do except the wind blow? So we should pray that the wind should blow upon our sails, and then the ship shall go indeed, as our Savior Christ says, The wind bloweth where it listeth, Joh. 3:8. The wind is free. When we have preached all that ever we can, yet the wind is free, whether it will blow or no. The Spirit of God is not tied to blow upon our endeavors, that they may have good success. What are Organs without breath? What is Paul's planting, or Apollos his watering, without God's giving of the increase? The Apostle tells us it is just nothing, 1 Cor. 3:7. As a Divine makes the similitude; when one heard what admirable victories Skanderbeg's sword had wrought, he would needs see it; and when he saw it, says he, This is but an ordinary sword: alas, what can this do? Skanderbeg did him word, I have sent thee my sword, but I have the Arm that did all by it: So, beloved, we have Christ's sword, but we have not Christ's arm, and therefore let us pray him, that he would together with our preaching, reach forth his arm, and that will do our people good; without this, poor Preachers are we all, we may cut at men's sins, but they will never off without him: we may show people the great things of the Gospel, we may invite people to come in, to lay hold on eternal life; but O for Christ's arm! And therefore we should study as much how to pray, as to preach. The want of this is that which mars all. Maybe we preach well, but we are not earnest with God to give a blessing, we do not bewail the sins of our people, we do not lay to heart the things that provoke Almighty God, we do not get into the case, wherein God may prove all our pains.

Fifthly, Ministers should all agree in the watching over the souls of men. Preaching to, and praying for our people, is not the whole of a Ministers duty; but we should observe our people, and watch over them, as the Apostle says; Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, Heb. 12:17. And indeed how can we preach unto the purpose, except we watch them

that are committed to our charge? As Solomon says, Be thou diligent to know the estate of thy flocks, and look well to thy Herds, Pro. 27:23. This was Paul's course to inquire into the estate of people, how it fared with them. This was the news that he asked after, his desire was to know how grace went forward in the Ephesians hearts. I hear of your faith, says he, Eph. 1:15. It seems he had been asking of it. Thus Epaphras told him of the Colossians estate. Thus he learned by some of the house of Chloe, the state of the Corinthians. Nay, all men will inquire and hearken after the health of their friends; parents, if their children be at the University, they will listen after them how they go on in learning. So should the Angels of every Church, they should listen what courses are in their Town, what sins break out, what corruptions appear, what proficiency the good ones make, who grow, who decline, who stand at a stay, who go aside, and wax worse and worse, that they may shape their preaching accordingly, that their words be fitted in their mouth, that they may apt their rebukes, their exhortations, their uses answerably. For then will their Sermons be like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver. It is no curiosity in Ministers to be inquisitive into their people's courses. It is the Objection of ill-minded ones, say they, What need Ministers busy themselves? They must have their tell-tales, we can do nothing but they must hear of it. O beloved, we can never preach fruitfully if we stop our ears with wax, and will not listen what our hearers do.

Sixthly, Ministers should agree in ordering their own conversations aright, it is but a folly else to be a Minister, we do but make repentance dearer, and at a higher price. A Bishop must be blameless, as the Steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, nor to filthy lucre, Tit. 1:7. It is a double wickedness for a Minister to be wicked, to be a company-keeper, to be a pot-companion, as God said to Aaron, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generation, that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer

the bread of his God, Levite. 21:17. We can never do good, if we blemish ourselves with vice. True it is, the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments do not depend upon the quality of the Minister; the seed sown in good ground may grow, though the sower had a dirty hand. Gold is gold, though it be in the hand of a thief; yet such is our weakness, that they are weak to us. People are apt to respect the Word and Sacraments the less, when they see the Minister is not holy, as we see in Eli's wicked sons; for men abhorred the offerings of the Lord, 1 Sam. 2:17. Their eyes must be taught as well as their ears. Those things, says Paul, which ye have heard and seen in me, do. Phil. 4:9. Except with Thomas in another case, they see, they will not believe. Let a Minister be never so godly, he shall do good little enough. The Prophet Isaiah, though a holy man, yet he complains he labored in vain. Now if a godly man can do but little good upon the most, much less can a wicked Minister. A true Minister must be able to say as Gideon, Look on me, and do likewise, as I do, so shall ye do, Judge. 7:17. Ministers must be examples unto the Flock, 1 Pet. 5:3. First cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the moat out of thy brothers eye. As it is said of Ezra, Ezra had prepared his own heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel, Ezra 7:10. Our Savior Christ did and taught, as Luke speaks. This is the course of a Minister indeed, to do his own Sermons. When a Minister does not do what he teaches, this makes him a vile person; nay, this makes him ridiculous. Like Lucians Apothecary, who had medicines in his shop to cure the cough, and told others that he had them, and yet was troubled with it himself. With what a forehead canst thou stand in a Pulpit, and publish the laws of God, and to undertake the charge of souls, that when thine own nakedness appears, when thy tongue is of a larger size then thy hands, thy ministry is divided against itself, thy courses gives thy doctrine the lie; thou sayest that men must be holy, and thy deeds do declare thy mouths hypocrisy, thou dost more

mischief then an hundred others, as ` Peter says of wicked Ministers, Many will follow their pernicious ways, 2 Peter 2:2, one Minister shall have many followers. A good Minister shall hardly get two or three to follow him. But when a Minister is wicked, he shall have many that will follow him. From the Prophets of Jerusalem, profaneness is gone forth into all the Land, Jerem. 23:15. If the springs be tainted, that taint runs forth into all the streams. People think themselves safe on an Ale-bench, when they have gotten the Parson with them; this hardens their hearts a thousand times more. But a true Minister is a godly man. Now when Ministers agree in godliness, this is another branch of this unity.

Seventhly and lastly, Ministers should agree in concord and in amity, even as all dear fellow-servants, as Paul says of Epaphras, the Minister of the Colossians, As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful Minister of Christ, Col. 1:7. Being to write to the Colossians, ye see what a tender care he hath of Epaphras, he labors to commend him to his people, that they may regard him the more. It is a horrible sin when one Minister will gird at another that is faithful, and that in the presence of some of his people. This helpeth the Devil to harden people's hearts against him, that he cannot do the good that otherwise he might do; when other Ministers will revile him, and traduce him, and speak filthy words, such as their malice doth prompt them with, Paul did not thus. When he knew Timothy was to go to Philippi, he does most dearly commend him unto them. O, says he, I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your estate, Philip. 2:20. So our Savior Christ, how much did he countenance and back John the Baptists Ministry, to the encouraging of all that heard him? Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, Matth. 11:11. O it is an excellent thing when Ministers do not

envy one another, when they love one another, and will live together in blessed Harmony: Thus ye see what this unity should be.

The Reasons of this point, why Ministers should all agree thus, and be all as one, are:

First, because this makes Ministers amiable in their people's eyes, it commendeth their Ministries unto the consciences of their hearers, as the Prophet Isaiah says, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, the publishers of peace, &c. Isa. 52:7. You will say, How is that? How comes his feet to be beautiful? It follows in the eighth verse, Thy watchmen shall lift up their voice, with a voice together shall they sing. Mark, that was it that made his feet beautiful; because all the watchmen were of one note, they sung with one voice together: look as one preached, so preached another, one did not pull down what another built up, one did not preach more pleasing doctrine to the flesh than another; but they all sung in one Tune, they all were of one heart.

Secondly, as it makes the Ministry more beautiful and comely, so it makes it the more powerful, when the Ministers are all of one mind in the Lord, when they all draw one way, all walk by the same Rule, all set themselves to do good, and to promote one another's good. I say, this makes the Ministry the more powerful and profitable. The Apostle speaking of an ignorant man coming into the Church to hear the Minister preach, he shows how powerful the Word may be unto him, 1 Cor. 14:25. O says he, the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he worships God; that is, the Sermon is made effectual unto him, and turns his wretched heart. But observe now, how this comes to pass, the Text shows in the four and twentieth verse, it is by reason of the unity of the Ministers, He is convinced of all, he is judged of all; that is, all the

Ministers were of one note, they all were in one consent, one did not preach looser doctrine then another, one told him he was a very wretch, and another told him he was a very wretch, and a third convinced him he was a very wretch; all had a blow at him: O thought he, I, I, I am a very wretch indeed; this burst his heart. If he could have heard any one of them preach easier doctrine, may be that would have given his conscience some foolish ease, and so the man had gone away never the better, but when he was convinced of all, and judged of all, this strikes him dumb. So, beloved, when a man can go into no Church, but everywhere he is met with, all the Ministers condemn him, all their lives condemn him, and all their Sermons condemn him to the pit of hell, and he can scramble comfort nowhere; if the man belong to God, this is the readiest way to beat him down, and subdue his heart. On the contrary side, when a man is wounded at one Ministers Sermon, by and by he drops into another, and there he catches hold of some ease: this makes him go on in his sins, and to blind his eyes against the truth. It is a great stumbling block unto the people this very thing.

Thirdly, as it makes the Ministry more powerful, so it brings more glory unto God. As it is said of John the Baptist, that when our Savior did commend him, and made the people see, that he was of Johns mind, and that he held the same Tenets, and that he would not speak against a tittle that John had delivered, but testified his unity with him; And made it appear what a reverend esteem he had of him: saith he, He is a Prophet, and more than a Prophet. Ye shall see how this brought glory to God. The Text saith, When the people heard this, and the Publicans, they justified God, being baptized with the Baptism of John. Luk. 7:29.

The use of this is, first, to condemn such as envy their fellow-Ministers, and will not be in the unity of mind, and heart, and life

with them. In the most, the Proverb is too true, Figulus figulo invidet. One potter hates another, one Tradesman envies another's custom, so, one Minister, another: if there be a Minister that desires to pour out his soul in the doing of good, in the taking of pains, in the discharging of his Conscience, there are some that will envy such a one, their hearts rise up against him; nay, not only so, but the worst Enemy that Jeremy had, was Pashur, one of his own Coat, Jer. 20:2. The sorest adversary that Amos had, was Amaziah, a Priest of Bethel, who would never leave heaving at him until he had gotten him away, Amos 7:12, and why so! Because he would not preach such pleasing Doctrine as he. Forsooth, the Land was not able to bear Amos his words, he Preaches as if he would scare people out of their wits. He preaches Schismatically, and as if he loved to be singular. The chief Priests were furious against our Savior Christ, because his Ministry was more blessed than theirs was, nay, they hated him more than Pilate, Pilate a very Pagan, his Conscience told him he found no fault in him, Why what evil hath he done? Their envy against Christ was so palpable, that he did discover it. He knew that for envy they had delivered him unto him. So when all the Country know in their Consciences that such and such teach the ways of God sincerely, set themselves to root out sin, and to save souls, nay, the very Drunkards you shall hear them say, I, I, he is a good man, God's blessing on his heart, he tells us our faults, we may do what we list for all such and such, but he tells us of our faults, and God help us to amend them, and when they are sick, they would rather have such a Ministers prayers, then twenty of other Ministers, that will soothe them up, and be hail-fellow with them: Whereas there be many of our own Coat, that are implacable against a Minister, that labors to be faithful. How contrary is this unto the Rule? The Ministers of God should be all one, and if one be godly, all should be, if one painful, all should be so, if one preach home to the conscience, all should do so, they should all live as Brethren. What says our Savior Christ? Ye are

the Salt of the Earth, but if the Salt hath lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men, Matth. 5:13. That is, Salt may season others, but if it have lost its savor, nothing can salt it.

A Minister is of an excellent calling, appointed to season men's hearts, but if he have lost his savor, he can never truly be seasoned again, nothing can do him good. An evil Minister, is a more desperate forlorn man than any else.

Secondly, Another use is, that all that are the Ministers of God would be hence stirred up to be all of one mind, all drawing one way, all bending our forces to one and the same end, the glory of God, and the salvation of our people. Its a fine comely thing to see any Brethren in unity. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments: as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commended his blessing, even life for evermore, Psal. 133:1,2,3. I say this is a very comely thing, to see any brethren to dwell together in unity, it is like the perfume of Aaron, that made all his garments fragrant sweet, it is like the dews of Hermon and Zion, that made all the ground fruitful, this is that which hath the Lord's blessing annexed to it, it is an excellent means unto eternal life. As the Apostle saith, If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies: Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, Philip. 2:1,2, if it be so necessary for Brethren to be united; how much more for Brethren in the Ministry? Of all men, Ministers have most reason to be of one mind, because we are to teach union unto others. Besides, if we desire to do what we

are commanded to do, we shall have enemies enough in the world. Our Tribe is a hated Tribe. Of all Offices, the office of a reprover is the most unwelcome. Paul was counted an enemy, because he told the Galatians the truth. Micaiah was hated because he dealt truly with Ahab: people love their lusts, as their members, yea, as themselves: Ergo of all men we are most hated. Every man is believed in his own profession but we; People do not hate Tailors that make them a good garment, nor a Shoe-maker that makes them a good Shoe, nor a Cook that makes them a good Feast, nor a Physician that makes them a good potion, nor a good Lawyer that makes them a good suite, though these do but provide for the body, and yet we that provide for people's souls, if we make them a good Sermon that would save their souls forever, so they would obey it; we are hated for our labor. Ergo, when Moses came to speak of Levi, that were the Ministers of Israel, he prays God, that God would deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, Lord smite through the loins of them that hate him, Deut. 33:11. I say we have many enemies in the world, and therefore we had need to hang together, whoever be at odds, we should stick close. Our message is hardly believed, and therefore we had need to be all of one mind. The word which we preach is adverse to flesh and blood, and therefore we had need all jointly to obey it, otherwise how do we think that we shall persuade any others?

Force, the more united the more strong. O if we would all join forces in one, we might make all our Parishes quake! All the wicked round about, their very hearts would be ready to fail them, if every Pulpit did rouse them. If they could come in no Church, but they were made to sit upon thorns, I verily believe, few would have any heart to go on in their evil doings.

Thirdly, another Use is, how we see it is a very useful and a profitable thing, that one good Minister should now and then come and help another, and preach for another, that our people may see our consent, that we all preach the same thing, and that is not our private preaching, but all the Ministers that are of God, are just of the same mind: This made the Apostle, whensoever he was to write to a people, that he knew would be somewhat backward to believe them, he would join other Ministers with him, as consenting together with him. Indeed when he wrote unto Timothy, he would not do it, for he knew that he did not need, he knew the faithfulness of his heart. But when he writ to the Corinthians, where false Apostles had been, and had made many of them to doubt, he joined Sosthenes with him, as it were confirming the same thing, 1 Cor. 1:1, when he wrote to the Galatians, he told them he had Peter on his side, and Barnabas and Titus, and James and John, and how the Apostles gave unto him the right hand of Fellowship, Gal. 2:1. 9. He writing to the Philippians, he joins Timothy with him. Phil. 1:1. And so writing to Philemon, about a thing, that though he hoped Philemon would do, yet because he knew he might have many carnal reasons against it, he joins another with him, Philem. 1. This is of very good use, when one good Minister comes and backs another's Ministry. For as it is with men-pleasing Ministers, that make as if the way to heaven were easier than it is, people hope that other Ministers will come, and confirming it, make it good. Ezek. 3:6. O they love such a Doctrine alive, and they hope there will be more of that mind: So when they hear a strict Minister, that delivers the Word to them as it is, and as they shall find it at last day, tush, this is so uncouth, that they hope that it is but the opinion of their precise Minister, and that nobody else is of his mind. Now when God shall bring a cloud of witnesses, it is I say, of very good use. I confess that when a Minister speaketh the truth, though nobody else come to set it on besides him, he shall be a witness against all the people that will not believe, and vexed at the

voice of his preaching. Noah condemned all the world, albeit there were none but he. But yet symphony and agreement, and the consent of the Ministers of God, is an Ordinance of God when it may conveniently be had.

Thus I have spoken of this second point of Doctrine, of the unity of Ministers, To the Angel of the Church in Sardis. I acknowledge this point is not so much for the general profit of you all. But you must bear with me, for handling of it. We shall come now to you ere long. For I am sure, if any portion of Scripture may do us good, in these dead times, the Treating of this Epistle may. And yet it is not lost time, to speak unto the Ministers, if by any means I may provoke myself, and my Brethren, to the abounding in the unity of the Spirit, and of Faith, and heart and mind, for the further spreading and enforcing of good.

SERMON III.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write: these things, saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead. - REVEL. 3:1.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write.

Ye have had two Doctrines from hence, concerning God's Ministers: I told you there is one more, and then I have done, and so will proceed. The Doctrine is this:

That a Minister may be in fault, that the people are dead, that they have no more heart to good things, that they are so ignorant, so cold, so ungodly, so worldly, so vain as they are.

I say the Minister may be in the fault; The point is very clear from this place. The Lord being to reprove the people here of Sardis, for their deadness in Religion, he directs his reproof to their Minister. To the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write: I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead.

He accuses the Minister for the deadness of the Church, that was committed to his charge, he means the Church, but he speaks to the Minister. You will say, how do ye prove that he means the Church? I Answer, there be three places that do manifest the same. The one is Revel. 1:4. There John tells us, that he indeed writes to the Churches, for that in the inscription of every Epistle, the Minister only be named. John to the seven Churches in Asia. So that this latter is sent to the Church that is in Sardis. John means it to the Church, and not only to the Minister. A second place is Rev. 1:11, what thou seest write to the seven Churches in Asia, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The third is, the conclusion of every Epistle. Where it is said thus: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, Rev. 3:6, and so it is at the closure of every Letter, to all the rest of the Churches, and therefore the Holy Ghost there accuses the Church of Sardis of deadness. I know thy works that thou art dead, and yet he directs it to the Minister of the Church, as a thing that concerns him, and that may be laid to his charge, and that he is faulty in. To the Angel of the Church in Sardis write. I know thy works that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead. That is, thou hast a dead-hearted people, and thou art the cause of it: Thou dost not do thy duty, thou dost not do what lies in thee for to quicken them. But thou

art too remiss in thy Ministry, and therefore their deadness may be imputed unto thee. Thus you see the Doctrine is very plain from the words. The good or bad estate of a people dependeth much upon the Minister. Commonly we see it so fall out, as the Prophet Hosea said, Like people, like Priest, Hos. 4:9. Like shepherd like sheep. Such as the builder is, such is the building, as is the Husbandman, so is the husbandry. This we may find throughout all these Epistles, where the Minister is commended, the people are commended. Where the Minister is taxed, the people are taxed. And therefore they stand and fall together, they swim and sink together, a wicked Minister, a wicked people, an ignorant Minister, an ignorant people; and so a good Minister, the people either are a good people, or else they are Monsters; nay, if the Minister be good, though the world in his Parish be never so wretched, yet he hath a good people, the Church of God in his Parish, is very good, commonly.

Well then, we have gotten our point out. The Minister may be in fault, that the people are dead, I do not say, it is always thus. For first, the Minister may be lively, and yet the people dead. The Lord tells us that Ezekiel had a stiff hearted people, Ezek. 2:4, and yet he was not to be blamed, themselves were in all the fault. So Isaiah had a dull hearted people: All the day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gain-saying people, Rom. 10:21, and therefore I do not say it was always thus.

Nay, Secondly, sometimes the people are the cause of the Ministers deadness. The Jews hardness of heart under the Ministry of Jonas, was the cause why Jonas had no heart to go unto Nineveh. O thought he, if Israel will not hear me, much less will Nineveh hear me. Thus the people deadened Jeremiah at one time, that he had little or no heart to preach for a fit. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak anymore in his name, Jer. 20:9. Thus Ezekiel was

deadened a while, by his people too. I came to them of the Captivity at Telabib, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days, Ezek. 3:15. The Lord was fain to rouse his heart up, and to tell him he would require their blood of him, before he could pluck up a good heart to Preach livelily among them; The people deadened him. Nay more,

Thirdly, sometimes the Lord locks up his good Ministers, and suffers them to be straitened in their utterance, and other gifts. Maybe the people are ready to lay all the blame upon their Ministers. O how tongue-tied are they! And it is their negligence, and torpor: Whereas it is for the people's sins, thus the Lord locked up Ezekiel, for the people's sins. I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover, for they are a rebellious house, Ezek. 3:26. Nay,

Fourthly, Sometimes people's sins are the cause why their Ministers are quite dead, and have no life at all in them, the Lord sends foolish Ministers among them, merely because of their sins. So it was in Hosea's time. The Prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitudes of thy iniquity, Hos. 9:7. Mark, they had fools for their Ministers; fools, besotted Ministers, giddy Ministers, Ministers that were wild, and like mad men; you will say, these were the causes of much sin to the people: No, saith the Text, the people's sins were the cause of such Ministers. The Prophet is a fool, the spiritual man mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity. These four exceptions then there been of the point. Otherwise the point is too too true, that the Minister may be in fault that the people are dead.

You see here the Church of Sardis was grown dead, and the Lord faults the Angel of the Church for it. I know thy works that thou art dead. The like is said of Laodicea. Laodicea, was grown horrible

lukewarm, no zeal of God, they were neither hot nor cold, and the Lord imputes it to the Angel of Laodicea: I know thy works, that thou art neither hot nor cold, and therefore I will spew thee out of my mouth, Rev. 3:14,15,16. The same is said of the Church of Ephesus, that they had left their first love, and yet the Lord hits the Angel in the teeth with it. I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love, Rev. 2:4. Beloved, the last day I spake of the Ministers concord and unity, to the Angel of the Church, all the Ministers should be as one man, as if they made up one and the same Angel. And therefore our Savior Christ made choice of Brethren, and Kinsfolks. Simon and Andrew his Brother, James and John his Brother. St. Peters bark is a fisher-boat, not a man of War, it is not furnished with mortal Engines, but only with nets to catch fish. If Peter were reprov'd for drawing upon Malchus, what reproof had he been worthy of, if he had drawn upon any of his fellows? This was the Theme, that we spake of the last day. Now then let us speak of the influence that a Minister hath in his people, he may be the cause of his people's deadness, if he do not take heed. And this he may be three ways; first, by his not preaching; secondly, by his dead manner of preaching; thirdly, by his dead manner of Life, and Conversation.

First, I say, by his not preaching, ye know the Word of God is the word of life, Phil. 2:16. The Word is that which quickeneth the heart, as David saith, Thy Word hath quickened me, Psal. 119:50. Now when Ministers do not preach it, this dead's people's hearts. We see this in those places where the due preaching of the Word is wanting, people are dead to all goodness; nay, they that had some quickness in them before, do lose them more and more: As Solomon saith, Where there is no vision the people perish, Prov. 29:18, that is, where preaching is defective, the people die, they are spiritually dead in trespasses, and in sins. Can a man live without bread, or without food? No more can people live without constant preaching. The

Word is the bread of life, now when this is not broken unto people, they must needs die. Mark, how Zacharias describes them that are without preaching, They are such as fit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, Luk. 1:79, that is, they are blind and ignorant, and lifeless, dead while they live, they are wicked, and abominable, in the power of Satan, under the wrath of God, strangers from the life of God; such Ministers as do not preach constantly, they are soul-murderers, they are guilty of their people's blood, they do not give them that which should quicken them up unto eternal life, they should quicken them up unto newness of life, but they do not; they should pour in the words of eternal life into their hearts, but they do not; people are naturally dead to Prayer, and dead to communion with God, and dead to all holiness, they have no heart to pureness and righteousness of walking, and such Ministers do not study to revive them.

Secondly, as a Minister may be the cause of his people's deadness by his not Preaching, so he may be the cause of their deadness by his Preaching, when the manner of it is dead. Preaching may be dead in the manner of it, seven ways,

First, When it is too general, when they preach only in general. That which we say is very good, for the general, but we do not apply ourselves, to every particular man's Conscience, this dead's people's hearts. Beloved, it is particular Preaching that does people good. When Nathan told David, Thou art the man, 2 Sam. 12:7, this stirred David's heart. When Peter had said to his hearers, Ye have crucified Christ, Act. 2:36. This pricked them to the heart. General preaching cannot quicken. First, because generals cannot act. Actio est singularium, as we say. Its only a particular, works. Let a man preach home and in particular, and this will work on the hearers. This made Michah a powerful Preacher, when he preached particularly to his

people's Conscience. Truly, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin, Mich. 3:8, this made him a powerful Prophet to quicken up his people, because he told every man his sin, and smote every man conscience for his transgression. No man is stirred till he feels his case laid open, till he sees the Minister beats upon him, and hit him; till the Minister treads hard upon his toes, he will never cry out.

Secondly, General Preaching leaves the Sermon to the people to apply it; now the people will never apply it while the world stands. Nay, David himself would not apply, as long as Nathan dealt with him in general, as long as Nathan was speaking of a man in the clouds, a rich man that had wronged a poor man, David's heart was as whole as a fish, till he came to Thou art Him. Now he cries out, I have sinned. Nathan was fain to make application. For David would never have done it else: Will a truantly Boy ever whip himself? The Master may lay the rod before him, but except the Master lay it on, he will go scot-free if he can. The words of the wise are as goods and as nails fastened by the Masters of Assemblies, Eccles. 12:11. Mark, the Masters of Assemblies must fasten them into the post, lay the nails by, the post itself will never knock them in; So, though the Sermon be never so good a nail; yet he must knock it in, the people will never do it. The Prophet Jehu must come and say to Jehoshaphat, Shouldst thou help the ungodly? Wrath is upon thee from the Lord, 2 Chron. 19:2. He fastened in the nail; though Jehoshaphat were a good man, yet the Prophet knew he would not do it. Nay, people are so far from applying the word unto themselves, that they will apply it to anybody else rather than to themselves, the Minister met with such a one today, there was a lesson for him: But none will say, this was for me, and I am a vile wretch, and vengeance

hangs over me, unless I do amend, and therefore certainly general Peaching, is a dead manner of preaching.

Thirdly, General Preaching is confused, when Ministers tell people they must repent, and believe, and serve God, and be godly, and carry themselves well, in all their places and callings. When they do thus in general, this is like, as if the trump should give an uncertain sound, like the noise in a battle, a confused noise, as the Prophet speaks, Isa. 9:5. Like the confusion in Ephesus, Great is Diana of the Ephesians, they kept a great stir, Act. 19:32, the Text saith, The assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together, so while we preach only in the general, Great is the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are great sinners, and great is the need of repentance, but we neither tell the people how, nor when, nor who, nor what: maybe our Sermons may keep some putter in men's Consciences, but people have no distinct edification, they go away and say, O it was a very godly Sermon, I pray God give us grace to follow it! But no man is the better. They hear admirable things about repentance, but they are not taught how to go about it, there they are at a loss. They remember gracious things about the serving of God, and about a good Conscience, and the like. But they know not how in the earth to set about these things to any purpose, if ever we would quicken our people's hearts, we must let them see distinctly, the will of God concerning them, the particular means, and helps, and signs of it, the particular motives, and Arguments to it, the particular circumstances of it, the particular hindrances; lets, and impediments of doing of it, and you can never do the will of God, as long as ye do thus and thus, and this course will break your neck, this practice of yours will be your utter undoing: when people hear distinct Preaching, this doth them good, if anything will. General Preaching is like the setting of good Physic before the Patient, without giving him directions for the taking of it.

Fourthly, General Preaching is deceitful, *Est dolus in generalibus*, as we say, there is deceit in the generals, we Preach that people must love God, and fear him, and thank him, and they must be new men, and they must leave their sins, and they must Pray, and hear the Word, and they must do everything to God's glory. Now mark what deceit there is in such preaching as this; this is in the general: People go away, and deceive themselves in the particular. They think they serve God, and they love God, or else they were not worthy to live; they think they say their Prayers every day, and that they are thankful unto him, they never eat their meat, but they say Grace, they never recover out of sickness, but they bless God; Whereas if we should deal with these men in particular, it would appear, they are haters of God, they are graceless and unthankful wretches; they never prayed true Prayer to God in all their lives: hence it is that people generally like a general Minister, Why? They can go along with such a man and be heart-whole. But now if a particular Minister should come and tell them they are worldly, and mockers of God and all goodness, as they are in very good deed; they cannot abide him, they would say wherein? Such were the Jews under the overly Ministry of the Priests. When Malachi dealt particularly with them, saith he, Ye have despised the name of the Lord: Wherein say they? Mal. 1:6. Ye have wearied the Lord with your words: Wherein, say they, have we wearied him? Mal. 2:17. Ye have robbed God: Wherein have we robbed him, say they? Mal. 3:8. Your words have been stout against the Lord, yet their answer was, Wherein have we spoken so much against the Lord? Mal. 3:13. Alas, alas! Their Priests had taught them only in general, and therefore when the Prophet was to deal particularly with them, and told them what vile courses they took, they cried, wherein? And whereof? And why do you say so of us? He was forced to come to particulars. Otherwise they would have gone away and blessed themselves.

Fifthly, General Preaching lets people see their sins if they will. But beloved this will do no good, if we let you see your sins, if you will; we must make you see your sins. Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, Ezek. 16:2. We must not only let you understand, if ye will, it is said of the good Priests, that they caused the people to understand, Neh. 8:8. Naturally people love their own selves and their lusts, and they will not see them till they needs must, they do not love to be precise, they will not willingly yield that they must be so strict, and so mortified, as the Lord Jesus will have them, if they mean to be saved, and therefore if they can put it off they will; show them there is a difference between people and people, some are the people of God, and some are the children of the devil, some are the redeemed of Christ, and some have nothing to do with Christ, some are clean, and some are unclean; though we show them the difference between these two, they will shut their eyes if they can. General preaching does no more, it shows them these things. But may be neither the Minister nor they will see for all that, now we must cause them to discern whether they will or no, if we can. They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean, and the clean, Ezek. 44:23, that is, tell them this is unclean, and this is clean; such and such persons are profane, and such are holy: Hold it before their eyes, cause them to discern; this is the way to quicken men's hearts. Now General preaching does not do thus. It only puts the truth before men, that they may see if they will, but if they will not, it does not urge them, this dead's our people, and does them no good, for people will not be awakened, as long as they can shift it.

Sixthly, General Preaching is aloft and aloof off, particular preaching is the most close, and the most plain, and the most sensible preaching of all, if any Preaching will sink into people's heads, this will: it makes the truth even sensible after a sort, as King James said

of a Reverend Bishop of this Land, that is now dead and gone: This man, saith he, Preaches as if death were at my back. So a press Preacher preaches, as if death were at a man's back, as if judgment and hell were at a man's back, he brings the point home to the souls door, <H&G>. Generals are not plain. Ignorant people are most led by sense. People may live seven years under a general Teacher, and be never the nearer, such a Ministry breeds only swimming knowledge, it does not lay the Truth at every man's door; may be they get knowledge, but their knowledge does them little good: it is said of the good Levites, that they taught the people the good knowledge of the Lord, 2 Chron. 30:22. That is, such a knowledge of the Lord, as made the people good, they laid the Truth at every man's door, they preached to the people as if death were at their backs. They did livelily teach them, and sensibly inform them, this did them good. General preaching is like an Arrow shot at rovers, that does not hit the mark, as if the Minister would lay his Sermon on his Cushion, and never dart it into his people's bosoms. Alas Brethren! If people do not feel our points at their backs, and like spears in their sides, and swords in their bellies, they will feel nothing, it is naked preaching, when we make men's estates even visible before their eyes, when we preach so of God's wrath, as if they saw it, when we so set out Christ, as if he were palpable to men's senses, this quickens and no other, as Paul saith: O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, and crucified among you? Gal. 3:1. Mark, how sensibly he had preached Christ to them, even as if he had held him before their eyes, and therefore he saith, they were even bewitched that they could not see them; q.d. how is it possible that ye should not see him, that ye should not obey the truth, where it hath been so sensibly preached unto you, and painted to the life, even before your very eyes! If any Preaching will quicken, this will, and therefore General Preaching, that will not do the deed.

Seventhly, General Preaching is against the nature of Preaching, for wherefore is preaching, but to take the word of God, and apply it unto people in particular, it is called the dividing of the word of truth aright, 2 Tim. 2:15. When the Minister is a good carver, to divide to every man his portion: Conviction to the ignorant; reproof to the offender; terror to the obstinate; comfort to the broken heart; judgment to the wicked; mercy to the Saints, and true penitent souls; Then the Minister applies it unto every man. Preachers are God's Harvest-men, as our Savior Christ saith: Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his Harvest, Matth. 9:38. Now Harvest-men, what do they do? Do they only bring a scythe or a sickle into the field, and give a slash, a general slash, at one Corn of the field, as though that would fetch down all the Corn? No, they apply it to the Corn, to reap it down. The preaching of a General Sermon is but a sickle, now except it be applied to all the people, it is not the way to reap in God's harvest. Preachers are called Christ's seed-men: The sower went out to sow his seed, Luk. 8:5. Now what does the seedsman? Does he only bring in a sack of seed, and pour it all on a heap in the field? Does he think that every spot of ground will draw it unto itself? No, he sprinkles it, and disperses it abroad, that every Lea may have its part. Whence comes that foolish conceit, that reading is Preaching, a tenet which many hold? The truth is, it comes from hence, because General preaching is made by most Ministers to serve the turn; Now, if this were Preaching, reading were Preaching indeed: But this is no preaching, preaching is the opening of the Word of God, and the applying of it, according as every man hath need. The not doing of this leaves poor people in their hardness and deadness of heart. This is the first. General Preaching is such a manner of preaching, as leaves the heart dead.

Secondly, Moral Preaching is a dead manner of preaching. When Ministers preach honest matter, but do not go to the quick, they

strike at the boughs: They preach against Drunkenness, and intemperance, and malice, and hatred, and tale-bearing, and lying, and covetousness, and making of shows, it is very good to preach against these things, and we must too, and let them know they are far from the Kingdom of God that live in these or any other such lusts. But alas! This is only to strike at the boughs. If we would awake the Conscience indeed, we must preach deeper then so. The axe is laid at the root of the tree, Mat. 3:10. John the Baptist was a lively Preacher; now the Text shows he did not only strike at the boughs, but he laid his axe at the root of the tree. When Ministers preach only good moral matter, this kind of preaching does not quicken.

First, Because Moral preaching does not hit all, many are very Moral people, that have not one whit of grace in their hearts. True, this may hit some. Paul told Felix of his intemperance, and how that there was a day of Judgment to judge all such persons, this made him tremble. Felix trembled, saith the Text, Act. 24:25. I say, moral preaching may startle some, but it does not startle all. Many Heathens have been sober and temperate, and true in their speeches; and just in their dealings; and loving in their carriages; and painful in their callings; as Paul saith, they have done by Nature, the things contained in the Law. Now ye know the Heathens are without grace, and are not acquainted with God, neither have they any communion with God, Pour out thy wrath upon the Heathen, that know thee not, Jer. 10:25. Mark, they have no communion with God, they do not know Jesus Christ, nor the mysteries of saving Grace. So that a man may be very finely moral, and yet be without grace. Now then, if a Minister should content himself with good moral teaching, many would go away, and conclude well of their own estates, though they have no grace.

Secondly, Moral preaching, those that it does hit, it does them indeed some good, but it does them not the good, it never quickens them up

unto eternal life; it seemeth to civilize their lives, and to reform them a little, but it never reneweth them, neither does it put them into Jesus Christ: Let a Drunkard hear he is a damned wretch, if he do not give over his drunkenness, if this Sermon hit him, what does he say? Why then I will be sober, and I will never be a drunkard more. And I can tell you, this is very rare too. But suppose it be, he may go to hell for all this. Suppose we do make all our people moral, which were a fine thing if we could, but grant we could, this does not quicken them together with Christ; No, no, a man must see his vile nature, and loathe himself, and be made to deny himself, to mortify his carnal reason, to put off his corrupt will, to feel his cursed condition in himself, to be emptied of himself, that Christ may be all in all to him, that he may be led by the Spirit of Christ, and guided by the word of Christ, that he may hang only upon the promises of God in Christ, that his mind may be taken up with Christ, and his thoughts and affections daily be labored to be fixed upon the things above, none are alive unto God, but such, Now Moral preaching will never do this.

God-forbid, I should speak against Moral preaching absolutely, or against Morality itself, it is a very good thing; Who will not commend Abimelech for the integrity of his heart, that he pleaded before God? Gen. 20:5. Ye know how the Lord himself liked of it; who will not say but that the young man in the Gospel, was a very commendable man, that had observed all these from his youth: Nay, the Text saith, That Christ, in some sense, did love him, Mark. 10:21. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar what an excellent thing Morality was. O! Saith he, If thou wilt break off thy sins, and be righteous, he means Moral righteousness towards man; if thou wilt show mercy to the poor, it may be God will lengthen thy tranquility, Dan. 4:27. The Prophet Isaiah tell the Moabites, what a deal of good they might do to themselves, if they would but be morally honest: saith he, Take

Counsel, execute Judgment, hide the outcasts, let mine outcasts be with thee, Isa. 16:3. Q. d. If thou wilt be kind and loving to my people, thou shalt fare the better. When the King of Babylon punished the wickedness of Tyre, the Lord rewarded them very richly for it. I have given him the Land of Egypt for his labor, saith God, because he wrought for me, Ezek. 29:20. Moral goodness is commended of God, as well as spiritual goodness in Jesus Christ; Nay, it is needful that Ministers should insist very much in pressing of moral duties, and the godly are to be willing to hear such Sermons, to look to just dealing, to Civil honesty, to justice between man and man; How abundant is the Scripture in urging this Theme! It is thought by some, there is no Divinity in this, and such a Minister is not deep enough, and why does he stand so much upon such things as these, which the light of nature calls for. But these do greatly err, the Holy Ghost is careful to urge such duties as these, to be honest. Walk honestly towards them that are without, saith the Apostle, 1 Thess. 4:12. Let us walk honestly as in the day, saith he, Rom. 13:13. Provide things honest in the sight of all men, Rom. 12:17. Nay, honesty, civil honesty between man and man is a sweet thing; the Apostle himself brings it among other things, as a testimony of his sincerity: We trust we have a good conscience in all things willing to live honestly, Heb. 13:18. O it is an excellent beauty to a servant of Jesus Christ, when his Morals are sound, and exemplary, and there cannot be anything that will make the profession of Religion odious in the eyes of the world, then want of Morality, when Christians fail palpably in their Morals. May be such a one thou wilt think, comes far short of thee in grace, in the knowledge of good, in the belief of the Truth, in a spiritual in-sight into the mystery of Christ; O then count it a shame that he should go before thee in the keeping of his Word. There cannot be a greater dis-honor unto God, than when a natural man shall be able to accuse thee of any dis-honesty in any kind. The Spirit of God sets it down as a great shame upon Sarah,

that Abimelech, a Heathen man should be able to reprove her; Thus was she reprov'd, saith the Text, Gen. 20:16. When Jacob perceived that his sons had sinned against moral honesty, there in the matter of Shechem: O, saith he, ye have made me to stink among the Inhabitants of the land, Gen. 34:30. Ye have troubled me, saith he, it was a great grief of heart to the good man, he knew this would be a great dis-honor to God, as well as a shame unto himself; and therefore God forbid I should speak against a Ministers speaking for morality.

Yet, Beloved this know, that this is not enough, a man may profess the name of Christ, and think verily that he Believes in Jesus Christ and be a very admirable moral man and yet never quickened up to the grace of life. Saint Paul shows this plainly in himself. I might have confidence in the flesh, if any other man might trust to that, I might be circumcised the eighth day: of the stock of Jesse: of the Tribe of Benjamin: a Hebrew, of the Hebrews: as touching the Law, a Pharisee: Phil. 3:4,5,6,9, if any fine-carriaged man under heaven could hope he is right; I could before my conversion. I was admitted into the Congregation of Christ by the Sacrament of Circumcision: I was borne in the true Church of God, I had godly Parents, I was of the Common-wealth of Israel, Nay, I was a Pharisee, which was so admirable a strict order, that after his conversion, he was not ashamed to be still called a Pharisee. I am a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee says he. Act. 23:6. He calls himself a Pharisee still: Nay he was zealous, and concerning the righteousness of the Law, he was a very blameless man, so that if any fair carriaged man under Heaven were right, he was right. But the truth is S. Paul Confesses that when God came to open his eyes, he find that he was a dead man, a vile wretch he shows, he had gone sheer to hell for all this, if God had not converted him. So that morality is a poor thing. And yet people makes it their Idol and trust to it, and think certainly they are the

children of God, certainly they shall have mercy, certainly they shall to heaven. And how many Ministers make this to be true Religion, and preach nothing but this? This then is another way, whereby Ministers do leave a dead Congregation by moral preaching.

Thirdly, A flat preaching, is, when there is no keenness in our Sermons, when we do not strive to stagger men's consciences that are to be staggered. When a man goes on in a track, Preaches true doctrine, though it were to be wished that more Ministers would do thus: This does not hunt the heart out of its own starting holes: this Ministry leaves people dead. It is said of our Savior Christ, that the people were astonished at his Doctrine. Matt. 7:28, he stunned their consciences: he set them at a stand, so if a Minister would quicken, he should labor to set the wicked at a stun. Ye know every wicked one gets somewhat or other to hang on, to hope they shall not be damned for all they are no better. Now when a Minister sets himself to put his hearers to a stun; still to startle truth in an astonishing manner, that may flash the bare truth into the soul, and to make them see their bad estates, this is quickening preaching. But when a man's Ministry is cold, there is nothing to stun the heart, their heart may have its starting holes for all it, his Ministry does not labor to meet with them, this leaves people dead, a Minister that still goes on in a track, can never look to quicken.

First, Because a good Minister must make Conscience to bring out new things, as our Savior Christ speaks: The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto an Housholder, that bringeth out of his treasure things new and old, Mat. 13:52, that is, though he bring none but the old things that were brought before; Yet still he brings them forth as new: He labors to keep the Word still new unto the heart, the reason is this, when people have once been convinced of the truth, presently it grows stale to them, and so they are subject not to be quickened by it

at all. O this we knew before, and so the heart makes little or nothing of it. I knew this before. Now when the Ministry of the Word darts it in a-new, and makes it look still with a fresh look upon the Conscience; this is a quickening Ministry. Like a man that keeps his Barrel still fresh, when a man gives the drinker still fresh from the Barrel: so when a Minister preaches still fresh from the Word, But when a Minister does not do thus, he is like a man that gives one liquor that hath stood a great while in the Cup, it grows dead.

Secondly, Because a good Minister must go further and further, or else he cannot quicken. My meaning is this, the more people are convinced by the Word, the more subtleties still the heart does devise; the more word is in the Conscience, the more wiles the heart mints, the Devil also prompting thereunto: so that if a Minister do not follow men's hearts still further and further, this will leave the people dead. The reason is this, Because when the heart hath once invented a wile to maintain its own hopes for all the same truth, we may preach the truth all the days of our life, it will never quicken that man's heart: because still when he hears that truth, he hath a wile lying by him that still defends himself from it: so that there is a necessity for a Minister to go further and further. The Word of God is a deep mine, there is no Bottom, a man may still dig deeper and deeper, Thy judgments are a great deep., Psal. 36:6. When the Minister besieges the heart, he is to dig round about it, and dig deeper and deeper. Still as the heart bears itself, he is to come with more and more supplies out of the Word, against it. It is a strange thing to see how deep Ministers have gone, and yet people arm themselves against the Word of God and are not converted by it. Tell them they must be new Creatures, they confess it, and though they be none, yet they have many fair colors to hope they are. Tell them of Communion with God, and fellowship with his son Jesus Christ, and Heavenly-mindedness, and hatred of all sin, love to universal

obedience, plucking out their right eyes: looking at the Glory of God: not to trust in their performances to go out of themselves; People make a shift to have something to answer all. All these things they hope they have done, in some measure. Now when Ministers go on and on, and do not go further and further, this leaves such people dead. It is said of a Preacher that is wise, that he still teaches the people knowledge. Because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge. Eccles. 12:9. That is, people could never come to him, but still he made them know more and more. You will say, how can a Preacher do thus?

I Answer, if a Preacher be well studied in his own heart, and in the Book of God, this will help him to do it. For still as he sees further into his own heart, still he will see further into the Word of God, and let out more and more light. It is said of Christ's Ministry, That in it the light did spring up, Matth. 4:16. So, this is a true Ministry indeed, when the light springs up in it. Ye know in a Spring, the water springeth up more and more; now when a Minister goes on in a track, and does not do thus, this is a deading Ministry. This is the third thing, Flat Preaching leaves people dead.

Fourthly, Cold Preaching too, when a Minister preaches coldly, when the Word floweth coldly from his mouth. When a man hides the affectionateness of the Word, from the people, by the coldness of his uttering of it. Beloved, the Word is full of affections: what a deal of affection is there in all the Truths of the Gospel; they are all steeped in the warm blood of the Son of God, there is affection in the promises, they proceed from the tender bowels of God: Affection in the threatening's, they all issue from the infinite wrath of God against sin. The Word of God is as fire, Jer. 23:29. Now when a Minister shall preach the Word coldly, he preaches the Word otherwise then it is: He does as much as in him lies, to hide the

affectionateness of the Word from the people's hearts. Suppose the Town were all on fire, would ye not count the man a ridiculous man, that should come to us, and tell us a cold story? Sirs, let me tell you a thing, there is a great fire in the Town, and I verily think it may burn all the Town, and you should do well to go and quench it: This man tells us so indeed, but would not you count him a fool, for telling us such a thing, in a cold careless manner, as if it were a small matter? Nature teacheth us another course in such a case. Fire, fire, help, O help, for the Lord's sake, water, water, in all haste. Alas, alas! We are undone, quickly, quickly, run for ladders, run for buckets, run for wet clothes; ah, you lazy villain, run apace for iron hooks, and the like: Thus nature teaches to deliver such a truth that does so nearly concern us, affectionately: So it is here, Brethren; what weighty things does the Word contain? Truths that our very bowels should yearn, and we should pour out our affections in the Pulpit, that we may show by our delivery, what they are. Now, when this is not done, this dead's people's hearts. They sit as quiet at a Sermon, though they hear of matters of life and death, eternal life, salvation and damnation: Yet they sit like blocks in their seats, as though it were no great matter. Why, they hear one standing in the Pulpit, as though he were saying his lesson; wicked people will not believe they are going to hell, though we tell them, they will not believe the ways of Jesus Christ are so good as they are, though we tell them. It is a pretty story of Demosthenes, when one told him that he was beaten and mis-used by such a man; it seems he told it very dreamingly, and coldly, showing no affection at all; Why, saith Demosthenes, hath he beaten thee? I do not believe it, No? Saith the man: and so the man was as it were in a great passion: I am sure thus and thus he did to me, and do not you call this beating? Nay, saith Demosthenes: now I believe he hath beaten thee indeed. Now you speak as ye had been beaten, as ye say. So when a Minister preaches unto people in a dreaming manner, though the things be never so weighty, yet they will not believe them.

He saith in a cold manner, that Drunkards are in a bad case, and such and such persons are in a sad condition, and saith, ye must repent, or you will all perish. But people hear him speak so frigidly of these things, that they will not enter into their hearts. If these things were preached as they should be, it would make people quake. It is said of our Savior, That when he was teaching, the Disciples hearts burned within them, Luk. 24:32. Did not our hearts burn within us, when, &c. Keckerman makes that to be the meaning of St. Matthew, where he saith that our Savior Taught with Authority, and not as the Scribes; that is, saith he, he did not preach coldly, but with life and zeal, and this went with Authority.

Now the manner of Preaching is cold, two ways, and, so dead.

First, When it flows not from the heart, for then it is unlikely that ever it will go unto the heart, *Pectus facit esse disertus*. The heart is the best Oratory, as Paul saith, What do you weeping and breaking my heart, Act. 21:13, they spake so heartily, and affectionately, and meltingly to him, this burst his very heart. In the 17th of Acts the 16th verse, it is said, Paul's spirit was stirred in him, to see all Athens given to Idolatry: He was inwardly moved in his own heart, in his preaching unto them. Now if you look into the 34th verse of that Chapter, how this quickened some there; Dionysius, and Damaris, and some others cleaved unto him: that is, he preached so movingly, that he made their very souls cleave unto him. Why? He spake from his heart. There be many clamorous Preachers, saith Galvin, who declaim against the sins of the people, and thunder against them, make as though they had a great deal of zeal, and yet never move a jot, because themselves have a dead heart, and a secure heart, the people see through their actings, that they are not moved themselves, and therefore this does not move them neither: when people can see

through a Minister, that he does not preach out of his own heart, this deadeth their hearts; God bade Ezekiel eat the Book, &c.

Secondly, The manner of preaching is cold, when the Sermon is not delivered in a lively manner; when he preaches dully and bluntly. The Apostle shows in the first of the Colossians, that Epaphras did a great deal of good in his Ministry at Colossae. Now in the fourth of the Colossians, and the 13 verse, the Apostle saith, he was a zealous Preacher; I bear him record, saith he, that he hath a great zeal for you. But when a Minister hath a cold delivery, this is a great hindrance to the Word.

You will say, how can this be? Is it not the same word whether preached coldly, or with heat? Yes, it is: But the Word hath two things in it; first, the bare-naked truth: secondly, the fatherly affectionateness of God in the same. Now a zealous Minister; lets the people, in some measure, see both. But a dull Ministry holds out the one, and hideth the other. Again, though the Word only convert, it is not the Minister that works, but the Word, yet the Minister is appointed of God to be a means to draw people's attentions to the word. Now when he does it in a cold manner, the people are the more apt to let fall their intentions, and not mark it. Thus you see how a Minister may be guilty of the deadness of his people two ways, first, by his not preaching at all. Secondly, by his dead manner of preaching.

There is one more yet remains, and that is, Thirdly, by his dead life and conversation; an evil life in the Minister, makes preaching seem vile: When he makes it appear by his course, that he makes no conscience of framing his life according to his own teaching: Is strict in the Pulpit, and dissolute in the street: I confess many are ready to quarrel with the lives of their Teachers without cause, as the false

Apostles, with Paul, as though he were carnal, 2 Cor. 10:2. But when a man will be a Minister, and yet walk like men hating to be reformed, and running into the same excess of riot with others; how doth this harden people's hearts, and deadeth the Doctrine itself? It makes preaching seem but a toy. When a man will seem to persuade to that which he neglects himself, and to cry out against that, of which himself doth make a common practice. Let no man despise thee, says Paul unto Timothy. You will say, how shall that be? Be you an example unto them that Believe. 1 Tim. 4:12. But I am prevented of time. There is nothing that more dead's a man's Ministry then this, when the people know in their Consciences, that the Minister is as vile as one of them. Let him preach never so excellent things; they will say, alas, alas! We know he loves his penny, he loves the pot, he is not right, no more than one of us. But I am forced to give over.

The use of this is. First, Is it so, that a Minister may be the cause why the people are dead? Then here we see the reason why the Devil is so busy to poison Ministers. He knows, if he, can poison Them, he can quickly poison all the Parish well-near. Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to sift thee. Luc. 22:31, when Joshua was exercising the office of the High Priest, Satan stood at his right hand, Zach. 3:1. The Devil is like the Syrians. O says he, fight neither against small nor great, save only against the King of Israel: If they could slay him, they knew they should quickly take his Army; so if the Devil can take the Minister, he cares not. If he can make him a worldling, or a drunkard, or a Drone, or a Pluralist that is it he desires. The deading of one Minister, dead's a 100 others, if he can be a lying spirit in a Ministers mouth, he is able to deceive 200, at once.

Secondly, Here we see that Ministers, of all men, should have a care to be quickened. For if we be not quickened, Brethren, our guiltiness is very great, we shall involve many others in our sin: It will go hard

with every private person that is dead to all goodness: He cannot be saved, he cannot escape the second death. How then can a dead Minister escape, that hath not only his own deadness to answer for, but also the deadness of all his people? What says the Lord to the Ministers of the dead Churches of Sardis Repent, Repent says he, lest I come against thee, as a thief, in an hour before thou art aware. Rev. 3:3. And therefore let us be awakened, that we may be quickened. Beloved, the times now are very dead, and it is we that are the Ministers of the Church, have let this deadness in, our not being watchful, our not being lively and stirring in our places, our not being quickened. O what wrath hangs upon us, if we do not labor for life, that we may communicate it unto our people! The common deadness up and down should be an argument unto us to excite us. When Elisha saw the badness of the Church in his days, he was very earnest to have the spirit of Elias doubled upon him. 2 King. 2:9. We have need of a double spirit of the good Ministers of God that were before us, the days do require it, never was there more deadness then now is. There are not many that profess holiness at all, but of them that do; O how many are dead, and without life! Now who should be a means to quicken people but we?

Thirdly, This should teach good people to pray for their Ministers: the more quickened the Ministers be, it is the better for them. But if they be dead, the infection will descend down into you. When Paul and Silas went out to preach, the Text says. They were Commended by the Brethren to the grace of God. Act. 15:40.

Fourthly, This should be an exhortation to us of the Ministry, that we would take heed unto ourselves and to all the Church of God that is committed unto our charge: that we would rouse up ourselves, and specially now, when there was never more need. When the children of Israel were about to go back again into Egypt, the Text says, how

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the Congregation of Israel, to beseech them to forbear. Num. 14:5. They were so mightily affected with the people's sin, that they fell upon their faces before them, q. d: For the Lord's sake, and for your own souls sake, Take heed of this sin. What! Will you pull all Heaven about your ears? Will you provoke the living God against you? O my Brethren take heed what ye do, so we should do, we should labor to be affected with our own and our people's deadness. We should call upon them to be quickened. O be quickened, the Lord will not endure a dead people, get life if ye be wise, it is but a folly to have a name to live, except ye be alive indeed.

Now the way for us to quicken our people, is, First, If we be good ourselves. When Jehoshaphat would encourage the Levites to quicken up the people; Says he, The Lord shall be with the good. 2 Chron. 19:11. He will bless your labors, he will strengthen your Sermons to do good, though not to all, for the greatest part are not of God, yet unto his people. Nay if we were good indeed, we might have hope do too much good, as it is said of Barnabas he was a good man, and much people were added to the Lord. Act. 11:24.

Again, Secondly we should be earnest with God to quicken all our hearts, that so we may the better quicken our Brethren, as Christ says to Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren, so we should desire God to quicken us, that we may quicken our Brethren, that we may wash our hands of our people. What an excellent comfort was that unto Paul, When he could take his people to record, that he was pure from the blood of all men! Act. 20:26.

Thirdly; We should mark which of our people are dead, Ezek. 8:6. And then think, what, are not we guilty of his deadness?

Fourthly, Let us lay about us soundly, that we not may be guilty of their sins in any kind.

Fifthly, Another Use is to let us see, What a great danger Ministers are in, they may be guilty of all the evil in their Parish, if they do not their duty, which is a great thing to do, they have all the sins of their Parish lying at their door, This should keep us from security and from pride, many grow proud that are Ministers, but alas! They know not what an Office they have, that do so. Our very Calling should make our hearts tremble and quake to think what a charge is imposed upon us. This made Moses and Aaron and many a good man more, so fearful to enter upon this function. No man takes this honor unto himself, saith the Apostle (meaning no godly man, no man in his right wits, no man that is well-advised what he does) but he that is called, Heb. 5:4, as our Savior Christ saith, Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest that he would send forth laborers into his Harvest, Matth. 9:38. <H&G>, so it is in the Original, that he would thrust forth laborers into his Harvest, q.d. God will have no good laborers, otherwise those that are good are not over-forward to enter into the Ministry, as a Father says, it is a burden that the very Angels shoulders would tremble under, as the Apostle said, Who is sufficient for these things? If there were no other Argument but this in the Text, it might sway all Ministers hearts in the world, lest we be guilty of our own deadness, and of others too.

Another Use should be to the people, that they would be forward, and willing to hear, and greedy to drink in the word of life. The want of this is the deadening of many a Ministers heart. I was in much bitterness, saith Ezekiel, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me, Ezek. 3:14, that is, I had had no heart at all to preach, but that the hand of the Lord was exceedingly assistant unto me; whereas the forwardness of people, is a great means to quicken up their

Ministers. When the whole City flocked in to hear Paul, though the wicked were mad at it; The Text saith, He grew bold, Act. 13:44,45. When the people crowded in upon our Savior, that he had not so much as time to eat bread, Mark. 3:20, the Text shows that he so bestirred himself there, that his own Kinsfolk thought he had been mad, Vers. 21.

SERMON IV.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write: these things, saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, &c. - REVEL. 3:1.

We have done with the Inscription, And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write. We come now to the Subscription, and that is in these words. These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars; Which words contain a description of the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom this Epistle is sent unto the Church, and he is described very gloriously, to the intent that what he says, may be the more reverently and seriously regarded. The Description sets forth two admirable properties and royalties of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, That he hath the seven Spirits of God, that is, he hath the Holy Ghost, to give to whomsoever he please. Secondly, That he hath the seven Stars, that is, the Pastors and Ministers of the Church. Christ hath them all in his hand, to send them, to gift them, to assist them, to preserve them, to vouchsafe them to a people, or to take them away, as he lists: and the Ministers are called Stars, because they are to shine in the firmament of the Church.

First then, the first royalty of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is, that he hath the seven Spirits of God: by the seven Spirits of God, he

means the Holy Ghost; you will say the Holy Ghost is but one Spirit. By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, 1 Cor. 12:13. There is one Body and one Spirit, Ephes. 4:4. Through him, we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father, Ephes. 2:18. The Spirit of God is but one. Ye know there is but one God, in three persons: one Father, one Son, one holy Spirit. There be three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, 1 Joh. 5:7, there is but one Father, and one Son, whom the Apostle there calls the Word, for so he is often called in the Scripture. The Word was made flesh, that is, the Son of God was made flesh: so there is but one Holy Ghost, one Holy Spirit. Why then does the Text here say of Christ, that he hath the seven Spirits of God?

I Answer, ye may know that the Revelation uses peculiar phrases, august, and mystical. Now the reason why John speaks thus in the plural number, is.

First, because he alludes to the manner of his Visions, now in his Visions, the holy Ghost was thus represented unto him, as ye may see, Rev. 4:5, where he saw seven Lamps of fire, burning before the Throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. So, again, Rev. 5:6, where he saw a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. So, that this is one reason why he calls the Holy Ghost, the seven Spirits of God, because he speaks after this manner, of the Vision that he saw.

Secondly, another reason is, because he was to write to the seven Churches of Asia. Now he speaks of the Holy Ghost in the same number, because that one and the same Holy Ghost, is severally and entirely poured upon them all. The Spirit of God was in Ephesus, and the Spirit of God was in Smyrna, and the Spirit of God was in

Pergamos, and so in Thyatira, and so in Sardis, and Philadelphia, and Laodicea: and therefore he calls him the seven Spirits of God, though he be but one and the same Spirit.

Thirdly, he calls him the seven Spirits of God, by a common Metalepsis, of putting the effects for the cause, because there be many and sundry gifts and graces, of the holy Spirit of God; the number seven being put to signify the perfection of them, and the universalness of them.

Now that the seven spirits of God, are nothing else, but that one and the same holy Spirit of God, is plain, out of Rev. 1:4,5. John, to the seven Churches in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from him, which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before his Throne, and from Jesus Christ, which is the faithful witness. Which words are Saint Johns saluting of the seven Churches in Asia, wherein he wishes them all grace from the blessed Trinity, q.d. Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from the holy Spirit of God, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness: Calling the Father, which was, which is, which is to come, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness, and the Holy Ghost, the seven Spirits of God. It is the very self-same salutation that Paul uses in all his Epistles, in effect; saving that this is more full, and more lofty and august. Now then by the seven Spirits of God, he cannot mean any creature or creatures, as Angels, or so: but he must needs mean the Holy Ghost, because he prays for grace from the seven Spirits of God, which no creature is able to give. Ye know God only can give grace, God only, is the Author of all grace: He only can justify, and sanctify, and quicken, and give a man eternal life, as James, Every good and perfect gift cometh from above, Jam. 1:17. It were Idolatry in John, to wish to the Churches, grace from the seven Spirits of God, if he meant by

them any Angels, or any other creatures. We might worship the Angels, if they were able to give us grace, we might pray to them, and serve them, and fear them and adore them, if they could be the Authors of grace to us. Now this is Idolatry. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Matth. 4:10. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever, Amen. Rom. 11:36. Ye know it is the glory of God to be the Cause of all grace. Now what says God? I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my glory will I not give to another. Isa. 42:8. Well then, you see what is here meant by the seven Spirits of God, even the holy Ghost himself, that one and the same holy Spirit of God. These things saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God, that is, these things saith Christ, that hath the holy Spirit of God, to give him to whomsoever he pleases.

Not as though that were all, that Christ hath the holy Spirit of God, for so Paul had the holy Spirit of God, I suppose also that I have the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 7:40, so Peter, and David, and all the Saints, all the people of God have the holy Spirit of God, nay, a man is dead in trespasses and sins, and is a mere carcass, like a dead body without a soul, that hath not the holy Spirit of God, therefore that is not all the meaning of it, that Christ hath the holy Spirit of God; for so all the children of God have him, and are quickened by him up to all goodness: But Christ hath the holy Spirit of God, that is, he hath him to give to whomsoever he pleases.

But it may be objected, is it not God the Father that gives the holy spirit to all his poor children?

I Answer, Yes, it is very true, He hath him to give to whomsoever he is pleased to give him, for the Holy Ghost is his Spirit as well as Christ, he flows from them both. And therefore saith our Savior, How

much more shall your Heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luk. 11:13, so that the Father gives the holy spirit to whom he will, but it is in Christ's name, Christ is the storehouse of this gift. When the Father gives his holy spirit unto any man, it is only in Christ's name, as himself speaks: The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, Joh. 14:26. Mark, it is only in Christ's name.

Well, now we see the point, That Christ only hath the Holy Spirit of God to give to whom he pleases: If any poor creature would fain have the holy spirit of God to be in him, he must come to Christ for him. Though the barrel be never so full of good Wine, yet when it is hooped round about, if one would have any, he must draw it at the tap: so, Beloved, the Lord hath hooped himself up from men, he hath closed himself up from all men, by reason of men's sins, he hath shut himself up, no man can have any of his holy spirit, but he must come and draw it at the tap: he must come to Jesus Christ, the Lord vents himself only in him, as Christ saith, he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. What is that? This spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, Joh. 7:38,39. Mark, Christ is the tap, ye must come to him by true believing, or ye cannot receive any of God's holy Spirit. He only hath him to give to them that do embrace him. From him proceed all the graces of the Spirit, that any men do enjoy. This is his Royalty, as being the only King and Head of the Church, and the opened fountain, that all that would be saved must repair unto. He is the beginning of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost proceedeth from him, as he is the Son of God, and as he is man, he is anointed with him. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me saith he, Luk. 4:18. Ho, everyone that would have him, come unto me for him. Away with your sins, and take me, abhor all your own ways, see what damnable creatures ye are in yourselves, whether your lusts and corruptions

carry you, what will become of you, if ye go on in your own paths? If ye would have grace, and mercy, and life, and salvation, come to me, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to pour him upon you, that ye may be saved. I say Christ is anointed with him, the Lord hath given him his Spirit in abundance, he hath enough spirit to infuse into all that lay hold upon him, as John saith, God hath not given the Spirit by measure unto him, Joh. 3:34. No, he hath the holy Spirit without measure, he hath all store of spiritual graces, to afford to them that lack; a Treasury of all heavenly blessings, to enrich all his poor distressed Members.

The Reasons of this Point, why Christ only hath the holy Spirit of God, to give where he will, are three.

First, Because there is none but he, that God is well-pleased in. God is out with all the sons of men, by reason of sin and wickedness, they are all hateful unto him, they are odious in his sight, and the whole world cannot make him and them friends again, that ever he should give them grace and favor, much less his holy Spirit. There is none in whom God is well-pleased but in his Son. This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. Father, and Holy Ghost, Both came and rested upon him, saying, This is the only He, in whom I am well-pleased, Mat. 3:16,17, q.d. If ye get him to be your Advocate, take him, and come unto me with him, then I will be friends with you, he may help you with reconciliation with me, he may get me to give you my holy Spirit, I am well-pleased in him, and in none but him. This is one Reason, so that Christ only can put his holy Spirit into thy heart, and so send thee to his Father. As Paul put a loving mediating letter in Onesimus his pocket, and so sent him to his Master: then he will be well-pleased with thee, when thou haste Christ's Letter of commendation about thee, then thou mayest go to God from day today, and be accepted with him: None can do this for thee but only

Christ, he only can put a mediating Letter in thy hand, he only can give thee the intercessions of his holy Spirit. Thousands go to God in man's duties from day today, and because they are without this, Christ hath not given them his holy Spirit, therefore they are not accepted. God is not pleased with them, they pray without his spirit, they cry God mercy without his spirit, they seek to enter in without his spirit, and so they are not admitted. Now when a soul comes to Christ, God is well-pleased with Christ, and therefore Christ can give him this love-token, Christ can give him the holy Spirit, and so he shall be admitted into favor with God. God is well pleased in him. As Pharaoh was in Joseph, and therefore Joseph could present his Brethren unto Pharaoh, Gen. 47:2. If anybody else had presented them, they should never have found favor, but Joseph could put acceptance upon them. Pharaoh was well pleased in him. So God is well pleased in his Son, and therefore he can do it and none but He.

Secondly, Another Reason is, Because the Holy Spirit of God will never enter into man more, except God's Justice be satisfied. God is resolved he will not put up those indignities that men offer unto him, except they bring with them one, in whom his wrath is appeased. As Saint John says, The Lamb slain hath seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. Rev. 5:6. That is, he hath satisfied God's Justice, and therefore he hath the Holy Spirit of God so given, the Holy Spirit of God will go to those men that he hath satisfied God's justice for, I say the Holy Spirit of God will not go to any man, without satisfaction, if any one will show him satisfaction, then the Spirit of God will say, I will go where you will have me, only let me have satisfaction. Now, Beloved, Christ only can say to the Holy Spirit come a-long with me to this man, here's a satisfaction unto Justice, Therefore he only hath the Spirit at his dispensing. And therefore if any man would have God's Holy Spirit, he must bring the Lamb Divine slain, with him to God. Lord here I have the Lamb slain, and now let me see thy face,

now let me have thy Spirit, as David said to Abner, bring me Michal, or never think to see my face. 2 Sam. 3:13, q.d. never come to me, except thou bring me my Michal with thee. The bringing of Michal with him, this might help him to see the Kings face. So, Beloved, when a man getteth the Lord Jesus Christ, and brings him with him to God, this may help him to God's Holy Spirit. Bring him along with thee, and thou shalt see my face, thou shalt have my holy Spirit. Neither will God send thee his Holy Spirit, neither will the Holy Spirit come to thee otherwise. Christ only hath him to give. Have Christ and have him.

Thirdly, another Reason is, why Christ hath the Holy Spirit to give, Because he is flesh of our flesh, and Bone of our Bone, and we may go to him: he is the fittest to have him to give, because he being man as well as we, we may make bold to go to him: My Brethren, we are not able to go to God for anything, much less for his Spirit, we are not able to look upon him immediately, as a man is not able to look upon the Sun-Beams in their strength, specially if he have sore eyes: But let him get a Scarfe, or a Cypress, and now he may. Now the Sunbeams will shine upon him through the Cypress, and not hurt him. The Scarfe is able to convey unto him the Sunbeams, without dazzling of him. So, beloved, Christ is able to convey the Holy Spirit of God into any man, our sore Consciences may look up to God through him, he moderates God's look, he can make us look God in the face, in a comfortable manner. Now we may ask anything of him, even his Holy Spirit, and he will give him, as the Apostle says: By him we have boldness, Eph. 3:12. O, beloved, they are great things that we need. We have need of such great matters, that when the Conscience is awakened, it can have no hope to obtain, that God should pardon such vile wretches as we, that he should accept of such poor services as ours, that he should love such filthy ones as we are, that he should give us a Kingdom, and his own Holy Spirit to

enliven us, to establish our hearts, to be an earnest of Heaven to us: how can we hope he will give us such infinite mercies? Now the Lord hath put all these Blessings into the hands of his Son Jesus Christ, that is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones. Now we may boldly go to him for them. As Moses when his face shone, Aaron was afraid to come near him, Exod. 34:30. Therefore he put a veil over his face: Now Aaron and others were able to come nigh him; so before, none were able to come to God for anything, but now the Lord hath put a veil of flesh upon himself by incarnating his own Son, now we may make bold.

The use of this, is, First; Is it so that Christ hath the seven Spirits of God? Then, what hath he not? He is an all sufficient Savior. He is God's Steward, God hath put all his goods into his hands. No man can be assured of anything that is good, but by coming unto him. All things are delivered to me of my Father. Mat. 11:27. That is, I have all my fathers goods in my hand: Favor, Pardon, Mercy, Grace, Comfort, Heaven itself, yea and his holy Spirit and all, I have the distributing of them all. He is the storehouse whither all needy souls are to go, He is full of all manner of good things, as John says, Of his fullness have we all received. Joh. 1:16. Look what grace any of the Saints have, they have it all of him, he is God's Conduit-pipe, the Lord opens himself only in him; he is the tap, he lets out God's Blessings, and Graces, and Spirit, like a sluice. He is the Lord Treasurer of Heaven and Earth: As Joseph in Egypt, if any one would have Corn; they must go to Joseph for it, if they came to Pharaoh but for a peck, or a gallon, presently he sent them to Joseph, so the Lord sends all that will have any drop of mercy, to his Son, if ye will not go to my Son, ye shall not have one drop, ye shall die in your sins. This is my well-beloved Son, says he, look ye hear him: hearken to him: obey him: be ruled by him: bow down unto him: do as he bids you: if ye anger him, and will not stoop unto him: if your hearts will not burst, if your

minds will not off from the world, and other things, and be wholly intent unto him, if ye slight him, and suffer vain things to draw away your affections and thoughts and meditations from him; there is no redemption for you. No Salvation but only by believing in his name, he hath all the seven Spirits of God, no Spirit of Grace at all can be had but only of him, he was the Rock, that Moses must stand on, that the glory of God's goodness might pass before him.

Secondly, Another use is, hath Christ the seven Spirits of God? Then we are without excuse: if we be without the Holy Spirit of God, Christ hath him to give: and yet how few will seek him of Jesus Christ! As Christ says, Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life. Joh. 5:40. That is, if ye would come unto me, I would make your dead hearts to live, I would quicken you to all goodness, I would pour my Holy Spirit upon you: But you will not come unto me, for it. This makes us without excuse, That Christ hath the Spirit in him, for all that have a mind to him, and we have no mind. How few among you to this very day have gotten yet God's Holy Spirit? Ye pray, but ye have not the spirit of supplication, to pray by, to lift up your hearts, to enliven your desires, to be able to wrestle with God to any purpose, no Spirit of grace stirring in you. When ye come to the house of God, ye hear Sermons but the Holy Ghost does not fall upon you to make them effectual and mighty in operation, to convert you to God, to knock off your base lusts: ye are dead in all holy duties, void of all Heavenly graces, dull to every good thing, even as the Body without the spirit is dead. Nay the Spirit of the world dwelleth in most men tying and gluing them to the things here below, and will not let them savor and relish the things of Heaven. Whereby they cannot cease from sin nor work the works of God. Rare is that man, now-a-days, that hath the Holy Spirit of God remaining in him in any measure: nay if people were asked, whether they have the Spirit of God, yea or no, their own Conscience could answer. No they have

not: they never felt any such Divine guest; their earthliness and lumpishness of heart in all the ordinances of God, their unacquaintedness with God, their unsettledness, and nakedness, and blindness in all the ways of peace, plainly does declare it; and yet they will not come unto Christ that they might have life: he hath the seven Spirits of God, and yet they cannot find in their hearts, to be instant and earnest with him, when Pharaoh appointed Joseph to distribute corn to all comers; Go to Joseph, says he, Gen. 41:55, the Text says, all Countries came to Joseph for Corn, because the famine was sore in all lands. But God hath appointed his own Son to be a dispenser of the Spirit, and there is a sore want of the spirit everywhere in all Towns and Parishes, and yet hardly any will come in. Certainly, this is the condemnation, that men intend their pleasure, and their profits, and every outward thing, and never seek to Jesus, to have the Holy Spirit of God.

For First, many of us have hard hearts that cannot melt at our own sins, nor the public provocations whereby God is provoked, nor the general calamities of the Church: our hearts are like a stone, and we are not affected, nor can be affected, no relenting at the Word, no bleeding in any other good duty, nothing moves us: the spirit could soften, yea, and take the stone away, and Christ says he would give him unto us, if we did desire him. I will put a new Spirit within you, and take the stony heart out of the flesh. Ezek. 11:19. He hath spirit enough in him to do it, and yet we will not sue to him but in a feigned manner, and so a hard heart possesseth us still, which mars all our family-duties, and all that we do in the public assemblies: nothing comes of all that we do. If our foolish hearts would come down to be fervent after Christ, this might be remedied. He hath the seven Spirits of God for the nonce. But a spirit of slumber bewitches us, and nothing can awaken us to this very day. Never was there a more hard-hearted time, never more hard-hearted Christians, numbed,

and past feeling, wishing indeed the things might be mended, but never putting forth our hand to have them mended.

Secondly, scarce any of us can pray, but in a blunt-hearted-wise: our prayers never stir Heaven, never give so much as a lift to any of our lusts, neither are they any whit answerable to the miseries that are on us, whether Personal or National, the spirit could help us, and enlarge us, as Paul says of the good Romans, Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption whereby ye cry Abba Father. Rom. 8:15, and Christ hath this Spirit in his hand, to give. But we would rather sit woulding and yawning then be down on our knees before God. Everyone almost hath heavy things that he is conscientious of: terrible guiltiness, horrible misgivings, self-condemning's, uncertainties about his later end, doubtfulness whether anything be sound, yea or no; and yet no heart of prayer, no straining's after Christ to have the Holy Spirit of him. Nay, tittle tattle is preferred before coming about Christ: and every idle business more takes up our thoughts, then how we may enjoy Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, where is the man well-near, that is holy? Some indeed are civil, and not very many, no, not of them that would be held for Professors. For what Civility, Honesty is there, when people are palpably proud, and palpably covetous, and palpably malicious, and spiteful, and envious? But, put case many be Civil; yet holiness is hardly anywhere to be seen. Where are any that are mortified unto sin? Crucified to the world? Pilgrims on earth, Heavenly-minded? Taken up with God? The Spirit indeed, is a Spirit of Holiness, Rom. 1:4. And Christ hath him to give but he cannot have our custom: We are not thirsty after such matters.

Fourthly, Where is the Communion of Saints? A Theme I spake of the last Sabbath day. We are all like unto Ephraim. Ephraim hath

mixed himself among the people. Hos. 7:8, that is, they had no Communion of Saints there among them. They were a mish-mash people; there was a Chaos and a confusion and a medley among them. If there be any that bear the name of Saints; They are like Lambs feeding all alone in a large place. Like Israel when they are scattered. Hos. 4:16. Lambes without flocks: Birds without mates: As if they were all frightened asunder: No Communion of Saints, no Communion of graces, nor duties, nor hearts, nor affections. I confess if we had the Holy Spirit of God, we would make a communion among us: As Paul says. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen. 2 Cor. 13:14. He would make a Communion among us, and Christ hath him too, and there we might have him, but we care not for him: which is a most fearful thing: a sign of horrible deadness and lifelessness in good: as it is with the boughs of a tree, when they are dead, they fall off, but they hang together as long as they are alive. Though communion of Saints, be an Article of our faith, yet we let it die. We see in nature, if we sling any meat to a Hen, presently she clucks for all her Chickens to have part: So, look what graces we get, we should impart what we can: the Lord hath appointed mutual giving good example unto one another, edifying one another, exhorting one another, admonishing one another, comforting one another, conferring one with another, supplicating one with and for another. As it is said, Luke 5:10. That Simon and James and John were partners in their fishing, look what fishes they caught, they divided among one another; so Christians should be partners. What they get at a Sermon, they are to impart, What they get in prayer, or at Sacraments, or in affliction; there be others that should be partners with them: as the Apostle says, Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Phil. 2:4. O says he, if there be any fellow-ship of the Spirit, thus it must be, that is, the Spirit would breed this fellowship and

communion among you. Now, Beloved, where is this holy Spirit to be had but in Christ? I say we are without excuse, if we do not get the Holy Spirit of God, Because Christ hath him for us, if we would resort to him, and therefore we can have no plea.

First, We cannot plead, we have no need of the holy Spirit of God: what need we have him, as long as we believe there is such a one? Is it needful we should have him? I, that it is; why else did God make his Son to be the dispenser, and the distributer, and communicator of him? O, Beloved, the Lord hath done this, because we cannot be saved without the holy Spirit of God: would we be regenerated and born again; we cannot without the Spirit: That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, Joh. 3:6. We can never be spiritual without the Spirit of God: none but spiritual men and women shall enter into the Kingdom of God. Drunkards, and adulterers, and liars, and muckworms, and better men than they, are carnal men. Now to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded, this only is life and peace: so that we cannot plead that.

Again, We cannot be justified without the Spirit of God, Ye may say, O, we hope to be justified only by Faith in Christ; True, but if ye have not the Spirit of God, ye have no Faith, none have true faith in Christ, till first they have the holy Spirit of God, and therefore it is called the spirit of Faith, that is, a spirit inclining a man unto Christ; bowing of the mind, and heart, and soul, to all heavenly things in Christ, no man can be justified without this, as Paul tells the Corinthians, But ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 6:11.

Again, Ye cannot have free-will to do the will of God without the holy Spirit of God. I confess, by nature no man hath free-will: I, but if ye be not more than nature, ye cannot be saved. Ye must have free-will

to all the ways of God, or ye cannot be saved. Now ye never can have this without the Spirit of God. Can ye mortify every wicked lust? Can ye resist the devil every day? Can ye keep out the world, and ward off the temptations of the flesh, ye can never do it while the world stands in a holy course, without the holy Spirit of God. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, 2 Cor. 3:17. Mark, there is freewill to all these things, that man hath liberty to do supernatural things, that hath the Spirit of the Lord, and no man else.

Again, Ye are none of Christ's, if ye have not the holy Spirit of Christ; that is the Mark he brands all his sheep with, as a man says, when he hears tidings of any of his sheep; saith he, if they be mine, they have such a mark: they have an A. and a B. on the left side, or so: so says Christ, if they be mine, they have my Spirit, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. 8:9. Hereby we know that he abideth in us, saith John, by his Spirit which he hath given us, 1 Joh. 3:24, so that we have need of the spirit, and therefore this cannot be our plea, that we have no need: we have such need of God's holy Spirit, that we cannot be saved without the having of him.

Secondly, we cannot plead, we know not where to have him. For Christ saith, he hath him to give to all that will receive him. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, saith he, Isa. 61:1, that is, he is poured upon me, that he may run down upon all them that come to be my members. If Christ indeed had not come, if God had not made him Vehiculum Spiritus, if God had not put his spirit upon Christ, like water in a Fountain, to run out upon all that will hold their hearts under him; then we might have some excuse: Lord, we know not where to have the Spirit. But the Lord hath told us where we may have him. We may have him in his Son Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, We cannot plead, we cannot tell how to have him: For as ye know where to have him, so ye may know how to have him too: and ye all do know, if we had a heart we may have him four ways.

First, By the hearing of the Word: you will say, ye have heard the Word many times; yet ye never received the holy Spirit yet. I answer, that's certain, but it is because ye do not come to it with a greedy yearning heart, with an open ear, and a willing mind to be guided by it. For if ye came thus with this mind, ye would quickly have the spirit. Lord tell me anything, I do unfeignedly desire for to do it; reprove anything in me, I do sincerely desire to leave it. Come thus to the Word; I dare say, thou shalt not be one quarter of an hour without the spirit, as Christ saith, Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit un to you, Prov. 1:23. You will say, this is strange, and have I heard so many Sermons, and never got the spirit yet? I, you never heard Sermons with an honest heart: You shall see, Cornelius and his company got the spirit at the first Sermon that they heard, when Peter Preached, the Holy Ghost fell on all those that heard the Word, Act. 10:44. How so? Ye may read there in the Context, O says Cornelius, We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Ver. 33. Now, if we have the Word daily preached, and we get not the holy spirit of God; we are without excuse.

Secondly, By Prayer, if we did pray faithfully unto God, we should have the holy spirit, as Christ says: If ye that are evil, can give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luk. 11:13. You will say, ye have prayed many a time and often, and yet ye find no such thing, and no marvel; when a man's heart prays only by the by: but if ye made it your business, from day today, if ye would seek for him as for life, and look upon it as more necessary then life itself; then ye

should quickly speed: But when ye will give God the blind, and the lame, and your hearts run a whoring after other things; Heaven is not the main of all your care, and study: the Lord knows a hollow heart, and can tell how to deny it: none shall have his spirit, that do not desire him above all things, and labor after him above all things, and use all manner of means for him. The Spirit of God is a great gift, and we must know its an infinite mercy to obtain him, and therefore we must seek him accordingly. They that get him, do not go dreamingly to work.

Thirdly, By repentance; this is another means to obtain the Holy Ghost, as the Lord saith, Rent your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, &c. Joel 2:13, what follows? And after that I will pour my Spirit upon you, saith he, ver. 28. Never think to have God's holy Spirit, and live after the flesh, or go on in a form, or a careless way: not only drunkenness and whoredom, and capital sins, keep him out, but any other lusts and corruptions, that the heart clings unto; Rent your hearts then, let your drowsy doings pain you at the heart, let all your security, and unbelief, and luke-warmness, whereby ye part stakes with God, let all these be a burden unto you, and you heavy laden with them: this is the way-making for the Spirit of God's coming in.

Fourthly, Take no denial, let not ill-success beat you off; this is that which thrusteth back thousands: They find little success at the first, and so they give over. But, Beloved, this is it, howsoever we find cold success in our holy labors, at the first, yet we must go on, though we do not find our lusts die, though we do not find that speeding in Prayer that we could wish, that prevailing in our endeavors, that we do desire, yet still we are to go on, and still wait upon God, in abounding in our care, until the Lord grant us better success. The hard success that we have, must not hinder us, as the Apostle saith,

Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not, Gal. 6:9. That is, let us not be discouraged with hard successes, or any other such like thing: certainly, if we go on we shall speed. When the Wisemen came seeking for Christ at Jerusalem, they had no good success there, they did not find him there, yet they would not return back without him; But they went down to Bethlehem, and sought for him there. When the Church had sought Christ in her bed, she had no success for that time. I sought him, says she, but I found him not, Cant. 3:1. What, would she give over because of her bad success at the first? No, she trudged out into the Lanes and the streets, she inquired of the watchmen and still she had little or no success. But the Text saith, she would never give over, till she lit upon him. Beloved, we must take heed of this. It is the impatience of men's hearts, if they cannot find a blessing at first dash, they will seek no further, then they strike into a former, or a worse condition: In the first of Haggai, ye may read, that when the Jews had been hindered by Cambyses, from building of the Temple for a fit, they gave over: Because they had no success, they would build no more, but fell a building their own houses, ver. 4, ye know it was their sin, and the Lord plagued them for it. Therefore, Brethren, it must be our care, although we do not speed at the first, not to slacken, or give in: As Isaac would still be digging Wells, he digged one, and that had no success, he digged another, and that had as bad; still there fell out strife, what then? Did he give over so? No, he never would have done, till the Lord gave him a Rehoboth, a Well that there was no striving about, Gen. 26:22, so, we should never be quiet, until the Lord give us his holy Spirit; though we do not feel his workings in us at the first, no bad successes though never so many, should make us weary: But still we should go on, a seeking of the holy Spirit of God. Thus, as we know where to have the Spirit of God, namely in Christ, so, we know how too, and therefore we are without

excuse, if we suffer ourselves to be void of God's holy and blessed Spirit; this is the second use.

Thirdly, another Use, is, to you that do indeed complain of great want of the Spirit: here you see where ye may have supplies even from our Lord Jesus Christ, he hath the seven Spirits of God. They labor to know Christ more and more: this is the way to have more and more of the Spirit, as the Apostle saith: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, Ephes. 1:17. Get the knowledge of Christ more and more, and thus the spirit shall come to thee more and more. It is said of the Indian Gymnosophists, that they would lie all the day long, looking upon the Sun in the firmament, so should Christians do, they should lie looking upon Christ, the more spirit still they shall have, if they do so.

First, May be ye want spirit to make you know the Lord's will, you find yourselves backward from day today: little or no heart to God's Commandments; look up to Christ, and say, Lord there is enough spirit in Christ, and he hath it for all them that do want, and would have the same; O give me some together with him, as he says, I will put my Spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, Ezek. 36:27, q.d. look up to me, I will do this for you.

Secondly, May be ye want strength, ye have many temptations, and you have no strength to resist them, they come in upon you like the breaking in upon you; may be ye are tempted to deny all, and to say ye have nothing in you; sometimes ye are tempted to give over all, saying, it is but a folly, I shall one day be damned, and I were as good give over now, as to do it afterwards, when it will be worse, and ye have no strength to hold out; sometimes ye cannot meditate; ye cannot pray, ye are fain to break off in the midst; with base fears;

with security, and vain hopes; you are tempted to do as the world does, and ye have no strength to oppose them: Look up to Christ, ye know the Spirit of Christ, is a spirit of power, and strength, 2 Tim. 1:7, and he hath him for you: Look up to him then, and cry for his strong spirit. Who knows? Maybe, you may be able to say in the end, as Paul does: I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.

Thirdly, May be, ye want boldness to call God your Father: ye are in a quandary, whether ye should call him so or no: ye are afraid, he is none of your Father, and that ye are none of his adopted ones: ye shall but blaspheme him to call him your Father, or to expect of him a childes portion; Look up to Christ, he hath such a spirit in him, whereby ye may cry, Abba Father, Gal. 4:6.

Fourthly, May be ye want life and quickening, you find yourselves very dead, even as the Church of Sardis in this place; I know thy works, that thou art dead. Look up to Christ, as here he does bid thee, he hath the seven Spirits of God, and hath that which will quicken thee. Christ himself, when he was naturally dead, he was quickened by his own spirit, 1 Pet. 3:18. That very spirit can quicken thy spiritual deadness, to every good word and work. His spirit is life, and that will make thee lively, though thy heart be little better than a Timber-log in duties, yet if that spirit get within thee, it will make thee agile, and active in every good thing. It is a horrible thing to see, how little, Christians know of Jesus Christ, though they have been thought to know Jesus Christ so long a time, yet they do not know him. Christ takes this very ill, as he told Philip: Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? Joh. 14:9. Christ could be even angry with him, for learning him no better: what little spirit is there in Christians nowadays! A sign, though they have been a long time a learning Christ, yet they hardly know him: For if we

knew him, Brethren, we could not be at enmity with the holy Spirit. We do not look up to Christ.

You will say, what is it to look up to Christ in all your ways?

I Answer, It is to follow Christ, as where John said, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

The Text says, That two of his Disciples went away and followed after Jesus, Joh. 1:36,37. O thought they, is he the Lamb of God, does he take away the sins of the world, we will follow him then. John bade them look at him, and they followed after him, that is, they looked at him indeed, as a man looks at one whom he follows: when a man so looks up to Christ, that he follows him: when a man sees him his only means to be happy, and godly, and in the favor of God, the only means to do well, and to be well, and desires indeed to follow after him, this is to look up to Christ, when a man labors sincerely to follow the counsel and direction of Christ, in all his ways; He bids him to deny himself, and that is the thing that he labors for; He bids him to repent of all his sins, and to ply himself to all God's holy paths, and to rely upon him for strength and acceptance, and mercy and pardon, and every blessing. Whatever thing he looks for at the hands of God, he sets himself to follow Christ's counsel, and to expect it in him. If he see his sins, he looks up to Christ, and there he sees his death to defray them; when he sees what power they have over him, he looks up to Christ for his Spirit to subdue them, in the use of all those means that he hath appointed; Prayer, Meditation, Watchfulness, Striving, Purposing, Endeavoring, and Fighting against all the lusts of his flesh. And wherein soever he fails, he labors to be humbled, and yet to look still up to Christ, for forgiveness, and more help against another time: This is to see the Son of God. Everyone that sees the Son, hath everlasting life, Joh.

6:40. This is to look up to Christ, to believe in Christ, to have Christ, to be in Christ, to dwell in Christ, and Christ in him.

But you will say, I am afraid I never looked up to Christ then, I never yet had him, for I have not his holy spirit, how shall I know whether I have the holy spirit? I Answer, first, I will tell thee, what be not signs; and then secondly, what be signs.

First, What be not signs, there are four signs that people take to be signs, and are not: First, a civil Life, when a man is a merciful man, kind to the poor, quiet and peaceable among his Neighbors, gentle, affable, courteous, well-conditioned; These are no signs of having God's holy Spirit: True, they are very commendable, and they that have the Spirit of God, must have them, and better than them. But a man may be without the holy Spirit of God, and yet have all these; Paul shows that the very Barbarians showed him no little kindness, they kindled him a fire, though they were mere natural men, Act. 28:2. Our Savior Christ shows that some are chaste by nature, that are born so; so, many are temperate by nature, and loving by nature, and meek by nature, patient by nature; therefore, these are no supernatural graces, these are no signs of the holy spirit.

Secondly, the profession of Religion. This is no sign of the Holy Spirit neither for many profess they know God, and ye are reprobate to every good work. Tit. 1:16, that is, many profess Religion, they will hear the Word, they will have prayers in their families, they will be of the better side in their Parish where they are, if there be any godly ones, they will be of their Company, if they can, and seem to do as they do, and yet they have a carnal heart, they do very good works every day, but they have a Reprobate and unapproved heart in them. They do not do them right.

Thirdly, Every kind of repentance is not a sign neither, we read that Pharaoh Confessed, his sin, and desired the prayers of God's people. Exod. 9:27. Saul wept for his sins. 1 Sam. 24:16. Judas made restitution: Esau bought repentance with tears. The world think certainly these were times of God's Spirit; no, no: They were only Common effects of the spirit. The wicked may in a sort repent of their sins and beat them down too, but the truths is, they do not mortify them. Like as if a man should come into a garden, and see how a mole hath cast up the earth, and made a fowl stir in the Alleys, and in the Garden knots, if he tread it only down with his foot, and do not kill the Mole, anon after it will be as bad as before, so many wicked men may do, they may beat down their sins every day, but they rise up still as bad as before; now they beat them down, and so their lusts like the Mole cast up again. Thus the Mole is not killed. This is no sign of the Spirit. But a godly heart, he kills the Mole, he mortifies his sin, indeed new Moles may breed, and cast up again; but he rids his soul more and more.

Fourthly, Every kind of faith neither, is not a sign of God's holy Spirit, ye know the stony ground Believed, Luk. 8:13.

Secondly, Now, for those signs that be. First, When a man is soundly convinced of his sins; This is an act of God's holy Spirit, Joh. 16:8. When a man hath the unction from the Holy one, The Text says, that abides forever, where it is, The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you. 1 Joh. 2:27.

Secondly, When a man hath had a sound prick for his sins, this lets in the Holy Ghost, as Peter told his hearers, That were pricked in their hearts. Act. 2:37, he told them they should receive the Holy Ghost.

Thirdly, When a man hath had an unsatisfiable desire of reconciliation with God, as it is said of Paul, that when he was rightly touched by the Spirit indeed, he could neither eat nor drink, Act. 9:9, he could not be quiet, till Ananias came and told him he was reconciled with God.

Fourthly, When a man is another, and a new creature, Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5:17, the Spirit of God, wherever He is, He is a new spirit, and He carries with him a new heart, Ezek. 36:26. He works a thorough change, and he renews mind, will, and affections, inclinations, memory, appetite, members and all: He does not only new-plaster them over, but he pulls a man quite down, and builds him up a new habitation of God, as Christ told the Centurion, if I come, I will heal thy servant, so, if Christ do once come with his spirit into any man's heart, he heals it, he works a mighty mutation in that man into another man, as Paul tells the Corinthians, Ye were drunkards, but now ye are washed, ye were railers, ye were adulterers, ye were covetous, ye were unrighteous, But now ye are washed, 1 Cor. 6:9,10,11. As Paul says, I was a blasphemer, and I was a persecutor, but blessed be God, now I have obtained mercy. Now I am not the man that I was; I was a liar, but now, blessed be God, I have the lip of Truth; I hated them that were godly, but blessed be God, now they are the dearest people to me in the world.

Fifthly, when a man does supernatural good things; natural good things, a natural man may do, without the holy spirit of grace: when you see a man lift up a hundred, or two hundred pound weight, you will say. I, this he may do by nature; But if you should see a man lift up five thousand pound weight, you will say there is more than nature in him: so, beloved, when you see a man loves sin and comes to be vain, and cannot abide to be strict; if he be strict a little, he is soon weary of it, and lays it aside; you may know this man hath not

the spirit of God in him, but if ye see you love holiness, and hate every evil thing, that nothing humbles you so much as sin, nothing takes you up so much as how to please God; now ye may know the spirit of God is in you, Why? This is above Nature. This then is another Use.

Lastly, Hath Christ the seven Spirits of God, to give them to all that will come unto him? Then what may Christ say to them that are contented without him, that have no care at all to come at him, that like not his government, that will not draw water at his Well? He hath taken pains to procure a stock of grace for them, to provide Merits enough for them, a salve broad enough for all their sores, spirit enough to pour into all their hearts; and when he hath done all this, they regard other things more than him. Truly, he may say as David did, when he was told of Nabal's churlish answer, Surely, in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath, in the Wilderness. 1 Sam. 25:21, Even so may Christ say: surely, in vain have I suffered for these men; in vain have I come out of my Fathers bosom for them; in vain did I die upon the cross: They will have none of my ware, they respect not my graces, they will not come at me for my holy Spirit, &c.

SERMON V.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write: these things, saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead. - REVEL. 3:1.

These things, saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars.

These words contain the Description of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom this Epistle is sent unto the Church in Sardis, and in particular to the Minister there, who is here called the Angel of the Church in that place. And the description does instance in two royalties of our Savior Jesus Christ.

First, That he hath the seven Spirits of God, that is, he hath the Holy Ghost, and all his spiritual graces in his hands, to give to whomsoever he pleases, for the quickening of them, and the sanctifying of them, that if any of his members want spirit, or any spiritual good, he hath it for them: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God: This we handled the last day.

Now we proceed to the second Royalty of our Lord Jesus Christ, That he hath the seven Stars, he speaks of the seven Churches of Asia, Christ hath all their Ministers in his hands, and he calls them stars.

First, because the stars do direct: Its a great help when Mariners can see a star in a dark night. When Paul and they that sailed with him could see neither Sun nor Star, the company were without all hope of coming safe to Land, Act. 27:20, they knew not what to do, when

there was not a star to be seen: The stars serve for direction in the night. So good Ministers are for direction unto people, they serve to direct people to Christ. Like the star in the East; When the Wisemen saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, Matth. 2:10, that star directed them to Christ, it went before them all the way, and showed them where to find Christ: so a poor soul rejoices to find a godly Minister; O thinks he, he is a star to direct me to Christ.

Secondly, Because the stars do shine, so good Ministers do shine forth, and hold out a light, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Ye are the light of the world, says Christ, Matth. 5:14, when a man sits in a dark house, he cannot see to do anything, but if one come and open a window, or a casement, and letteth in light, now he may see to go about his business: so, Beloved, people that dwell in dark Parishes, where no sound Ministry of the Word is, they know not what to do to be saved: they err, they wander, they grope, they stumble and fall, they see not how to be godly, and happy for evermore. But when a faithful Minister comes, now light is let in, and those that have a mind to go to Heaven, now they may see the way thither, so that in this sense too, Ministers are stars.

Thirdly, Because stars have influence upon these inferiors bodies, as God says of the Pleiades and Orion, which are a company of stars in the heavenly Orbe. Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Job 38:31, the stars have influences into things here below. The Pleiades open the earth, they make herbs and flowers grow, the spring is when they arise once, Trees begin to sprout, and the plants do wax green; Orion, it produces cold, the Winter comes when that shows itself; the stars have a great influence into sublunary bodies, so it is with Ministers. Bad Ministers are like the stars of Orion, they serve to cool people's hearts, and dead them to all goodness. But good Ministers are as the

stars of Pleiades, no soul can have any mind in him to that which is good, but they do exceedingly help and further, they quicken the heart, they warm and fructify the souls of God's Elect.

Again, the Stars do hang high, so the Ministers of Christ are set high; they hang high, that all the people may have the benefit of their glistening. Zachary calls them the Prophets of the most High, And thou child, shalt be called the Prophet of the most High, Luk. 1:76. But I have handled this Point in effect, when I spake of Ministers being Angels, and therefore I will omit it now. Thus ye see the Ministers are stars. Now he calls them seven, because he speaks of seven Congregations, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Seven Churches, seven Congregations, and everyone had their several stars. Whence we see that every Parish should have a particular faithful Minister. Paul appointed Titus, to ordain Elders in every City, Tit. 1:5. The Apostles ordained Pastors, and Elders in every Church, Act. 14:23. So it was in the time of the Law, as the Text says, Moses of old time hath in every City them that Preach, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day, Act. 15:21.

The Reason is, first, because those Towns that have not a faithful Ministry in it, generally do all perish. I do not deny, but some souls in such blind places may come otherwise to be converted and saved, but generally they perish forever, that live in such places: as the Evangelist says of Galilee. True, they had sorry Priests, but they had not a faithful Ministry. says he, The people sat there in the region and shadow of death, Matth. 4:16, that is, till they had a better Ministry, they were in a damnable estate. So that it is a pitiful thing, when any Town or Parish are without a faithful Ministry, no star of Heaven shining among them.

Secondly, because when people have no faithful Minister of their own, generally they care not for removing of their dwelling, neither will they go a mile or two for the means, they content themselves with what fare they have at home, though it starve them to death: Like the people under the false Prophets, they liked them well enough. My people love to have it so, Jer. 5:31. Nay, they love such prophets better than them that would deal plainly with them; Nay, there be many, that when they have a faithful Minister at home, will be sneaking out, to a drunken Minister abroad, they would rather live under such a one.

Thirdly, Another Reason why every Church should have its particular Star; every congregation had need of a faithful Ministry of their own: Because, if there be any godly Soul, or any one that desires the salvation of his Soul, and lives under a blind guide, he cannot go out, without giving very great offense, it will be thought a giddiness, and a flighting of their own Minister at home; now if every Parish had a sound Ministry in it, this would not be: When people came out of every Parish round about unto John, they had no Pastor of their own, but they came flocking unto John, no question but this bred heart-burning against John: I, and ill-will against those people, that would not be satisfied with what teaching they had in their own Synagogues. Now, I say, if every Parish had its several shining Star, this would not be.

Fourthly, When some Parishes have their Stars and many have not. This casts in a bone of discord between Ministers, for they that are idle, and vain, and scandalous, will envy them that spend themselves in giving light. Again, the people of such Parishes have many times occasion of conversing together, and falling into one another's company. Now, how will this harden one another's hearts, when people shall say, God's blessing on our Ministers heart, he does not

meddle or make with us, we may do what we will for all him! Who would dwell in such a Parish as yours is? We hear he keeps a horrible stir with you, he will not let you alone, you cannot be merry now and then, but you are sure to hear of it: he is so strict forsooth, and so precise, you must have preaching, forenoon and afternoon, and there is such ado to get precise Constables, that you cannot be quiet. What a woeful thing is this? How does this harden the Countries hearts?

The Use of this is; first, this shows what a miserable thing it is, when a Land is darkened, that hath but a few stars; May be here one and there one, but most places are in darkness, and have none: Beloved, this is a sign of the wrath of God. God is wroth with such a Land, and pours his wrath upon such a people, as the Prophet says. Through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, is the Land darkened, Isa. 9:19.

Again, secondly, you that have your stars shining among you, how are you to bless God, when there are so many places in the world that have none! Suppose the Harvest should be coming, and the earth hath great need of rain, to plump up the ears, the Corn is quite spoiled for want of rain: if it do not rain; Alas! Our Corn will be burnt up, and prove little worth. Now if God should rain upon your fields, and not upon your Neighbors: Your Closes, and Leizes have rain, but on the other side of the hedge there is none; What a special mercy is this unto you? As God says, I have caused it to rain upon one City, and caused it not to rain upon another, one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered, Amos 4:7, is not this a great mercy to the owner of that ground where the rain falls, and does not fall else-where? So, my Brethren, you that have the spiritual rain in your particular parishes, what a mercy of God is it unto you? When so many Parishes have not one drop of it.

Again, thirdly, let us take heed lest those few stars that yet be, set upon us, and so we be all in darkness, we have a little rain yet, here and there some. O let us repent and be more forward to bring forth more fruit, if we continue to provoke God with our unfruitfulness, as we do, that little shall be taken away from you. When God's Vineyard in Judah became barren, and brought forth no grapes, but wild ones; What says God? I will command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it, Isa. 5:6, q.d. I will take away all the rainy clouds: ye shall have clouds still, but they shall be clouds without rain, stars without light and heat, Ministers that shall do you no good, this is a fearful case, and yet God will bring it upon us, for a certain, if we do not take heed.

There be six signs of all the stars vanishing away, that God will take away those few stars, those few godly Ministers away, that are left.

First, when people will not walk in the light, while they have the light. As our Savior Christ says: Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, Joh. 12:35, q.d. ye have the light; a little while the Lord lets you have it, he lets it stay with you a little while longer, but if ye will not walk in the light, the light shall be gone, and ye shall be in darkness, this is an evident sign that the light will surely away from us: what a deal of light is yet held before our faces, and scarce any have a heart to walk in it! When servants are idle, and will not mend their clothes, in the day time at spare hours, why should the Master allow them any candle? So, we have a day among us, and people will not bestir themselves, they go all rent and tottered in their garments, they care not for doing of their business, therefore, the Lord will allow them no candle, he will put out all the lights.

Secondly, when people grow deader and deader, when they forsake their first love, they were once more earnest for heaven, more tender in Conscience, more eager for good things, more lively in Prayer, more zealous in holy duties, but now they abate, and slacken, they are told of it, and yet they do not amend, when it is once come to this pass, the Lord will remove the faithful Ministry of his Word. To what end should he let it stay any longer? As Christ says to Ephesus, Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candle-stick out of its place, except thou repent, Rev. 2:5, this is another sign of the Ministries departing away from us, Candle and candle-stick will away, for we will not amend. We have been told of our formality, we have heard whole Sermons against our lukewarmness, and against our declining's, and yet nothing will fetch us up again. We will not think soundly from whence we are fallen, we will not be persuaded to do our first works, our hearts are grown senseless, and nothing can pluck them up, therefore how can we hope but our candlestick will be removed, and quickly too.

Thirdly, when people wax weary of God's Ordinances, they are even cloyed with them, like the Israelites there in Amos, when will the New Moon be gone that we may fell corn? When will the Sabbath be over, that we may set forth Wheat? Amos 8:5, q.d. here is such ado with Lectures, and Sermons, we can hardly have time for our Markets: such ado with the Sabbath, it is so tedious, so irksome, we are not able to hold out, Prayers in the Family come so fast about, and duties come so thick, we have hardly any space for our other businesses. Ministers require so much of us, Sermons are so strict, Sacrifices are so often, we can have no breathing: thus people are cloyed, they are full fed, they care not much if they had less, nay, some will not stick to say it, and others that in their hypocrisy will not say it, yet they have no stomach, no appetite, there is so much

Word, that they are not able to digest it, neither have they any mind to concoct it; therefore mark there what follows. Behold! The days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord, ver. 11, that is, you are more afraid of a famine of bread, ye would be more troubled if you had no Bread to eat, nor liquor to drink, you care not so it be not that famine. But think what you will, I will send you a worse famine than that, a famine of hearing of God's Word. Ye shall have Preaching little enough. Little enough food for your souls, seeing ye will be filthy, ye shall be filthy; seeing ye will be heartless towards heavenly things, ye shall be heartless; ye shall be hardened, ye shall be let alone; and the blind shall lead the blind, and both shall fall into the ditch; the wicked shall lead the wicked, wicked Ministers the wicked people, and both shall perish together: and then though ye would never so fain have a Sermon that may come to the Conscience, ye shall be long enough before ye shall hear it: Ye shall starve for want of spiritual knowledge: starved to death for want of life: Seared in your sins; ye shall have no Sermons to dispossess you of Satan, no teaching to purge your hearts, to humble your souls before God, or to minister the Spirit unto you, ye are weary of the sound Ministry of the Word, therefore ye shall not be troubled with it. This then is another sign that God will take away those few Stars that are yet remaining. And then woe be to you.

Fourthly, when there are hardly any sons of peace, that the Ministers peace may light upon, then the Lord bids them pack away: Like the Market folks, when they see their Commodities lie upon their hands, they take up their Commodities lie upon their hands, they take up their Commodities, and go home. O say they, people will give nothing, they will not give our price, we and our children will have them for our own selves, rather than we will part with them for nothing. So they go away, so, God's Ministers go away, when the

Market is dead, no Customer will come to their stalls. So Paul and Barnabas went away from the Jews, Ye put off the word from you, and therefore, lo, we turn unto the Gentiles, Act. 13:46, q.d. ye will have none of it, we have offered it to you, and we were bid to do so, but ye put it off from you, therefore fare ye well. Die in your sins. So people now put off the word of God, our Doctrine sinks nowhere almost; one puts it off from him, another puts it off from him: Like as the Cities of the Philistines did with the Ark. The men of Ekron, they cried out, and do you bring it to us? And so the men of Ashdod, said, and it shall not abide with us. 1 Sam. 5:7. Everyone put it off, they would have none of it.

Fifthly, when people oppose, they are so far from repenting at the preaching of the Word, that they fall to oppose, and to mis-use the bringers of it, as the Jews did Saint Paul. The Text says, He shook his raiment at them, and told them, your blood be upon your own heads, and away he went, Act. 18:6, when people lay their heads together, how they may heave out the Minister, many times God gives them leave for to do it, that they may bring evil on their own heads, the Lord lets them have their cursed wills, to their own utter destruction and condemnation.

Sixthly, when God hath sent all his Ministers that ever he means to send: He sent one Minister, and they would not hear him, he sent another after him, and they would not hearken to him neither, a man would wonder, surely God will send no more, well, may be God in his great goodness sends another good man, and he does what he can, but the people will do wickedly still. Yea, but when God hath sent all that He means to send, now he will send no more; as God did with Judah. I have sent unto you all my servants the Prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, return from your evil ways, but ye

have not inclined your ear unto me, Jer. 35:15, when God had sent all, then he would send no more.

You will say, how can this be a sign? When God hath sent all that he means to send: who can tell that?

I Answer, Beloved, God may show it plainly, that God hath sent even all that he means to send; when he blocks up the way, that more cannot be suffered to come to us, then those that are come, when such courses are laid, that never a faithful one more is permitted to enter; when God's faithful ones are forbidden to Preach, as Paul says, They forbid us to Preach. When people will have Pashur's, and not Jeremiah's: When there be Laws made, Look ye speak no more in his name: When they say to the Seers, see not, and to the Prophets prophesy it. When the good Levites are made to go away, and to leave their own places, as it was in Jeroboams time, 2 Chron. 11:14. Again, when the shadows wax long, it is a sign that the Sun is going down.

The reason why God will take away all his Stars, when matters are come to this pass, is,

First, because it is but lost labor, and Cost cast away, to administer physic to such patients whose diseases are desperate: my Brethren, God is a wise physician, and he knows whom he hath to deal with: when he sees men rend in pieces his Prescripts, and pull off his plasters, and vomit up his wholesome potions, that he gives them for their good; he gives them up for gone, he will be their Physician no longer. This was the reason why God did leave Judah, Thy disease is incurable, Jer. 30:12.

Secondly, because it is not only lost labor, but it is worse then lost, to let such people have the Ministry of the word: it makes them much

worse. Why should ye be smitten anymore? Ye will revolt more and more, Isa. 1:5, why should ye be preached to anymore? Ye will, &c.

Thirdly, Because if men will needs go on in their sins, God would rather they should do so without his word, then with it: as a husbandman, if the ground be stark barren, he would rather never plough it, and sow it with seed, then to have it barren after the seed sown; when people will needs be wicked, God would rather have them do all their wickedness out of his sight, then in it, I will cast you out of my sight, Jer. 7:15. God cannot abide to look upon a people, that will have their own ways; they anger him more, when they commit all their wickedness under his Word; God looks towards a people when he sends them his holy Word, he looks upon them to do them good, he looks towards them in pity, and calls them to repentance, that they may find favor with him, and therefore, if they do evil now, this provokes him more a thousand times. A drunkard where the word is truly preached, an adulterer there, a muck-worm there, a proud person there, a profane wretch there; I say, this angers him more a thousand thousand times. The times of ignorance, God winked at, Act. 17:30. If your sins were committed in blind Parishes, God would wink at you, in a manner, that is, your damnation should be less. God would excuse you himself, in some measure. Alas! Poor creatures, they know not what they do; let them have less hell, they do not deserve so many plagues; he winks at the wicked that live without his Word: But you that live under the word, he cannot wink at you. He will punish you to the full. O! Beloved, above all things, the Lord cannot abide that people should be wretched and vain under his Word: But I will pass over this point. Thus ye see they are seven Stars, every Congregation had its Star, every Church had its Minister.

Now in the next place, we see here that Christ hath these seven Stars. These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. Christ hath the seven stars. Christ is said to have the seven stars, in five respects.

First, in respect that they have their mission from him, secondly, in respect they have their Commission from him, thirdly, in respect they have their abilities from him, fourthly, in respect they have their success from him, fifthly, in respect they have their Protection from him; of these in their order.

First, they have their Mission from him. It is Christ that sends forth all true Ministers: As my Father hath sent me, so send I you, Joh. 20:21, it is Christ that sends Ministers to the Church, as he told Jerusalem: Behold I send unto you Prophets, and Wisemen, and Scribes, Matth. 23:34. He called the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, &c. Mark. 6:5. So he called the seventy and sent them also, Luk. 10:1, so it is Christ that sends Ministers to this day. True, the Church does ordain them; I, but if they be not sent by him too, they are intruders. Now when he sends them, they are his Ministers, though it be the Church that puts them into Orders. As it is with a true Constable, though the Parish choose him, yet he is the Kings Officer, and does things in the Kings name; so it is with every true Minister, Christ hath the sending of him, he is the Minister of Christ, as the Apostle says, Let a man so account of us as the Ministers of Christ, 1 Cor. 4:1, and therefore look what we do in our Office, we do it in his name. As he said, in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk. So we say unto God's Elect, in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk. In the name of Jesus Christ Repent of all your wicked ways, and Believe, and though the world will not stir at our speech, yet they that are elected of God do stir: they are none but

the Reprobate, that lie still in their sins, sometime or other we get all, the Elect for to hear us.

The Use of this is; first, for comfort to us that are true Ministers, Christ hath the sending of us, therefore certainly he will be with us in all his errands, the world may be against us, we may meet with many wolves: Behold! I send you as sheep among Wolves; people may threaten and speak their words against us, a foot and a half long; what need we care for all their great speeches, as long as Christ sends us? Christ will be with us for the good of his Elect, in all the course of our Ministry, be it short, or be it long: We shall be useful to them whatever the world do: if there be any that belong to God, we shall find them out, no matter for others. Christ will be with us in the Pulpit, in the prison, in the dog-hole, if ye would put us into it, as Christ told his Ministers, Go and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, and lo I am with you to the end of the world, Matth. 28:19,20, this is our comfort that Christ will be with us, and this is the Elects comfort, they shall be sure to find him with us in our Ministry.

Secondly, if Christ hath the sending of us, we must be sure we do his message, that we perform the work he sends us to do, every messenger should do thus, nay, Christ himself did thus. I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me; Joh. 5:30. If a Merchant should send a servant beyond Sea, to be a Factor for him, if that servant should go and trade for himself, to get monies for himself, and an estate for himself, and neglect his Masters business; he may look for a cold welcome home: so when Christ sends us to be Factors for him, to see what Souls we can gain unto him; if we should now seek ourselves, how to be rich, how to be some-body in the world, how to get preferment, and so leave his business undone; we may look for a cold welcome home, when we

shall be brought before God. Certainly, if Christ sends us, we should mind his work, glorify Christ, labor to reveal Christ, to win Souls to Christ; this is our business to do. When David sent Hushai to Absalom, to be a factor for him, we see how well he did the message, he turned the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness, he marred all that wicked wretches plots, he did all for David: so we should do all for Christ, we should labor to turn the devils plots into foolishness, to undermine Satan, and where God hath any to save, we shall prevail.

Thirdly, If Christ hath the sending of us, we must give him account when we have done. When Christ had sent his Disciples to preach, they returned again, and gave him account of what they had done, Luk. 10:17. Lord even the Devils are subject unto us. Lord I have done thus and thus, I have declared all thy whole counsel, I have kept nothing back: I have done thy message, and such and such have heard me, but such and such will not hear me. A messenger is bound to give an account unto him that sends him: nay, the devil himself returned to give an account: when the Lord sent him to tempt Job, he came again, and told what he had done, Job 2:1, when the children of Dan sent spies to search the land, they came and gave up their account. The very devil may teach us this lesson, to go and give Christ account of what we have done. We see there how they that had received the Talents, how they came and gave in their accompt, Lord thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Fourthly, another Use is to you; what a great mercy is this, that Christ should send unto such as you be? If Christ had sent unto you, when ye had sought him and turned unto him, it had been very much, but that he should dispatch messengers to you, when ye had not a thought of him; nay, when ye sinned against him, O what a great mercy is this! It was a great kindness, that Joseph would send unto his Father, and his Brethren, and bid them leave all, and come

into the Land of Egypt, and willed them that they should not care for their stuff, for the best of the Land of Egypt shall be yours, ye know his brethren were unkind unto him. Beloved, Joseph was never so unkindly dealt with by his Brethren, as Christ hath been by us, and yet that he should send to such wretches as we are: O leave all, and come unto me, regard not your stuff, regard not your profits, never trouble yourselves with this thing and that thing, for all the best of heaven shall be yours; O what an infinite kindness is this! When he will send such treasures of his to us, by his Ministers. As Joseph filled his brethren's sacks with corn, which they carried to their fathers house, in Canaan, to preserve them alive till they came over to Egypt; So the Lord Jesus Christ, hath put his spiritual treasures into a sack, and given them his Ministers to dispense them to their brethren, to nourish them, and preserve them, until they come home to him: he fills his Ministers sacks every week for us, they come with sack-fulls of heavenly and divine truths every week to us, with sack-fulls of food to feed our souls unto eternal life, and when that is spent, he sends us every Sabbath more; and therefore how should we esteem a true Minister that comes to us from Jesus Christ! He is one of a thousand, as Elihu speaks, if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to declare unto man his righteousness, then he is gracious unto him, Job 33:23,24, that is, then is God gracious to us indeed, such a one is one of a thousand, such a one declares to us our righteousness, he brings to us the righteousness of Jesus. This the Lord Jesus Christ sends unto us, when he sends us a true Minister, he sends us an excellent present, even his own righteousness and merits, and the glad tidings of peace, how we may live and be saved: So that we should be thankful unto God, that Christ sends to us his Ministers, with such precious things. If the King should send to any one of us but five pound, O how would we wonder at it, whoever were the messenger, we would bid such a one welcome, and, what! Does the King take notice of me? Such a

poor man as I? Who would have thought that ever he should send such a token to me? What a condescending is this! I tell thee, if thee, if the King should do thus for thee, thou wouldest make very much of it, I, and talk of it too, where ever thou comest; nay, it would make thee glad, and a very joyful man, and it would make thee think thyself highly preferred. O Beloved, and what a horrible shame is this, that the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lord's, should send a messenger to us every day almost, not with five pounds a-piece to every one of us, but with all the riches and treasures of heaven, to enrich us forever, to make us happy forever, Blessed that ever we were born, and yet that we should not be affected hardly! My Brethren, we that are the Ministers of God, we come with heavenly and glorious things, every day from our Lord Jesus Christ: though we have them but in earthly vessels, yet they are things that the whole world is but dross and dung in comparison of, and therefore think how ye should come to Church; think how ye should come to hear Sermons: Now I come to hear a message from Christ, now shall I hear an Ambassador from heaven, that will break open Christ's Letter to me, a reproof from Jesus Christ, a counsel from Christ, Directions from Christ concerning the framing of my life, Lessons from Christ, how I may come to glory. O, says the Apostle, He hath given to us the Ministry of reconciliation with God: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ his stead be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 5:18,19,20, q.d. Ah ye poor creatures, God and you are out, ye are enemies of God, by your evil works, the wrath of God hangeth over you, wrath for all your sins; wrath for your drunkenness; wrath for your covetousness; wrath for all your carnal courses; ye lie under the wrath of God, wrath that will damn you, and undo you forever. Now the Lord of Heaven and Earth hath

sent us as Heralds of Peace, we come Ambassadors from the Lord of all glory, we have the word of reconciliation, the word that we preach, will make God and you friends, if ye will believe it. O, we pray you in Christ his stead consider of it, and be reconciled unto God, hear our message, embrace our Embassy: O do not slight what we say to you, we speak to you from Christ, do not receive it as a word only from our mouths, but as indeed it is, the Word of the great God. This is the only Word that can make God and you friends, O how highly does it concern you to submit hereunto!

How will this judge the world, that the Ministry of the Word, is no more regarded or heeded! When God sends his Ministers unto people, and because forsooth, their flesh and blood does not like it; they look little after it: Whereas this contains eternal life, and if ye reject this, ye reject eternal life. I beseech you judge what I say: Do you meet with a reproof, that crosses your corrupt lusts? I pray you reason the case thus with your own Souls, O let me not put off this reproof, it reproves me of my drunken doings, it reproves me of my security, it reproves me of my sins: if I put it off, I put off the word of reconciliation: This is one of those truths, that comes to reconcile me to God: I stand out in rebellion, and defiance against God, if I do not take it home. So of any other passage of the Word. Still when the Prophets would speak unto the people, this was their voice, The Lord sent me: so says Isaiah, the Lord sent me; and Jeremiah too, the Lord sent me. When they refused to hear what he said: O, says he! Surely the Lord sent me to speak thus unto you. One would think it were enough to strike terror into the hearts of men, to put off any Sermon, any rebuke, any exhortation, of Christ's Ministers, when they know the Lord sends them. May be, the Minister is as poor a creature as one of you; O, but remember who sends him, as Christ says, he that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you,

despiseth me, and he that refuseth me, refuseth him that sent me, Luk. 10:16.

SERMON VI.

These things, saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. - REVEL. 3:1.

I Have begun to handle this Epistle, wherein I noted four things:

First, the inscription, declaring to whom this Epistle is sent, To the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write: that is, to the Minister of the Church, and to the Church itself.

Secondly, The Subscription, declaring from whom it is sent: These things, saith he that, &c.

Thirdly, The Substance, or subject matter of the Epistle: I know thy works, &c. Usque ad, ver. 4.

Fourthly, The Conclusion, He that over-cometh, &c. ver. 5,6.

I have already Analyzed all this whole Epistle, and Paraphrased upon every part of it, and showed you the meaning of it, and the scope of it; and have made some entrance upon it; namely, to reprove their deadness and coldness in Religion, and to quicken them up unto life, lest the judgment of God fall upon them. I have dispatched the Inscription: And to the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write: and so I pass on to the second: Namely, the Subscription, These things saith, &c.

These words, as ye heard, contain a description of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom this Epistle is sent. The Description is not a whole and an entire description of him, but only accommodated to the business in hand. And therefore it describes him only from two admirable Royalties that are in him. The first is this, That he hath the seven Spirits of God, that is, he hath the Holy and quickening Spirit, to give him to whomsoever he please, q.d. if ye would be quickened, hearken unto me, come unto me, I have all the graces of the Spirit to quicken you withal.

Secondly, That he hath the seven Stars, that is, as I told you, he hath all the Ministers of the Church in his hand, and at his dispose, These things, saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars, That is, Christ hath all the Stars, all the Ministers of the Church, they are all in his hand. I told you, he is said to have them in five respects: 1. They have their Mission from him. 2. They have their Commission from him. 3. They have their Abilities from him. 4. They have the success of their labors from him. 5. They have their protection from him, he opens their mouths as long as he lists, and shuts them, when he seeth fit so to do.

I have spoken of the first; The Ministers of Christ have their Mission from Christ, he hath the sending of them, As my Father hath sent me, so send I you, Joh. 20:21, it is Christ that sends Ministers to the Church, as he told Jerusalem, Behold! I send unto you Prophets, and Wisemen, and Scribes, Matth. 23:34. He called the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, Mark. 6:7. So he called the seventy and sent them also, Luk. 10:1, so, it is Christ that sends all true Ministers, to this day. True, the Church does Ordain them, but if they be not sent by him too, they are intruders. Now when he sends them, they are his Ministers, though the Church put them into Orders. As it is with a true Constable, though the Parish choose him,

yet he is the Kings Officer, and does things in the Kings name. So it is with every true Minister, Christ hath the sending of him. He is the Minister of Christ, as the Apostle says, Let a man so account of us, as of the Ministers of Christ. 1 Cor. 4:1. And therefore look what we do in our Office, we do it in his name. As Peter said, In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk. So we say unto God's Elect, rise up and walk, in the name of Jesus Christ repent of all thy wicked ways and believe, and though the world will not stir at our speech, yet they that are elected of God do stir, they are none but the reprobate that lie still in their sins. Sometime or other we get home all the Elect, they hear us, they obey us, they submit to our Doctrine, in the name of Jesus Christ.

The Use of this is; first, for comfort of the poor Ministers of Christ, may be we meet with many wolves in the delivery of his errands. We meet with sour faces, and wry looks, suspensions, oppositions, and such like wolvish dealings, for doing of our message; what need we care for all these, as long as Christ sends us. Certainly, if he send us, he will be with us, as God said to Moses, I send thee, certainly I will be with thee, Exod. 3:12, he will be with us for the good of his chosen, in all the course of our Ministry, be it short, or be it long. We shall be useful unto them, though the reprobate world will not obey any of our words. Christ will be with us in the Pulpit, in the prison, in a dog-hole, if the wicked put us in it, as Christ said, Go and teach all Nations, and loe I am with you to the end of the world, Matth. 28:19,20. This is our comfort, Christ will be with us, and this is the Elects comfort, they shall be sure to find him with us in our Ministry: if we be in the Pulpit, there they shall hear us teaching of them; if in the prison, there they shall have us sealing of the truth to them.

Secondly, if Christ hath the sending of us, we must be sure to do his message, that we perform the work he sends us to do. Every

messenger should do thus. I seek not mine own will, saith Christ, but the will of the Father which hath sent me, Joh. 5:30, if a Merchant should send a servant beyond the Seas, to be a Factor for him, if that servant should go and trade for himself, to get money for himself, and an estate for himself, and neglect his Masters business, he may look for a cold welcome home: So when Christ sends us to be Factors for him, to see what Souls we can gain unto him, if we should now seek ourselves, how to be rich, how to be some-body in the world, how to get preferment, and so leave his business undone; we may look for a cold welcome home. Certainly, if Christ sends us, we should mind his work, we should glorify Christ, labor to reveal Christ, to win Souls to Christ. This is our business to do.

Thirdly, If Christ hath the sending of us, we must give him account when we have done. When Christ had sent his Disciples to preach, they returned again, and gave him account of what they had done, Luk. 10:17. Lord even the Devils are subject unto us. Lord I have done thus and thus, I have declared all thy whole counsel, I have kept nothing back: I have done thy message, and such and such have heard me, but such and such will not hear me. A messenger is bound to give an account unto him that sends him: nay, the devil himself returned to give an account: when the Lord sent him to tempt Job, he came again, and told what he had done, Job 2:1. So we should come again, and tell God what we have done. When the children of Dan sent spies to search the land, they came and related what they had done, so should we do. Lord, behold, here am I, and here are the people that I have begotten by thy Word, and here are the rebels that I could never get to reform their wicked ways. We see how they that had received the Talents, how they came and gave in their accompt, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. O what a case shall we be in, if we cannot give up a good account at the last day, of what we have done in our places and callings!

Fourthly, If Christ send us unto you. O, Beloved, what a great mercy is this! That Christ should send unto such as you be? If Christ had sent unto you, when ye had sought him and turned unto him, it had been very much, but that he should dispatch messengers unto you, when ye had not so much as a thought of him; nay, when ye sinned against him, This was a mercy indeed! It was a great kindness, that Joseph would send unto his Father, and his Brethren, and bid them leave all, and come into the Land of Egypt: O, saith he, regard not your stuff, for the best of the Land of Egypt shall be yours, ye know his brethren were unkind unto him. Beloved, Joseph was never so unkindly dealt with by his Brethren, as Christ hath been by us, and yet that he should send to such wretches as we are: O leave all, and come unto me, regard not your stuff, regard not your profits, never trouble yourselves with this thing and that thing, for all the best of heaven shall be yours; O what an infinite kindness is this! When he will send such treasures of his to us, by his Ministers. As Joseph filled his brethren's sacks with corn, which they carried to their fathers house, in Canaan, to preserve them alive till they came into Egypt; So the Lord Jesus Christ, hath put his spiritual treasures, as it were, into a sack, and given them his Ministers to dispense to their brethren, to nourish them, and preserve them, until they come home to him: he fills his Ministers sacks every week for us, they come with sack-fulls of heavenly and divine truths every week to us, with sack-fulls of food to feed our souls unto eternal life, and when that is spent, he sends us every Sabbath more; and therefore how should we esteem a true Minister that comes to us from Jesus Christ! He is one of a thousand, as Elihu speaks, if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to declare unto man his righteousness, then he is gracious unto him, Joh 33:23,24, that is, then is God gracious to us indeed. When God sends us a messenger from him, such a one is one of a thousand, such a one declares to us our righteousness. Ye know we cannot stand before God without

righteousness. Now such a one declares to us righteousness. He brings us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So that we should be thankful to Christ that he sends us any of his true Ministers. O my Brethren, we that are the Ministers of God, we come with heavenly and glorious things, every day from our Lord Jesus Christ: Though we have them but in earthen vessels, yet they are things, that the whole world is but dross and dung to; and therefore think how ye should come to Church; think how ye should be affected with our message, think with what affections ye should hear our Sermons: Now I come to hear a message from Christ, a Letter from Christ, a Direction from Christ, a reproof from Christ, counsels from Christ, for the framing of my life, now I shall be told, what I may do to inherit glory. O, says the Apostle, He hath given to us the Ministry of reconciliation with God: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ his stead be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 5:18,19,20, q.d. Ah ye poor creatures, God and you are out, ye are enemies of God, by your evil works, the wrath of God hangeth over you, wrath for all your sins; wrath for all your drunkenness; your covetousness; worldliness; wrath for all your carnal courses; your slighting of heaven and heavenly things, the wrath of God abideth on you. Now the Lord of Heaven and Earth hath sent us as Heralds of Peace, we come as Ambassadors from the Lord of all glory, we have the word of reconciliation, the word which we preach, will make God and you friends again, if ye will believe it, and embrace it. We pray you in Christ his stead to consider of it, be reconciled unto God, hear our message, do not slight what we say to you, we speak to you from Christ, This is the only Word that can make God and you friends.

O how will this judge the world, that the Ministry of the Word, is no more regarded nor heeded! When God sends his Ministers unto people, and because forsooth, their flesh and blood does not like it; they look little after it. Whereas this contains eternal life, and if ye reject this, ye reject eternal life. I beseech you judge what I say: Do you meet with a reproof that crosses your corrupt lusts? I pray you reason the case thus with your own Souls, I am reprov'd for my looseness, and my vain ways, my fashioning of myself according to this world, my fawning, my flattering, my gaming, my scandalous courses, my sinning against light, I have had good education, I have lived under good means, but I am very graceless, if I put off these reproofs, I put off the word of reconciliation: This is the word that comes to reconcile me to God, if I have faith to apply it, but if I put it from me, and do not regard it, I refuse all reconciliation with God. So, when the Word shows you your duty, how to believe, how to live, how to walk, in all holiness and true righteousness. Consider, if ye put it from you, ye put away from you the only word of reconciliation. These are the truths that are sent unto me, to reconcile me unto God: O, if I will have none of them, I cast off the Son of God, and everlasting life. Still when the Prophets would speak unto the people, this was their preface, The Lord sent me: so says Isaiah, the Lord sent me, Isa. 48:16, so says Jeremiah, the Lord sent me. When they refused to hear what he said: O, says he! Truly the Lord sent me, of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you, to speak all these words unto you. Jer. 26:15. One would think it wore enough to strike terror into the hearts of men, to put off any Sermon, any rebuke, any exhortation of Christ's Ministers, when they know the Lord sends them. Of a truth the Lord hath sent me to speak all these words unto you. May be, the Minister is as poor a creature in himself, as one of you; O, but remember who sends him, as Christ says, he that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me, Luk.

10:16. So much shall suffice to have been spoken of the first way, whereby Christ is said to have the seven Stars, that is, the Ministers of the Church, namely, he hath the sending of them.

Secondly, He hath them, that is, he hath the giving of them their Commission, as they have their Mission from him, so they have their Commission from him too. They are not only messengers but Ambassadors. This Commission hath two things; first, the heads of their Embassy, that Christ sends them to treat of. Secondly, the authority of their Embassy, that Christ invests them with.

For the first, the heads of their commission, Christ hath the appointing of them, what they shall treat of, and they are five. First, they shall preach the Word. Go and preach the Gospel to every creature, Mark. 16:15. Secondly, to remit the sin of all them that do embrace the Gospel, Joh. 20:23, that is, to pronounce all the promises of the Covenant of Grace, and in particular, forgiveness of sins to all true penitent and believing Souls. Thirdly, to administer the Sacraments of the New Testament, to all the said persons, to whom the promises of eternal life do belong, for the assuring of their hearts, concerning all the things of the Kingdom of God to them in particular, Matth. 28:19. Fourthly, To build up the Church of God, for the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ, until they all come, &c. Ephes. 4:12. Fifthly, to shut the Kingdom of Heaven upon all that have an evil heart of unbelief, to go on in their sins, and not to stoop to the Scepter of Jesus Christ, Mark. 16:16, and in divers other places. These are the heads of their commission, that Christ will have them treat of in their Embassy unto men.

Secondly, now for the Authority that he invests them with, it is not any carnal or earthly authority, to jet, and to vaunt, or to domineer, as though they were Lord's, and God's heritage, 1 Pet. 5:3, no, says

Christ, it shall not be so with you. But he that is greatest among you, he shall be as the least, Luk. 22:26, and therefore I do not here speak of any earthly authority: No, the Authority that Christ's Ministers have, and they have it from him, is a spiritual Authority: namely, not only to preach, and to declare forgiveness of sin, and to administer the seals of the covenant, and to build up the Saints, and to denounce wrath and damnation to all that continue in their unregenerate estate through impenitence and unbelief, but to do all these things with a heavenly Power and Authority, to have an Office under Christ for the doing of them, so as to be the very mouth of Christ, and that which they do according to their commission from him, to stand firm and good, forever and ever. I will give power to my two witnesses. Rev. 11:3. The Lord hath given me power and authority says the Apostle, 2 Cor. 10:8. You will say this is great power indeed, all the Kings and Potentates of the earth have not so great power as this, this is a power of life and death, not natural, nor temporary, but Spiritual and eternal, this is a power not over men's Bodies but over their souls, not in small matters, but either for salvation or damnation. This is a great Commission, how come they by such a great one as this is? O says Christ, I am able to invest them with as much as this comes to. For all power is given unto me in Heaven and Earth. Matth. 28:18, q.d. I am able to furnish you with all authority and power, go you in my name, and preach you in my name, in my name bid people repent and believe, in my name open heaven to all that do obey, and shut it upon all that do disobey, and I will make it good.

The use of this is. First, have the Ministers of Christ such a Commission from Christ? Then they are the greatest Ambassadors, that ever were, or can be. Ambassadors of earthly Kings, have a great Commission, they represent the Kings person from whom they come, Alas, what are they to these? They come about petty things, about

civil peace, or war and yet they are Lord Ambassadors, they are Lord's by their places, they are much respected among men. O then what great Ambassadors are the Ministers of Jesus Christ, that represent the King of Kings person, that represent the person of the Lord of Lord's, that came to Treat of peace between God and Man, or of open Hostility between the Creator and the Creature? As Paul says now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 15:20, that is, we have a very great commission, we represent the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, we come to treat with you about eternity, according as you hear us, or hear us not, so it will be with you unto all eternity. O consider what we have to do, you are enemies unto God from the womb, as long as your sins do remain, ye are enemies still, we come to set you at one again. Ye know the condition, ye know what the heads of our commission be, if ye will not hearken unto them, and submit, ye are damned forever; if ye do, blessed and happy are ye for evermore, was there ever such a great Embassage as this? As the Apostle says, To make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which, I am an Ambassador in bonds, Ephes. 6:19,20, q.d. though the wicked and blind world, look upon me as a Schismatic, and a malefactor, and cast me into the prison, and here I am in bonds, they see no such thing in me, as an Ambassador of the great God, yet the truth is, though I be in bonds, they shall know it one day to their cost, who I was, and what a commission I had, and what it is to slight it, and put it off. I am an Ambassador of the mystery of the Gospel, though I be in bonds.

Secondly, Have some Ministers, such a commission from Christ? Then let them learn how to behave themselves in their function. My Brethren, Christ hath committed unto us the custody of his own power, and authority, and therefore we are to exercise it in his name, our commission is to charge the great men of the world, Charge them

that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, 1 Tim. 6:17. True, we are your servants for Jesus his sake, and we are to be humbled, and to wait upon men of lowest degree, and to condescend unto men of meanest capacity, and there is a time when we should for loves-sake entreat, but the truth is too, we have power to charge and command, These things command and teach, 1 Tim. 4:11. These things speak and exhort, and rebuke withal authority. Tit. 2:15. We must not betray the power and majestical simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have Christ's own power and authority in our ministry, and therefore we are to command you in his stead: as ever you will answer Christ, before his Tribunal at last day, neglect not those things, which we preach to you from him. Now we command you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us. 2. Thes. 3:6. True, we are inferiors to Kings, and Princes, and Magistrates, and the Nobility and Gentry of the land: There be thousands and thousands that are our Betters, in all civil respects; but our Embassy is above all.

The Lord's own Power and Authority goes through the ministry, as a Trunk. As, the King may send a Command to the greatest Nobleman of the Kingdom by the hand of a mean man, and he is to hearken to it: though the messenger in himself be his underling, yet his message is above him, and he loses his head if he despise it. So, beloved, we are over you in the Lord, that is in regard of our message. Though we be your inferiors, and some of you be our betters, and we are to stand with Cap in hand to you; yet ye lose your souls; if ye will not hear us, and obey our Embassy. We must not bow to your humors, nor make the Spirit of Christ in the Gospel to bend and comply with human lusts. If Princes and Potentates were by, we must not spare their sins. Nathan deals roundly with King David. Thou art the man. Jehu, with King Jehoshaphat, wrath is upon thee from the Lord,

because thou hast helped the ungodly. We must let all the world know that Christ whom we preach, is above them all, we must not prostitute Christ's Scepter, no not at a Monarchs foot. If we be men-pleasers, we are not the servants of Christ. We must not suffer Christ's word to be bound, whosoever is our hearer, whether high or low. We defy popish Divinity that exalt their Antichristian Clergy, above the civil Magistrate. Belarmines Martin is but a foisted story. But yet in this sense we are above all the Kingdoms of men, as God says, Behold I have put my words in thy mouth, and loe I have set thee this day over Nations and Kingdoms, to plant and to root up, to build and to throw down. Jer. 1:9. 10. Let no man think we are saucy, though we reprove the greatest of you all, as long as we do it in Christ, and from Christ, we are the mouth of the Judge of quick and dead, and he will make our words good; The meanest Sergeant in the Kings name dares arrest the greatest Duke. So, my Brethren, we come in the Kings name, in Christ his name, and therefore we must not be afraid of your faces, As Paul told Philemon, I have great authority in Christ to command thee, that which is convenient. Philem. 8. We have great authority to command every one of you, to do your Duties towards God, and man. We have Christ for our Author, and therefore he will be a wall of Brasse to us. We are his Ambassadors, and therefore our Message is with great power.

Thirdly, Have we this Commission from Jesus Christ? Then this may serve to condemn all such as do not obey our Ministry. Though we have all this authority, the very power of Christ himself in our mouths, that equally binds King and Beggar; Yet who obeys our commands? Who stirs? Who repents? Who submits himself unto our commission? We have called for humiliation, but no man will humble himself. We have cried for reformation, and amendment of life, but no man relents; we have read our commission every week unto people, we show them our Letters Patents from the Lord Jesus

Christ, and they are counted as idle tales by the most. O what an indignity is this unto our Lord Jesus Christ! We are his Ambassadors, and your standing out against us, is not against us, but against him, and he will repay it. O, says the Apostle, if any man obey not our word, By this Epistle, note that man, 2 Thess. 3:14, q.d. note him with a brand of infamy, note him as a Rebell against Jesus Christ, look upon him as a wretched miserable creature, take heed of him, avoid him, withdraw yourself from him, point at him, yonder goes a wretch, that will not obey the voice of his teacher, excommunicate him from your company, have as little to do with him as you can. Be ye shy of such a man, certainly there is great wrath hangeth over him. So, Beloved, if any obey not our word, note such persons, note such parishes, note all such families, the wrath of heaven hangeth over them, their stubbornness, and hardness of heart is not against us, but against the Lord. These are notorious Towns, notorious people, that have Christ's Ambassadors among them, and yet will not be obedient, and yet how is our Embassy made nothing of! If Kings only, and Princes, and Lord's, and great men should make nothing of it, we should not so much wonder, because they are greater men, then those that God sends his Embassy by, and yet if they were wise, and knew what they did, they durst not do as they do, but every base fellow stops his ear, and hardens his heart, against the God of Heaven and earth, and will not obey our word: nay, men can hear their sins ripped up, and the Anathema's of Christ spread before their faces, and not blush. They can hear that those very sins they live in, do separate from God, do adjudge them to hell, and show them to be under the blackness of darkness, and the sentence of damnation, they can see it shown them out of the word, which they cannot deny for their hearts, though they would never so fain, and yet they will not repent nor return that they may have mercy. Not one drunkard will leave, nor one Mocker leave, nor one Covetous person, nor one graceless wretch leave, they will

have their own ways, do the Ministers of God what they can. We can get none to be awakened, none quickened, none stirred, none startled to any purpose. Setting aside here one and there one that truly obeys the voice of God's servants, the whole country lying in ignorance of God, in the privation of his Spirit, unreconciledness with heaven, voidness of faith, emptiness of grace and life, the nakedness of an outward profession, having no true quickening within, nay the most in gross wickedness, drunkenness, company-keeping, unruliness, disorder, uncleanness, lasciviousness, covetousness, mocking at the pure in heart, malicious alienation of spirit against the holy ways of God. Nay since we have spoken to them in the name of the Lord, yet none will hearken to any effect that their souls may live.

Fourthly, therefore, I pray you let me add one use more; do but consider, how the Lord taketh this at our hands, that his Ministers are thus vilipended. They are in more danger of their liberty for reprovng, then the wicked for committing of their sins. Are his Ministers, his Ambassadors? Then he will never endure that his Ambassadors shall be abused. When the King of the Ammonites had abused David's Ambassadors, that he sent him in love. 2 Sam. 10. Ye know what it cost, it cost above 40, thousand men's lives. The Romans slue the Illyrians and the Tarentines, for mis-using of their Ambassadors, and as Cicero says, our Ancestors says he, for this very thing destroyed all Corinth. For alas how could Princes deal with one another, if Ambassadors should not go safe, and be hearkened unto? Therefore Ambassadors must be regarded. When Scipio Africanus took a ship full of Carthaginians, though he meant to rifle all they had, yet when they said they were Ambassadors, he would not meddle with them. True, they were not, they did but counterfeit, that so they might escape. But yet you may see how inviolable Ambassadors were, the least indignity offered to them, was punished

as if it had been offered to the person of that Prince, that they did sustain. Well then, how do we think will the Lord take it at people's hands, that his Ambassadors are abused, and disobeyed, that people will not diligently come to them, and acknowledge their errands, and yield obedience to him, no Nation under heaven hath had more Ambassadors from Heaven then we have had, and though some have hearkened to them, yet for the most part they meet with Ammonitish dealings they are disfigured, and mocked, and laded with indignities, denied to deliver their message, every paltry rascals complaint admitted against them, none walk in so much danger as they, none more shot at, then they; scarce any will hear them and submit to their Embassage, and those few that do, are counted the only factious people, and pestilent fellows in the land, O, what wrath is there against us for these things. For this very cause, the Lord plagued all Judah even because they would not listen to God's Ambassadors that he sent to them early and late, as the Prophet speaks. Jer. 29:17,18,19. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts. Behold I will send upon thee the sword, the famine and the Pestilence, and will make them like vile Figs, that cannot be eaten they are so evil, and I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine and with the Pestilence, and I will deliver them to be removed to all the Kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment and a hissing and a reproach, among all Nations whither I have driven them. Mark now; what is the reason, why God would do thus? Because they have not hearkened to my Word, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the Prophets, rising up early and sending them, but ye would not hear saith the Lord. This was the reason, why God would plague them so grievously, because they would not listen to his Ambassadors that he sent them for their good. The like we read of the ten Tribes: the Lord poured his vengeance on them too for this very reason, because they would not hear his Ambassadors, therefore the Lord cast them out of his sight, and flung them away from being

his people and he would never be their God more, the place is 2 King. 17:13,14,15. The Lord testified against Israel and Judah, by all the Prophets and Seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways and keep my Commandments and my Statutes, according to all the Law which I commanded your fathers notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their Fathers, and did not believe in the Lord their God, and they rejected his Statutes and his Covenant, that he made with their Fathers. Mark, this was the cause why the Lord was so angry with them, and removed them out of his sight. Because they would not do as his Ambassadors did command them in his name. Now as God hath let out his fury upon them for not attending to his Ambassadors, so he hath done, and daily doth and will yet more do upon us. For though for temporal Judgments, God be patient and forbearing, beyond all admiration, we feel yet no Sword, no Famine, no Pestilence, we may be astonished to see how long suffering he is, O if we had the grace to consider of it, nevertheless the Lord is effusing out upon us the very dregs of his Cup, he fashions us up for his eternal ire, he hath done converting of our hearers, he hath done blessing of our Sermons, he hath made us Loammies, and Toruhamahs, and turned us into a generation of his wrath. You whose eyes God hath opened, whose hearts God hath inclined unto him, whose Consciences God hath purged and Sanctified and made you Saints. Bless him and praise his holy name, and make more of his infinite grace and goodness. For it is to be feared God will now add no more to your number, he delivers people now to a reprobate sense, he resolves to be revenged on our land in fire and Brimstone, for the contempt of his glorious Gospel, that hath been preached so long a time. He lets men fill up the measure of their sins, that those that are filthy may be filthy still, those that are drunkards may be drunkards still, those that are led with their lusts, shall be so still, to the intent that he may bring upon the world, all the fierceness of his spiritual and everlasting wrath, and that he may

revenge the quarrel of his Covenant, and the labors of so many Ambassadors, whom he hath sent unto you, and ye would not hear. O that this might move some of your souls, that so ye might prevent this dreadful judgment and be plucked out like Brandes out of the Burning.

Fifthly, Another Use is, are God's Ministers, his Ambassadors? Then they must Preach no mercy at all, unto such as willfully stand out against Jesus Christ. When Antony was a Rebell, O says Tully, it is not fit to send him Ambassadors of Peace, to treat with him of Peace; as Theseus said once: Go, says he, and tell Creon, Theseus offers thee a gracious offer; Yet I am pleased to be friends, if thou wilt submit. This is my first message: But if this offer prevail not, look for me to be up in Arms. So, Beloved, God's offers of peace have been made already, again, and again, and they have been rejected. Now his Ambassadors must cry. Arms, Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. At the first God dealt with us, as Tullus with his Enemies, Quae verbis componere potuit, armis non decrevit: as long as he could reconcile them with his word, they should not have his blows: So the Lord hath dealt with us, at the first he persuaded us with the promises of his Word, now seeing no more can be gotten in that way, he will have his Ministers lay the axe at the roots, to hew down, and to destroy, and to slay people with the sword of his lips. Do not wonder, when we preach hell and damnation to all rebellious souls. You will say, here is nothing but judgment, Preachers send us all to the devil, they preach, as if they would drive us to despair: they should put in, except we repent.

I Answer, it is enough now to understand it; when the Gospel hath been a long time in a place, God's Ambassadors must hold out the black flag: when Tamberlane had hung out his White flag, and that would not do, and his Red flag, and that would not do neither; then

he hung out his Black flag. Now look for no mercy. So, Christ's Ambassadors should do. When Paul knew that the Gospel was contemned in Corinth, the white and red flag had ceased to do good; You see how he hung out his black one. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Be not deceived, No idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor railers, nor covetous, shall ever inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:9,10. He does not put in, now except ye repent; no, no, now look for no mercy. So the Apostle John. The fearful, and unbelievers, and whoremongers, and liars shall be cast into the Lake that burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21:8, he does not put in, except ye repent: if we should be ever putting in, except ye repent, and concluding with mercy upon condition of repentance, what would hard-hearted people say? O we had a terrible Sermon today, but the Preacher gave us comfort in the closure, he had a sweet bit at the last, and thus they heal all again. Nay, when people grow once to be stubborn, then Prophets have been so far from putting in except ye repent, or any other term of mercy, that they used to meet with the people's presumption of repentance. So Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and others, they threaten destruction to the wicked, and they add this above all, though they cry for mercy, nay, though they fast, and could get Noah, and Samuel, and Job and Daniel to pray for them, yet they shall have no mercy: q.d. ye think to avoid these judgments, by repenting another day; no, no, when ye cry for mercy, ye shall not have it. When a Nation, or a Parish, or any people grow perverse, and have rejected the sweet tenders of mercy, God's Ambassadors are to look upon such wretches as rebels; no indenting with them more, no terms of peace more, as the Law says, with Pirates, and Traitors, and Rebels, the Law of Arms is not to be observed, as Baldus speaks, they have broken the league, as Florus speaks: when Spartacus the Rebell, desired an Embassage of peace, he would fain have Crassus contract a league with him, Crassus scorned the motion; when Talfarinas that

egregious Robber and Traitor, sent an Ambassador with treaty of Peace to Tiberius the Emperor, Tiberius took it with indignation, that he should be so saucy with him. No Embassage of peace is to be made with rebellious wretches; we need not put in, except ye repent, when we are to deal with such; No, no, when ye grow once to despise reproof, see you to that. True, if ye do repent, who knows what God will do? Though Crassus would not parley with Spartacus about peace, yet when he did repent indeed, he received him to mercy. So will God do with you. But in the meantime, know that the God of Heaven is at defiance with you, and all the curses in his Book, are directed against the face of you. Ye have played the deaf Adder, against the gracious tenders of mercy from day today, and therefore see your damned condition. The Ambassadors of Christ have not one tittle of mercy of you, if we could see you melt, and cry out, and down on your knees, and your hearts turn, and your spirits sink down before God, then we might say something unto you; therefore, Brethren, if the Ministers of the Gospel do daily preach more and more judgment, do not think much, they ought so to do.

Sixthly, and Lastly, one Use to you that fear God, and believe his Ambassadors, and are besought by them. Let me say to you, as the Prophet Isaiah said, Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servants, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God, Isa. 50:10, that is, be of good comfort, though all the world, and all the devils in hell be against you, yet be of good cheer; what, although ye meet with never so many temptations, and fears, such a fog of them, that ye can see no light, yet it shall assuredly go well with you. Though others have not come in at the preaching of the Word, ye have. Howbeit others will not reform, will not see the Lord's hand lifted up, they will not acknowledge their sins and sinful doings, and damned case, yet ye have. Ye have seen it, and felt it, and

run to the throne of Grace, and have sought the Lord, according as God's Ambassadors have directed you out of his Word, ye have feared God, and obeyed the voice of his servants, though others make a mock of such as will be ruled by Preachers; tush, they shall not curb me, says one, and they shall not control me, says another. What, does he think to lead me in a string? Yet ye do fear God, and ye dare not stand out against the preaching of his servants, ye desire that ye may ever practice their Word, and lead your lives according to it, whatever others do. Be of good cheer, says the Prophet, The Lord is your God, and do ye stay yourselves on him. the Doctrine that God hath sent unto you by the Ministry of his servants, is the only Doctrine of Salvation, and therein ye shall find eternal life.

SERMON VII.

These things, saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. - REVEL. 3:1.

These words are the Subscription of the Letter, unto the Angel of Sardis, containing a description of Christ, from whom the Letter is sent. Now Christ is here described, according to the matter in hand, from two royalties of his; first, That he hath the seven Spirits of God, that is, he hath the giving of the Holy Ghost, and all his gifts and graces to whomsoever he pleaseth; Secondly, that He hath the seven Stars, that is, he hath the disposing of the Ministers of the Church. And this, I told you, is to be meant divers ways. Christ is said to have the Ministers of the Church five ways. First, he hath the sending of them, they have their Mission from him. Secondly, he hath the delegating of them, they have their Commission from him. Thirdly, he hath the gifting of them, they have their abilities from him.

Fourthly, he hath the prospering of them, they have the success of their labors from him. Fifthly, he hath the keeping of them, they are put into a place, continued, or removed, they have their liberty from him, and when they are put down or silenced, it is he that does do it.

The two first I have handled already; first, that he hath the sending of them; Secondly, that he hath the delegating of them. I come now to the third, He hath the gifting of them; look what good gifts and abilities they have, they have them all of him. As Paul says, He hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:6, and this was one of the ends of his Ascension, as the Apostle says, He ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, Ephes. 4:8, that is, this was one end of his ascending up to Heaven, that he might send down gifts unto his Church. Now what gifts does he mean? True, he sends gifts to all his true Members, but he means the gifting of his Ministers, as it follows: And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry; and so forth, ver. 11,12.

And the truth is, it is not without cause, for of all men, we that are the Ministers of Jesus Christ, have need of singular and rare gifts and abilities.

First, To open the Scriptures: the Scriptures are a great deep, and they have under the Letter, much admirable spiritual matter encouched, and many things are hard in them as Peter says, And a Minister is to open them, and to give out the sense, as it is said of the Priests, They read the Law distinctly, and gave out the sense, and made the people to understand the Reading, Nehem. 8:8. Now if a Minister have not gifts from Jesus Christ, what mad work will he

make? The Scripture will be a clasped book unto him, and a Fountain sealed up. Like the Philistines, that in three days could not expound Samson's Riddle. It is said of Christ, that he opened the Scriptures, Luk. 24:32. The Scriptures are shut, and contain Mysteries folded and lapped up, now the Minister had need of abilities to open them.

Secondly, To Teach; as a Minister is to open the Scriptures, which requireth great gifts: so, he is to teach the people out of them, to draw Doctrines out of the same, and this requireth great gifts too, to inform the judgment, to let out the light of the Word, to scatter the beams of the Sun of righteousness abroad, to dispel the darkness of men's minds, to shine round about them in spiritual knowledge. This is a work of much ability, as the Apostle speaks to Timothy, the things which thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others, 2 Tim. 2:2, and therefore it is called Propheying. Despise not Propheying, that is, despise not Teaching, a man had need of a special gift, to be able to Prophecy, so, if a man would be a Teacher; when Nicodemus would express what an able Teacher Christ was, says he, Thou art a teacher come from God. A man had need to be one that hath been with God, that would teach aright. There is a gift of fitness and aptness, without which a man cannot do it. The servant of the Lord must be apt to teach, 2 Tim. 2:24, the Apostle tells us, there be heaps of naughty teachers in the world, a good teacher is a rare man, it cannot be without all wisdom, as he says, Teaching every man in all wisdom, Col. 1:28, we are to teach people the learning of the holy, how to know God, how to fear him, and love him. We are to teach people how to pray, how to walk in all holiness and righteousness of living: the great things of God's Law, the deep things of the Spirit, the mysteries of eternal life, to open the wiles of Satan, the mistakes of the hearts of men, the many by-ways of the soul, ye know sin is covered over with pleasures, and profits, and carnal reasons, and evasions, and we are to lay it out

naked, as indeed it is. Gracious and godly courses, seem grievous, and irksome, and uncouth, and vile, and needless, and we are to discover the inward pleasure, and commodity, and necessity and glory of them, and therefore we have need of abilities.

Thirdly, to Convince, ye know how the heart does use to put off the Word, and if it meet with a doctrine, or a reproof, or a precept, that it does not like, it will deny it, it will cavil and carp, O, it is false, as Johanan and others said to Jeremiah, it is false you do not say true, we will never believe it. When we paint out a drunkards damned estate, he is ready to gainsay it, or an adulterers, he is ready to except, people contradict such passages of the Word, as are against their lusts, and they give us very little better than the lie, many times, therefore a Minister should be able to convince, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gain-sayers, Tit. 1:9, when people are subject to condemn us for harshness, and hard sayings, and that we do not preach placentia enough, we must be able to use some speech that cannot be condemned, Tit. 2:8, when a Minister preaches weakly, Sermons like wide nets, or rotten threads, that the Birds may get through or break, this is not able preaching, as Zwinglius said of Carolostadius, when he heard him disputing weakly against consubstantiation, O, says he, I am sorry that so good a cause should have such a weak defendant. It is said of Apollos, that he mightily convinced the Jews. Stephen, the University-men there, that came huddling about him, they were not able to withstand the Spirit, and the wisdom by which he spake, Act. 6:10, it is the promise of our Savior, I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, or resist, Luk. 21:15.

Fourthly, to move the affections, Ministers have need of abilities to move the affections of their hearers; not only to inform their

judgments, but also to work upon their affections, not only to enlighten their understanding, but also to stir up their hearts, as Peter says, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, 2 Pet. 1:13, a Minister is to stir up his people, to stir their hearts and affections: he may preach a wholesome Sermon, and the hearers be like Mill-posts, and not stirred a jot: Paul labored to stir affections too: Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, 2 Cor. 5:11, that is, we labor to work upon your affections, and therefore Christ sent a Seraphim with a live coal unto the Prophet Isaiah, to touch his lips, Isa. 6:6, he had need of live coals in his lips, to fire the affections of his auditory; So, he sent the Holy Ghost down upon his Apostles in fiery tongues, without this the information of the judgment is little worth. Religion consists more in the will and the affections of men, then in any other faculty of the soul. I confess the Minister must shine too; I, but he must heat too. John the Baptist was a burning and a shining light.

Fifthly, To speak *Pro re nata*, a Minister hath need of extemporary abilities, sometimes he shall be called before Councils, he preaches such doctrine as angers the world, and therefore he is in danger to be had before Councils, and therefore he had need to have an extemporary faculty, that he may answer as he sees cause, as Christ says, When they deliver you up, take no thought, how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour, what ye shall speak, Matth. 10:19, sometimes to preach upon short warning, as Augustine did, when he relied upon his Brother Severus, to Preach for him, he not coming, he was fain to go up extempore himself, and so he preached upon the 95 Psalm; So; when there was a sudden judgment of God that fell out there in Hippo, though Augustine had preached twice that very day before, yet he went up again, and preached the third time: O, says he, do not wonder, my dear Brethren, *Si hodie ter Sermonem*, &c. do not wonder that I preach

thrice this same time, it is not without cause, &c. Again, a Minister may be put upon it as Philip was by the Eunuch, concerning the meaning of a place of Scripture to speak of it at first sight, and a Minister must not only have this knowledge in his note-book, but in his lips; that is, to be in a readiness upon every occasion. His lips must preserve knowledge. Mal. 2:7. Sometimes he may come among his people, he may light upon their company by chance, now if he have not good abilities, he cannot do the part of a Minister. As Paul says, I long to see you, to impart unto you some spiritual gift, Rom. 1:11. A Minister when he sees his people, he should be a well-stored man, to impart some spiritual thing or other to them, a word of instruction, a word of exhortation, a word of admonition, when he does but see them, he should be able to drop something among them.

Sixthly, to observe seasons, to be able to make choice of special Texts for special occasions. For howsoever all Scriptures are full of divine and Heavenly truths; yet some Scriptures sit some persons and some occasions better than othersome. Aaron's bells must be wisely rung, sometimes in one tune, sometimes in another as the occasion serves. A Minister is to change his note, as the circumstances do require. A Steward in a family must have as well wisdom to Minister every own his portion in due season, as fidelity to dispense his Masters goods. A word fitly spoken in due time, is like Apples of Gold in pictures of Silver, Pro. 25:11. The very Heathen man Commends much <H&G>, When a man speaks in due season. S. Paul had this gift, in all his preaching to ponder all circumstances, who, and what, and where, and when, and how. I made myself a servant unto all, says, he that I might gain the more, To the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law. To the weak I became as weak that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 1 Cor. 9:22. To Beloved, we are

the ministers of God, and we have need of abilities to fit our doctrine to the present time and occasions and persons, that we may profit hearers. When the Apostle came to Athens, he took his Text according to the present hint. He found an Altar with this inscription, To the unknown God, and so he spake of that. Act. 17:23,24. He took occasion from thence to speak of the God of Heaven and Earth to them. When our Savior Christ saw the woman of Samaria come to draw water, he took opportunity to preach unto her of the living water. Joh. 4:10. Ministerial gifts are for this very purpose as the Prophet says. The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season. Isa. 50:4. It is noted of John the Baptist, that when he saw the Scribes and Pharisees came in to hear him, he had about with them. O generation of Vipers, who hath forewarned you to sly from the wrath to come, q.d. What do you make here? Ye are Hypocrites, ye are vile wretched persons; repent or else you will to hell. This was now in due season. So when a Drunkard comes in, we should let fly at him. Weep and howl ye drunkards. See what God says of you: to whom is woe but to you? See what the Scripture says of your courses, ye shall never inherit God's Kingdom, none of you, as the Apostle speaks. So, when Whoremongers step in, we should give them their doom, O ye Whoremongers and Adulterers, God will judge you one day. This is like the former and the latter Rain. Then it comes, when the ground hath need of it. So when a Minister observes seasons, then the word comes, when the soul hath need of it. It comes pat, as we say, Then people may see a special providence in it. I see a special providence of God that the Minister should speak of such a Theme this day, that he should hit so right upon my sin; when a man hath been cozening, then to come to Church and there hear of it again: When a man hath been swearing and lying, then to turn in to the preacher, and hear of that very sin, and the danger of it, and the damned estate of the commit of it: When a man hath been thinking to do evil, then to sit in

his seat and hear his evil ripped up, and all his secrets laid open, and woe to you wretch, that devise evil, the Lord knows your devilish intentions, ye are thinking to be revenged, but God will be revenged on you, ye are minding to go by-and-by to such a piece of villainy, but the Lord will find you out. This is preaching in season. So when a soul cannot be cast down, but when he comes to a Sermon, there he meets with his own case, his temptations are treated of wine and oil is poured into his wounds, this is to preach in due season. O what gifts had a Minister need to have! He had need of daily influence from God: Daily instincts, that God should guide his tongue and his heart. Now, Beloved, it is Christ alone that gifts all his true Ministers. I will be with thy mouth, says he to Moses.

The use of this is. First, here we see that a Minister had not need be a fool, no; no, he that winneth souls, is wise, Pro. 11:30, he must be a wise man that would be a Minister, it requires more than human wisdom to catch souls, when the heart hath so many put-offs, so many deceits, so many strongholds, so loath to obey the word, so subtle to invent excuses, so crafty to thrust away the truth; There is some wisdom required to catch fishes, and birds, and vermin; how much more, to catch men! Who is sufficient for these things? The best of us all may blush to think how unfit we are to be Ministers. O how should we bless God, if he fit any of us in any suitable measure! And when we have done our best, we had need to go home, and down on our knees, and cry shame on ourselves for not doing better.

Secondly, Then they are none of Christ's Ministers that are not gifted for this mighty work. Will he send a fool on such a weighty Message as this is? He that sendeth a Message by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the feet and drinketh damage, Pro. 26:6. That is, if a man have a business of any great importance, He had not need to employ a fool in it, lest he suffer great damage. It is all one as if one should chop off

ones feet and then bid him go on our errand. O, Beloved, preaching of the Gospel is a work of infinite importance, the humbling of men's hearts, the convincing of consciences, the converting of men's Souls, these are great businesses, doubtless they are no Fools that Christ sends on such errands. True, all Christ's Ministers are not alike gifted, some have meaner gifts then othersome have, but he that hath least, he is fitted in some measure to dispense divine mysteries, to call home God's elect, to build up the called, to judge all his hearers, to stop the mouths of gainsayers, to hew down the obstinate, to show unto men the things belonging to their peace, to give the Saints their due, and the wicked their due. That a good man cannot come, but he shall have heavenly meat to feed on: Nor a wretch neither, but his Ministry will single him out and give him his bit to chew upon. He that cannot do this in any measure, he is none of Christ's Ministers. Surely he will not send such a Message by a fools hand, but either he makes him a wise able man, or else he runs without his sending.

Thirdly, then my Brethren, hence we learn whether to go for gifts, if we would be enabled to our calling, let us go to Jesus Christ that hath the seven stars in his hands, he can make our influences strong, and our light and heat mighty, he can give us a gift of boldness to fear no men's faces. He can untie our stammering tongues that we shall have liberty in speaking. He can make our tongues a sharp sword. He can make us sons of consolation unto some, and of thunder, unto others. If we want knowledge in the mystery of Christ, let us make our wants known unto him, and he will instill into us. If we want words, he can make them flow in unto us. If we want affections, he can purge away our iniquities and fire our hearts and lips. While the Apostles were together at prayer. Act. 1:14, suddenly the Lord Jesus sent them the gift of the holy Ghost in fiery cloven tongues, Act. 2. While Paul and Silas were praying in the prison, the Lord backed them from Heaven, and made them instruments of turning the heart of the Goaler. Let us

pray, then, not only in our Pulpits before our Sermons, but also in secret, God giveth the greatest gifts in secret, and like man revealeth himself apart: as secret meals make a fat body, so does secret prayer, it makes a well-liking soul.

Again, this should teach us to stir up the gifts that he gives us: We should labor to put them forth, a man may lose the benefit of Christ's gifts, for want of rousing up himself, and putting of them forth, as Paul says to Timothy, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of hands, 2 Tim. 1:6, we must stir up the gift in us. When Father Isaac would prophecy to his Sons, he stirred up his spirit with savory meat. When Elisha would Prophecy before the three Kings, he called for a Minstrel to stir up the spirit of Prophecy in him. Deborah cries, awake, awake, Deborah; Awake, O my soul, says David. When Christ would pray to his Father, the Text shows, how he stirred up himself, These things spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes unto heaven, Joh. 17:1. He lift up his soul and his spirit, as Samson went and shook himself, if his spirit had been in him it had been well, but like a fool he had driven him away. But it should seem, when he had the spirit in him, this was his wont, he shook himself as at other times, he used to stir up the Spirit in him, so we should stir up the Spirit in us, we should rouse up our gifts, like sparks out of the ashes, and bestir ourselves soundly, remiss using of them, lets them warp and wane.

Again, we should labor to rely more upon Christ, we trust too much to our notes; but, O if we could trust more to Christ, thats warmest matter that comes down from heaven in the speaking, not that we should leave all without study, till we come into our Pulpits: No, prepare as much as we can. But then if we would trust in Christ for his present assistance, and yearn up to him for prompting, it would make our Ministry more lively. When a Sermon is an effect of Faith,

that it that does most good: then Christ's Spirit Preaches, and not we, as the Prophet David says, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, 2 Sam. 23:2.

Again, this should teach the people of God, if they would have their Ministers enabled indeed, to do their souls good; that they should pray for them, that Christ would more furnish them. How often does the Apostle tell the people, that Ministers might have greater gifts, if they had a heart! O says he, Pray for me, that I may have utterance, and that I may speak boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, Ephes. 6:19, q.d. if ye have a heart to pray, I do verily think that I shall be the more assisted, a great deal. Our Chariot drives the more heavily, because it wants the wheels of your Prayers, and the truth is, God uses to punish people thus, that because they are dead and dull, and have no heart, and are weary of the Word; therefore he with-holds from the Minister on purpose, to plague them back again; as God told Ezekiel, Son of man, thou shalt be dumb, and when thou wouldst reprove, thou shalt be tongue-tied, thy tongue shall cleave to the roof of thy mouth: now mark the reason; why? For they are a rebellious house, Ezek. 3:26. Mark, it was long of Judah's sins that the Prophet Ezekiel was tongue-tied and locked up: An excellent Minister, and yet straitened for the people's sins.

O, Beloved, I will tell you what would enlarge our hearts and our gifts towards you. First, if you would more flock to the Word, and attend. It is said in Matth. 5:1,2. That Christ seeing the multitude, He opened his mouth, that is, he was the more enlarged to Preach, upon the sight of such a great auditory. Who would not cast his net amidst multitudes of fishes? The Text says, When Christ saw the multitude, he had compassion on them. So, if Ministers could see all their Parish come in, all that might hear; the sight of such a multitude would stir up pity. O would we think, O what a goodly company is

here! O it is pity but they should have somewhat, O if I could win some of you. There may be a lust in this thing, and we must take heed of it too, lest we be tickled with flocking's, or discouraged with thin Pews. This is pride, but yet there is a truth in this. What a shame is it, that there should be fewer of our own Parish every Lecture-day, than of strangers? Is it not just with God to make the breasts dry, when the Children care not for sucking?

Secondly, if God had more among you to be saved, as God said to Paul, concerning Corinth, Be not afraid, speak, hold not thy peace, I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, I have much people in this City, Act. 18:10, this opened Paul's mouth, this made him find abundance of assistance from Christ, because God had much people there.

Thirdly, if you would hear with alacrity, and with a ready and a greedy mind. When Cornelius and his company were all listening, and earnest to hear, and to hearken, O say they; Speak Peter, we are all here before God, to hear everything thou speakest. Then Peter opened his mouth, Act. 10:33,34. But when people look dully, and blockishly, and sit sleepily and drowsily, as though they were weary of hearing, and cared not whether they heard or no; Nay, this is the reason why the Devils instruments are so bold to oppose the Ministry of God, they see they are not much cared for, none but here one, and there one, a sort of precise fools: whereas, if people would be eager to hear over all the land, they durst not meddle with them, as it is said of our Savior, the Chief Priests, and the Scribes sought to destroy him, but they could not find what they might do, For all the people were very attentive to hear him, Luk. 19:48.

Fourthly, if ye would be fruitful in obedience, and in learning; this would put life into our Prayers at home, this would quicken our

labors and pains in the Pulpit. The very hope of having fruit, made Paul very eager to come to Rome, Rom. 1:13. The very thought that the people are gracious, and godly, and fruitful, carries the Preacher beyond himself. Nay, its strange to consider, how, when the Minister knows he hath but one understanding judicious hearer, one gracious Soul in his Parish, it provokes him very much, it makes him look about him the more, a great deal: How much more, when there be many such? But when a Parish is senseless, and heavy, and froward, it is unspeakable to consider how it straitens a Minister. Let a man be to pray in a meeting, where they be graceless, and dull, and hardly any almost godly, he cannot tell what to say almost, he is not himself. Whereas, if he were to pray among them that he knows can savor gracious things, there he hath more liberty to let out himself.

SERMON VIII.

These things, saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. - REVEL. 3:1.

And the seven Stars.

The Doctrine we continue yet in, is, That Christ hath the seven Stars, he hath all the Ministers of the Church. I told you he is said to have them five ways. First, he hath the sending of them; they have their Mission from him. Secondly, he hath the delegating of them; they have their Commission from him. Thirdly, he hath the gifting of them; they have their abilities from him. Fourthly, he hath the prospering of them; they have the success of their labors from him. Fifthly, he hath the disposing of them, either for placing, or removing, for freedom, or restraint.

The first three I have handled already; the last whereof was this; That He hath the gifting of his Ministers; As Paul says, He hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, 2 Cor. 3:6. This was one of the ends of his Ascension; He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, Ephes. 4:8. Thus the Text says of the Apostles, they preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following, Mark. 16:20. So Paul had great gifts, and abilities, which he calls the signs of an Apostle. Truly, the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, with signs and wonders, and mighty deeds, 2 Cor. 12:12, they that are not competently, at the least, gifted for the Ministry, they show no sign that they are the Ministers of Jesus Christ. Christ gives all his Ministers a gift of utterance, a gift of speaking to the Conscience, a gift of dividing of the Word aright, mighty deeds. They may all say to the people, Truly, the signs of a Minister of Jesus Christ hath been wrought among you. These gifts are the witnesses, whereby he gives witness to a man, that he comes from God to a people, as Paul says, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers Miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will, Heb. 2:4. I confess such wonders and Miracles are now ceased; I, but the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are poured out still upon all the true Ministers of Christ, and these are God's witnesses, that people may know they are sent of Jesus Christ.

I showed you how Ministers have need of excellent and rare gifts; I, and you have need that they should be well-gifted, that so they may be able to do you good:

First, for the interpreting of the Scriptures, they are a sealed and a clasped book, they are shut up naturally to a man. It is said of Christ, that He opened the Scriptures, Luc. 24:32. So, a Minister had need of gifts to open the Scriptures; to give out the sense, as the Priests in

Nehemiah did, St. John wept, when no man could open the sealed book. When a Parish hath a Minister that cannot open the sealed Book, it is enough to make good people weep and lament.

Secondly, they have need of gifts to teach. He that would teach, had need to be an able man, as the Apostle says, that are able to teach, 2 Tim. 2:2. The servant of the Lord must be apt to teach, 2 Tim. 2:24, there is a gift of fitness and aptness, without which a man cannot be a good teacher.

Thirdly, they have need of gifts to be able to convince, it requires a great art to speak irrefragably to men's minds. Many truths the hearts of men do not like, and therefore they labor to put them off. And therefore a Minister had need of a gift of convincing, That he may be able by sound Doctrine to convince the gainsayers, Tit. 1:9, as it is said of Stephen, they were not able to withstand the spirit, and the wisdom by which he spake, Act. 6:10.

Fourthly, to move the affections; a Minister is not only to inform men's judgments, but also to work on their affections, as Peter says, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, 2 Pet. 1:13, a Minister is to stir up his people, to stir their hearts and affections: as Paul says: Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, 2 Cor. 5:11, that is, we labor to stir your affections, Christ sent a Seraphim with a live coal to touch Isaiah his lips, Isa. 6:6, we had need of fire coals in our lips, to heat your affections. Religion consists in the will and affections of men, more than in any other faculty of the soul.

Fifthly, To speak *Pro re nata*, a Minister hath need of extemporary abilities, to be able upon short warning, when Severus, Augustine's Brother, failed him one day, he was fain to go up extempore into the Pulpit himself and Preach. A Minister may come into the company of

his people, now if he be not habitually furnished, how unprofitable will he be? Saint Paul says, when he came among his people, he would impart unto them some spiritual gift, Rom. 1:11.

Sixthly, A Minister had need of abilities to observe seasons, that Aaron's bells may be wisely rung, sometimes in one tune, sometimes in another, as occasion serves, A word fitly spoken in due time, is like apples of gold, in pictures of silver, Prov. 25:11.

The use of this was First, here we see that a Minister had not need be a fool, no; he must be a well-gifted man. He that winneth souls is wise, Pro. 11:30, he must be one that may win souls, and therefore he must be a wise man, when the heart hath so many wiles, and so many put-offs, and so many evasions, and distinctions, and excuses, and strongholds, he had need be a wise man that will go about to catch it. There is some wisdom required to catch birds, and beasts, and fishes, and vermin; because they are all subtle in their kind, how much more, to catch the heart? This is *Onus humeris angelorum* for *midandum*, as Chrysost. speaks. Who is sufficient for these things, says the Apostle? 2 Cor. 2:16. The best of us all may blush to think how unfit we are to be Ministers: and therefore how should we bless God, if he fit any of us in any suitable measure?

Secondly, another Use was, Then they are none of Christ's Ministers that are not gifted for this mighty work. Will he send a fool on such a weighty Message as this is? He that sendeth a Message by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the feet and drinketh damage, Prov. 26:6. There is great damage in the Church, because so many fools have the handling of God's message. But I let this pass.

Thirdly, Hence we learn then, whether to go for gifts, if we would be enabled to our callings, let us go to our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath the seven Stars in his hands, he can make our influences strong, our

light mighty; he can give us a gift of boldness, to fear no man's face; He can untie our stammering tongues, that they shall have liberty in speaking, that words may flow in; He can make our tongues a sharp sword; He can fire our hearts and lips. While the Apostles were together in prayer, Act. 1:14, the Lord Jesus Christ sent down the Holy Ghost on them in fiery tongues, Act. 2:1.

Fourthly, This should teach us to stir up the gifts that he gives us; we should strive to put them all forth, as Paul says to Timothy, Stir up the gift that is in thee by the putting on of hands, 2 Tim. 1:6, we must stir up the gift that is in us: when father Isaac would Prophecy to his sons, he stirred up his spirit with savory meat: when Elishah would Prophecy before the three Kings, he called for a sacred Minstrel, to stir up the Spirit of Prophecy in him: so Samp son used to go and shake himself, when he went against the Philistines; as Deborah, while she was at her work in God's worship: Awake, awake Deborah, says she; she shook up herself; we should labor to use all our gifts to the full, as the Apostle says, Make full proof of thy Ministry, 2 Tim. 4:5, so, we should make full proof of every one of our gifts, put them out to the utmost. Ministers should be able to say, as Paul does, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ, Rom. 15:19, to preach fully, to convince fully, to exhort fully, fully to terrify the hearts of the wicked, not to use our gifts by halves. O, how shall we answer it, if we let our gifts rust for want of sound using of them?

Fifthly, We should rely more on Christ, we may trust too much to our notes; but, O that we could trust more in Christ, that is warmest matter that comes down from Heaven in the speaking, not that we should leave all without study, till we come into our Pulpits, and then hope to have it given us in that moment; No, we must prepare as much as we can: as Solomon says, Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build thy house,

Pro. 24:27. So, we must prepare our Sermons, and make them fit for our people in our studies, and then come and preach them, Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to Doctrine, says the Apostle, 1 Tim. 4:13. God gives gifts by means, but then if we would trust Christ for his present assistance, and yearn up to him for prompting, it would make our Ministry more lively. When a Sermon is an act of Faith, that's it that does most good, then Christ's Spirit Preaches, and not we, then, then God speaks, and not our notes, as the Prophet David says, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, 2 Sam. 23:2.

Sixthly, this should teach the people of God, if they would have their Ministers enabled indeed, to do their souls good; to pray for them, that Christ would more furnish them. How often does the Apostle tell the people, that Ministers might have greater gifts, if they had a heart! O says he, Pray for me, that I may have utterance, and that I may speak boldly, &c. Ephes. 6:19, q.d. if ye have a heart to pray, I do verily think that I shall be the more assisted, a great deal. The truth is, God uses to punish people thus, because they are dead and dull, and have no heart, and are weary of the Word; therefore he withholds from his Minister on purpose, to plague them; as God told Ezekiel: Son of man, thou shalt be dumb, and when thou wouldst reprove, thou shalt be tongue-tied, thy tongue shall cleave to the roof of thy mouth: now mark the reason; why? For they are a rebellious house, Ezek. 3:26.

But I will recapitulate no more of what I have delivered. Thus ye have heard the third thing, how Christ hath the gifting of his Ministers? They have their gifts and abilities from him. Now I proceed on to the fourth. That he hath the prospering of them: They have the success of their labors from Jesus Christ. Christ bids us preach, Repent, repent, but it is he that must give the Repentance; So, Paul preached to Lydia, and had good success, for the text shows how she was

converted by his Ministry: But, it was God that opened her heart. As Rebekah cooked the Venison, but Isaac gave the blessing. So we may cook the Word for you, but the blessing is in Christ's hands, as the Apostle says. We are Ministers by whom ye Believed, even as the Lord gave to every man, 1 Cor. 3:5, that is, when we preached among you we had good success, you believed. What? As we would ourselves? No, Alas we would fain have had you all to Believe but even as the Lord gave to every man, the success was as he would; soto some he gave only conviction by the word to some only knowledge, to some good reformations, to some a true faith. It was as he was pleased to give to every man. So when he preached unto other Gentiles he confesses, look what good success he had, he had from Jesus Christ. I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by Word and deed. Rom. 15:18, that is, as who should say, that the Gentiles did hear me, that they were brought to obedience in word and deed, that I had so good success in my labors; God forbid I should say or think it was my doing. I dare not say so for a world. No, no, It was Christ, and he alone that did work by me as his poor Instrument. I have all my good success from him. The success is merely as he will. If he will be pleased to give so good success, Peter shall convert 3000 at one Sermon. But if he be pleased to deny a good success, the Prophet Isaiah shall preach in the reign of 4 Kings, about fourscore years and convert hardly one, as he says to Israel, as the Apostle quotes him. All the day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and a gainsaying people. Rom. 10:21. All successes are of God, and therefore much more success here. Let it be in any calling. As for example, fishing; that when a man goes a fishing, he finds good success, this is of God. Simon and his company toiled all night and took nothing. But when Christ came and gave them good success, then they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, two ship full of fishes at one draught, Luk. 5:5. So when a man runs,

who shall get the Goal; the man may run, but whether he shall get the Goal, that he cannot tell. When a man fights, the man may fight, and be the better man of the two, but whether shall overcome, that is uncertain unto them; the success is of God, as Solomon says, The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor riches to the wise, time and chance happens to them all, Eccle. 9:11, that is, not as though the swift do not sometimes get the race, and the strong the Victory, and wise men riches, yet they do many times; namely, when God gives success, otherwise they do not. How many times do men go about businesses, and in all likelihood, they might hit well, yet how often do they not? The Lord will have us see that success is from him.

Now if it be so in outward things, how much more here, in other things, the work is more in the man's hands, and the thing is traceable to him, but it is not so here: We may labor to convert Souls, but this work is not in our hands, the using of the means, the Lord Jesus Christ puts that into our hands; but the doing of the deed, the success is only from him.

First, Because we are nothing in this work. We may be something at other works, we may study, and in an ordinary providence we may make a Sermon. But when we come to preach, it is not an ordinary providence that will make us to convert souls; no, here we are nothing, Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, Now mark what follows, he does not only say, it is God that gives the increase. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase. 1 Cor. 3:6, that is, all their success and all the fruit of their labor is from God. That is not all he says. But in the seventh verse, says he. Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth anything, but God that giveth the increase. As if he should say, as excellent gifts as these men had, they did nothing in this work, the whole success is of God.

Beloved we can but set before you, life and death, we can but tell you thus ye will be damned, and thus and thus ye may be saved. But it is God that must bless this unto you. Otherwise we can do nothing. We may preach our hearts out; and yet you will to hell, do we what we can, except the Lord break your career. Elisha's man could lay his Masters staff upon the child, but the child stirred not, till Elisha came himself, and then the child was raised. So we can but lay our Masters staff upon your dead souls, But except our Master come himself, never a dead soul will stand up: what is all our preaching, and dressing up of our Sermons, like the rigging of the sails, that's nothing except the wind blow. The Spirit of Christ is the wind, except he blow upon you, we are nothing: the tampering on the Organs is nothing, but when the breath comes, then there is music; So, we may keep ado to turn your hearts, but till God breath into you, there is nothing done. True, the preaching of the Gospel is a very powerful thing; I, when Christ's arm goes along with it, it is the sword of the Spirit, but if the Spirits arm be not with it, we may brandish it here every week, and do little; as Scanderbagge said: One hearing what mighty feats Scanderbagges sword had done, sent for it, and when he saw it, he made nothing of it: Is this the Sword that hath done such great exploits? Whats this Sword more than other swords? O, says Scanderbagge, I sent thee my sword, but not my arm, that did handle it. So, my Brethren, the word which we preach, is but Christ's sword; God sends you his sword many times, when he keeps his arm to himself, and so nothing is done. So then, we are nothing, and therefore all success is of Christ. First, our wills are nothing to do it, we may will to do you good, but Converts cannot be made by our wills, as the Evangelist says, Joh. 1:13. Secondly, our pains and labors are nothing; we may labor and take pains, but look Isa. 49:4. Thirdly, our gifts are nothing; who had better gifts than Christ had, as he was man? And yet that would not do it, Joh. 12:38. Fourthly, our Prayers are nothing, they may do something, sometimes, but except God be

pleased to give success, they are nothing, Jeremiah prayed, Jer. 14:7,8,9, yet the Lord told him, that should not do it, ver. 11.

Secondly, the Conversion of Souls, is a supernatural work; we that are Ministers, preach to make men new creatures, to turn Leopards into Kids, as if we should preach to make Blackamores white, the dead alive, which is a work for God alone to do, and therefore the success must needs be from him, Alas, what are we able to do? As the Apostle says, You are God's workmanship in Christ Jesus, created to good works, Ephes. 2:10, we are his instruments, that's true indeed, but ye are his workmanship, you are the Epistle of Christ, administered by us; Written, not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, 2 Cor. 3:3. The Epistle of Christ, but ministered indeed by Christ, his is the hand, we are but the pen; when we bid you repent, and believe, and be holy, and godly, and heavenly minded men; deny yourselves, be dead to the world, and alive to God, come out of Satan's power, come into Christ's Kingdom: it is like Ezekiel's bidding of the dead bones to gather flesh, and stand up living men. All the success must needs be of God.

And therefore what does this teach us? The Use of it is: First, That we that are the Ministers of God, can but make trial whether we can convert our people, or no; as the Apostle speaks, proving, if at any time, God will give them repentance, 2 Tim. 2:25, so it is in some of your Bibles, so, we must make proof: we must try; come into the Pulpit every week, and try, sharpen our nails as sharp as we can, and strike them as far in as we can, and so try, often try, as the wiseman speaks in another case, In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand rest, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this, or that, or both, Eccle. 11:6. So Jeremiah did, he would try; first, he went to the poorer sort, to see whether they would hearken unto him; when he had no success there, then thought he, I

will try the great men, I will get me to the great men, Jer. 5:5, we should make assays, we do not know, may be God will give us good success, we must make assays, as it is said of Paul and Silas, That they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not, Act. 16:7. O, thought they, here be a great many souls in this Country, we will try, whether there be any for Christ, yea, or no. Indeed, they found that they had no success in their attempt. But they made an assay though.

Secondly, This teacheth us to wait, though we have not success presently, yet we should wait, all success is from Christ, and therefore it is fit we should wait for it, and therefore a Minister is commanded to be patient. The servant of the Lord must be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, 2 Tim. 2:24, q.d. he hath not the success in his own hands, to have it when he will; no, though he do no good yet, nor yet, he must be patient. He is not apt to teach poor people else, except he be patient, as he is not fit to teach a dull Scholar, that is over-hasty. And therefore, my Brethren, though we have lost all our labor hitherto on the most of you, yet now again we speak to you, come, will ye yet go to heaven? Come are ye yet in the mind to hearken and obey? We come to you once more, will ye yet, &c. as Jeremiah says, Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? Jer. 13:27. Beloved, we are dull Scholars in Religion, and people are hard to take their learning in this kind, and therefore if we would be apt to teach, we must be patient, what though we see no good yet, this must not make us out of heart, or to grudge our pains, we must be patient still, we are to think, may be the next time I preach God will give me good success, Isaiah and Paul gave not over, though they had cause to complain.

Thirdly, This may serve to condemn all the world, whether the Gospel comes, and specially us hereabouts, that do not let Ministers

have any good success, you will say, how do I make this use of it? If all the Ministers success be from Christ, then one would think, this were an excuse unto people.

I answer; no, the meaning of the Doctrine is this, that the people are so contrary to the Word, such enemies to the ways of Jesus Christ, that a Minister can look for no success, except the Lord turn their hearts: This is the meaning of the point. Does this excuse any? What, does your enmity against Christ and all goodness afford you any excuse? Nay, this aggravates your sin. Now this is the meaning of it. As Saint Paul, when he spake, how little success he and all the rest of his fellow-Apostles had, he lays the blame upon the people; All the day long, I have stretched out my hands against a disobedient and a gainsaying people, Rom. 10:21. So the Prophet Isaiah, from whom these words are taken, complains of the unfruitfulness of his Ministry, as being the people's fault, and therefore he complains of them unto God; Lord who hath believed our report, Isaiah. 53:1. The conscience of man knows this to be true, for he knows he sins willingly, and he knows he would not do otherwise, he daily feeleth God's Spirit haling him to good, and telling him he ought to live thus and thus, and yet he is loath and will not, he inclines the other way, and rather would do as he does, then as he knows God would have him: what is this but contempt? And indeed this is the great sin of this Land, the contempt of the Gospel, people count it not a precious, but a tedious thing. Never merry world (says some) since we had so much Preaching: as if the Sun shone too bright; like the Israelites who stumbled at the plenty of Manna: Nay, they are akin to the Devils, who asked Christ if he were come to torment them; they account the Gospel a torment, because it crosseth their lusts, and lets in so much light. These can spend days and nights in vanity, but an hour at a Sermon is tedious, if they had any delight in the Word, they would not care though their Minister stood somewhat long. Though

Zacharias stayed long in the Temple, yet the people waited for him till he came out, Luk. 1:21, they marveled indeed he stayed so long; but the Spirit of God notes, that they waited for him. But our people sit upon thorns at a Sermon, but they can lie soaking at an ale-bench as though they sat upon soft cushions. The Onions of Egypt have a better taste with them, than the Quails of the Wilderness. They had rather live at the Hogs-trough, than in their Fathers house. With the Gadarenes they prefer their Pigs before our Savior Christ. O say they, we cannot live by Sermons; Sermons are too holy and straight for them. Bid them take up Christ's yoke, they care not for it except it were wider. The Ministry hath no success at all with them unto any purpose. What a thing is this Brethren! Whence is it that we regard the Gospel no more? The sooth is, people know not their damned estate, neither will they believe it, though we tell them; nay, they care not whether they hear it or no. But if they knew the goodness of it, they would run from East to West for it, if drunkards, and worldlings, and such rabble, knew their fearful estate, the Minister should be as welcome to them, as bread to the hungry, or a pardon to a Thief; So that ye see this condemneth them deeply, that the Word hath no success with. Thus ye see the Ministers of Christ have all success from Christ, if any one soul come in at their teaching, it is an evident sign, it is of Jesus Christ; for otherwise people hold off, some hold off altogether, others yield a little way, but will not yield full out; if a man yield to us indeed, it is merely by Jesus Christ.

Now I will show you, that as a Minister hath all his good success of his labors from Jesus Christ. So if he be a true Minister of Christ, Christ uses to give him good success. When Christ put Peter into the Ministry. He told him from hence forth thou shalt catch men. Luk. 5:10. That is, as I have made thee a Minister, So thou shalt have good success. They shall have some good success, as we see in the sense though three parts fell into hard ground, yet some fell into good

ground, Mar. 4:8. Nay, though Christ's Ministers come into the most Desperate places that can be, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, notwithstanding the places they went to, were deeply rooted in Idolatry and full of persecuting Jews, and they were ready to be stoned to death, the people were so mad against their Doctrine; yet they never Preached anywhere, but they had good success with some. When Paul came to Thessalonica, the text notes, some of them believed, and joined in Company with him. Act. 17:4. When he came to Athens, though some mocked, and some hung in suspense, like Neuters, that were neither fish, nor flesh, howbeit certain men clave unto Paul, and believed Act. 17:34. So when he came to Rome. Though some stood out, yet some were persuaded, Act. 28:24. Yea when Philip came to Samaria, though it was a Town, that was bewitched, full of sorcery and witchcraft, and they had even given their souls to the Devil. A Minister could hardly come into a worse Town, yet the people gave heed to those things that he spake. Act. 8:6. Nay, the context shows he had marvelous good success, the Lord maketh that precious account of the Ministers of the Gospel, that he never bestows it upon any place, where he hath not some elect; other blessings God bestows more promiscuously, Reprobates have as great plenty as others. All things come alike to all. But this blessing he gives to no place, where he hath not some to save. Either some in the Town, or some thereabouts.

The use of this is, first, Here we are to inquire then what may be the reason that Christ's Ministers have so little success nowadays. First, Some Ministers have the less success by raising up of others that have greater. As Calvin after Luther. Luther had admirable success for a time, and then when Calvin came, he did increase, and Luther did decrease. So John observed of himself, he had admirable success for a time, but when Christ came, John had the less. He must increase but I must decrease. Joh. 3:30. Again, it may be people's

unthankfulness, for the Ministry of the Word. When people have had the Word along time, and yet they will not obey it, may be God says to them as he did to the Fig-tree, Never fruit grow on thee more, while the world standeth. Then God sends Isaiah to make the heart of the people fat. Then Jeremiah's errands most an end to pluck up and to pull down. Then John is to say, He that is filthy let him be filthy still. Then Hosea cries, Ephraim is joined unto Idols; let him alone.

Thirdly, Some Ministers may be have the less success, for their own fault in not spreading of the net, when their preaching is little better then reading. True, it may be a man may be converted by reading, as Luther says he was. And John Hus by reading Wyclefs books. Agustine says he was converted by reading the 13th of the Romans and the 14th verse. There is a Blessing that may be looked for by reading. Blessed is he that readeth Rev. 1:3. But this is very rare. There may a fish or two hang on the net, being let down on a heap, but that is a chance. No, no, it is not the net lapped up together that bringeth in the draught, but hauled out at length and spread all abroad, this closeth in the fish. So it is the spreading of the Word, the stretching of it out upon every soul present, this is the way to catch some: When a Minister labors to hit all.

Fourthly, some Ministers may be unsuccessful for not preaching roughly enough. Beloved our times are knotty times. Rough hewing is needful. Now people had need hear of hell and damnation, and wrath and vengeance, against their sins, Some save with fear, as the Apostle speaks, plucking them out of the fire, Jude 23.

Fifthly, Again, May be a Ministers success is not seen, maybe he is successful, though he shall not live to see it, as Christ says, One sows and another reaps, Joh. 4:37, as the Prophets sowed, and the

Apostles reaped: So, Beloved, we may sow now, and those that come after us, maybe they shall be the reapers. The present age, now may sow seed for the succeeding. *Arbores serit, quae alteri prosuit saeculo.* As the China make their dishes: the Fathers lay them into the fire, and the third generation after takes them out. Though we do not see our seeds to come up; maybe we meet with no harvest, this may be our comfort, if we can but sow, for others afterwards to reap. Let us have a care of sowing, many a man that now hears the word, and now is brought up under a good teaching Ministry, though yet he do not obey it, who knows what God will do? Maybe God may cast him into some horrible affliction yet before he dies, and sling terror into his Soul, and then what we have delivered may do him good: And therefore we should never relent sowing, though we never see the Harvest: this should be our comfort, that the ground hath the seed. Let us still pour in good examples into our people; Parents into their children, Masters into their servants, Ministers into their hearers, let God alone with it, when, and what, and where the Harvest shall be.

Lastly, Some Ministers are not godly, and then how can they look for good success? As God says, If they had stood in my Counsel, and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, Jer. 23:22. I dare not say absolutely, that a carnal Minister shall never have good success in his Ministry. As if a Minister should conclude he were a good man, because God hath blessed his labors; No, that is not a good argument: for,

First, It is the Word that converts, and not the person of the speaker, I dare not tie God to the goodness of any man's person. God, as he is a Creator he is a wise God, and can write well with a bad pen, and cut well with a blunt naughty knife.

Secondly, Such may be sent of God, and gifted for the Ministry, and therefore for all that I know, they may be an Organ of conversion sometimes.

Thirdly, Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached by the false Apostles, though it were but of envy, Phil. 1:15,16,17,18, you will say, how could he rejoice in that? That was a wicked manner of Preaching. Why surely he could not rejoice in it, but that he did think that it might do some good.

Fourthly, This may be thus, or else, no man can be assured of his salvation: For, if a carnal Minister cannot be the means of conversion, &c.

Fifthly, They may say at last day, Lord, Lord, we have Prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have we cast out devils, and yet Christ will say unto them, I know you not, &c.

Sixthly, Why else does our Savior Christ bid people hear the Scribes and Pharisees, but that he implies, they may be a means of good to them.

Seventhly, Judas was sent out to Preach, Matth. 10:4. Christ said to him as well as the rest, When ye go Preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, ver. 7.

Eighthly, Experience hath found this to be true; some godly souls have confessed this very thing, that such as now they see to be palpably carnal, have been the means of their conversion, &c. Many helped Noah to build his Ark that perished in the waters. God may make the crowing of a Cock, to be a means of a wakening Peters Conscience. The temptations of the Devil, to be the means of Luther's quickening: and therefore, I do not simply affirm that carnal

Ministers cannot convert. But this I say, it is a very rare thing, as Christ says, If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch, Matth. 15:14. So, if a Hypocrite lead a hypocrite, the Drunkard lead the drunkard, &c. It is a woe to a Parish, when their Ministers are not godly: Woe to the City says God, Zeph. 3:1, why so? Her Prophets are light persons, ver. 4. Woe to such Towns whose Ministers will go to the Alehouse, whose Ministers will keep company, and be hail fellow with every vain fellow, whose Ministers will embrace this present world, whose Ministers are proud, and envious, and malicious, that give a bad example to the people, that depend upon their charge. Woe to them, says God. The curse of God is upon such Parishes. God hath hardly any intention to save such people's souls. Or, if he have any of his Elect there, God will save them some other way; as God told the naughty Shepherds. I, even I will search out my sheep and seek them out, Ezek. 34:11, that is, I will search them out some other way, I will not do it by you. and therefore when he hath a mind to save a poor people, he sends good Ministers among them, or them to good ones. Turn o backsliding children, says God, and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will give you Pastors according to my heart, Jer. 3:14. &c. God would have none but wise-hearted men to work in his manual Tabernacle, Exod. 35:10, how then do we think he will let fools, as all carnal Ministers are? &c. Saint Paul said, it was a part of the hope that he had in the presence of Christ, at his coming, that God had made him the instrument of gaining souls to his Kingdom. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing, are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming? 1 Thess. 2:19, and hath made a promise to such as convert souls; so runs the Promise, They that turn others to righteousness, shall shine as the stars, Dan. 12:3, indeed this is but a secondary evidence of Salvation, &c. O, Beloved, if we could convert any of your Souls, what a comfort would it be? Whereas, if a man be a wicked man, what hope can he have that God will bless his labors?

Nay, he hath said expressly, that if a man will not obey the voice of the Lord: cursed shall he be in the field, and in the house, and so in the Pulpit, in his studies, he cannot look for God's assistance, as God told the wicked Priests: I will curse all your blessings, if ye will not lay it to heart, Mal. 2:2.

Secondly, Another Use is, does Christ use to bless and prosper his true Ministers? Then let us labor to get this blessing of him. Let us seek to him to give us good success, O how eager is Paul everywhere in prayer to God for good success?

Thirdly, Another Use is, if we have not the success that we could wish, let us not be discouraged; as the Prophet Isaiah says, My labor is with the Lord: though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious, Isa. 49:4,5. The Husbandman loseth by an ill crop; I, but if we be faithful, we shall not loose, though our crop be never so ill, if we have plowed well, and sown well, no matter what the crop be, we shall have our pay. If I preach and you repent not, it shall never repent me of my pains, I will preach still. For though my preaching be not a sweet savor, yet it shall be to God, even in thee, and thou shalt smart for it; and therefore let us not cease working, many a draught the poor fisher man makes and takes nothing, yet he leaves not off; many a time is the net of Preaching shot forth, and yet none converted thereby. So it pleaseth God to exercise the patience of his servants. Yet still the work must be followed, and the Lord's leisure must be waited for. Oftentimes the net taketh fish, and they slip out again; So, there be many that seem to be pulled in by the Gospel, nevertheless they slide away again. Again, there is oftentimes brought in into the net, that which is yet good for nothing when it is got, there comes in frogs, and weeds, and a great deal of trash, which in the end are cast away, and yet for love of the fish, the fisherman is content to hale all in that he can; So, Beloved, we draw in many

hypocrites, many that prove naught, and yet for hope of good fish, we must still be a laboring, and maybe we may have a good Harvest yet, though yet we see little likelihood. Be not weary of well-doing, says the Apostle, for we shall reap if we faint not. Gal. 6:9.

Fourthly, another Use is to you, that you do not willfully stand out, to deprive us of good success. The shrewdest turn you can do your poor Ministers, is to deprive them of the joy of their labors; the way to rejoice them, is to embrace the Gospel they preach, it will be heavy for you when we shall groan to God, that we could not persuade any of you. If thou wilt not now hear that which may profit thee, thou shalt hear one day that which shall make thy heart ache. Go ye cursed into everlasting fire. O, remember Sodom, and do not stand out against the Ministers that come from Jesus Christ to you.

SERMON IX.

These things, saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. - REVEL. 3:1.

Having done with the inscription of this Epistle, To the Church that is in Sardis write, we came to the Subscription, containing the person from whom the Epistle is sent. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is here described from two Royalties of his, First, that he hath The seven Spirits of God, that we have handled already. Secondly, that he hath the seven Stars, or the Ministers of the Church. This we have almost finished too; we showed you that Christ is said to have the Ministers of the Church five ways.

First, he hath the sending of them; they have their Mission from him.

Secondly, he hath the delegating of them; they have their Commission from him.

Thirdly, he hath the gifting of them; they have their gifts and abilities from him.

Fourthly, he hath the prospering or not prospering of them; they have their success from him.

All these four I have spoken of already. Now remains the fifth and the last, he hath the disposing of them, the placing of them in a Town, the continuing of them, or removing of them, the holding of them up, or the pulling of them down, as the Apostle speaks, He hath the key of David, he openeth and no man shutteth, and he shutteth and no man openeth, Rev. 3:7, that is, he hath all power in the Church, to place it or displace it. To settle it or to transplant it, to prescribe or not prescribe, to absolve or to condemn, to save or to destroy, to give Ministers liberty or to take it away. As Christ tells the Minister of Philadelphia, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it. Rev. 3:8, good Ministers shall have Liberty to preach in their stations, as long as he pleases, and they never can be hindered, till he is pleased so to permit it, or appoint it. So when Paul was at Ephesus though he had never so many adversaries there, that would fain hinder him if they could, Yet as long as Christ gave him an open door, to preach and to do good, none of them all could withstand him. A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries, 1 Cor. 16:9.

First, Christ hath the placing of his Ministers. As he saith to Jeremiah I have set thee. So Christ says to all his true Ministers, I have set you. God hath set to all men the bounds of their habitations. Act. 17:26, that one man shall dwell here; another there, one in this Parish, another in that Parish. How much more does he appoint unto

his Ministers their habitations, that John the Baptist shall be in the Wilderness of Judea, Titus shall be in Crete, Epaphras shall be at Colossae, Epaphroditus at Philippi, Timothy at Ephesus, and the like. Nay, he is no Minister of Christ that is not of Christ's placing. As the Apostle speaks. Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. Act. 20:28. Over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. He is a true Minister to this or that Congregation; that can say that the Holy Ghost hath made me an overseer to them.

The Reason is, first, Because no man is a Pastor or a Shepherd to any sheep, that did not enter in by the door into those sheep. He that entereth in by the door, is a shepherd of the sheep. Joh. 10:2. Now who is this door but Jesus Christ? I am the door saith he, By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. As it follows there in the ninth verse. As he is the door, no man can enter into the Ministry rightly but by him. He must have his Letters of Orders from him. So he is the door into any flock, and if a man have not institution and induction from him, he is no Shepherd of the flock. Nay, Christ tells him flatly, he is a thief and robber, and a hireling. When the Danites asked the Levite in Mount Ephraim, who brought thee hither? What makest thou in this place? Judge. 18:3, ye know he put himself there, he sought for the place himself, and it was maintenance that brought him thither. His own conscience told him he was a Hireling. He could not say, the Lord brought me hither. He came not in by the door; Now every true Minister comes in by the door into a Parish, and therefore he comes in by Jesus Christ.

Secondly, No Minister can be placed in any Parish, but by the Bishop of the Diocese. Now Beloved, whoever be Christ's substitute, Christ is the main Bishop of every Diocese, Christ is the Shepherd and Bishop of our fowls, 1 Pet. 2:25. Indeed there be other Bishops under him,

other Shepherds under him, I but he is the great Shepherd of the sheep, Heb. 13:20, the Arch Shepherd. <H&G>, 1 Pet. 5:4. The chief Shepherd. When the chief Shepherd shall appear. Well if he be the chief Shepherd, it is fit that he should institute and induct into Pastoral charges. Its fit that his word should be followed, in every ones coming into a living, to go nowhere, but where his word doth allow. To take no care of Souls, but of such as he commits to our custody. All true Ministers are his Curates, and therefore if they be not of his placing, they came not in right.

Thirdly, If it be he that must pay them their wages, then reason good, that he should set them on work. If a man thrust himself into a Parish, it was not Christ that moved him to come there, but forsooth he wanted a Living, he would fain have maintenance, there is so much Per annum, this was his motive, Christ never moved him, this man can look for no wages from Jesus Christ. When he hath gathered in his Tithes or his quarterage, Christ will tell him as he told the foolish Pharisees, Ye have the record. He that set you on work, he will pay your wages. I never set you on work, and therefore ye can look for nothing at my hands. Certainly if Christ must pay a man his wages, good Reason that he should have the putting of a man into this or that Vineyard. He called in the Laborers and paid them their wages that gave them their task. Matt. 3:20:8.

Fourthly, How can they look for his assistance and Blessing, if they be not placed by him? When the Lord had placed Jeremiah a Prophet in Judah, the Lord undertook to assist him. I have made thee this day a defended City and an iron Pillar, and Brazen walls, I will be with thee Jere. 1:18,19. A Minister hath need of Christ's assistance, where e're he is, his Preaching else will do little good, his Sermons will be of no effect, Christ's assistance and Blessing is all in all. Moses prays for Levi, Bless Lord his substance, and accept the work of his hands.

Deut. 33:11. No man hath more need of Christ's blessing to go along with him than a Minister. Now when a Minister is not there where Christ would have him to be, How can he expect that Christ's blessing should be with him? If he can say, Christ would have me here, Christ hath placed me here, then he may look for Christ's being with him.

Fifthly, what peace of Conscience can they have, when they lie on their death-beds, except they can comfortably say, Lord thou didst place me in this Parish, Lord I came in by the door, and by no other way. It was not by-ends, nor filthy lucre, nor gain, as Jeremiah says, I did not thrust in myself to be a Pastor, Lord thou madest me a Minister to this Congregation, I have faithfully tended those Souls, that thou gavest me to feed, this is a sweet thing. Ye know people are apt to say, who sent for you, who made you our Minister? We will not acknowledge you to be our Minister. As Shemaiah said of good Jeremiah; Thou hast made thyself a Prophet to this people, Jer. 29:27. Now if Jeremiah had not his own Conscience to prove his Institution from God, what a taking had he been in?

Sixthly, And lastly, what comfort else can the people of God have to live under such a man's Ministry, unless they can say, this is my Minister, set over me in the Lord! This is so needful, that without it, he were as good have no Minister at all. As the Apostle tells the good people of Colossae, Epaphras is for you a faithful Minister of Christ, Col. 1:7. This is their comfort indeed, when they can truly affirm that this man is for us a faithful Minister of Christ. This Minister is our Minister in Christ. This is the ground of their Consciences, submitting to his Ministry, and of their receiving of him, as an Ambassador from Christ unto them. Now when a man is not placed by Christ in a Parish as their Minister, what joy can they have to hear him? What hope that God will sanctify his labors among them?

The use of this is, first; For us that are Ministers, that we look we be of Christ's placing, that we may be able to conclude to our people, as Paul to the Corinthians, Though I be not an Apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am an Apostle unto you. So that we may be able to conclude to our people, doubtless I am Christ's Minister unto you. As our Savior Christ says. Who is the faithful wise Shepherd, Whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his household? Luk. 12:42. Hath the Lord made us Rulers over his household? We are all shepherds in such and such Parishes. But did the Lord put us there? We are Spiritual Rulers over such and such households of God, but did the Lord make us Rulers over them? Otherwise we are not Stars in his hands; No, We are blazing Comets out of his Orb, if we be Stars in his hands, we can prove our placing from him.

Secondly, This serves to condemn them that are thieves and intruders into God's Heritage, that never came in by the door, but by some other way, that are hirelings and will leave the sheep, for their own advantage; Gain makes them take livings, gain makes them chop and change, that never went to Christ for his approbation, it is said of the Apostles that the Rulers and Elders perceived that they had been with Jesus, Act. 4:13. Those are Ministers of Parishes indeed, that have been with Jesus, But these men, no man can perceive that ever they have been with Jesus Christ, that ever they had any allowance from him, and yet they will be crowding in into Livings. But I let this pass.

Thirdly, Hath Christ the placing of Ministers? Then this is of use unto you, that have Ministers of Christ's placing among you. Take heed how ye carry yourselves under your Ministry. If you do not obey their Doctrine, you sin against Christ. O reject not their reproofs, put not off the Word of God in their mouths, if ye do, ye do not put off men but God. It was an excellent exhortation of that godly King,

Jehoshaphat: Hear me, O ye inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, believe the Lord's Prophets and ye shall prosper, 2 Chron. 20:20. O, if Kings and Princes would do so now, call upon people up and down, O Sirs, believe the Lord's Prophets and ye shall prosper: Ye that have God's Ministers among you, believe them, may be when they threaten against all your sinful courses, they tell you of hell, and damnation, and heaven and salvation, ye hardly believe any such thing: O believe them, that it may go well with you. Remember they be of Christ's placing among you. He put them into your Pulpits, he gives them the Themes that they preach to you from day today. Believe them.

Fourthly, Hath Christ the placing of Ministers? Then never complain of graceless Ministers; O, ye have graceless Ministers, and our Minister is not as he should be, he is not a good liver, he does not preach to the Conscience. People are apt to complain of Patrons, and such and such causes, but let me tell you, you murmur against Jesus Christ, every Parish in England might have a good and a godly Minister, a Minister after God's own heart, for all that I know, if they would go to Jesus Christ, he hath the placing of Ministers.

Now what is the reason that there are no more able worthy Ministers everywhere?

Answer, Surely if Christ were sought to, this would quickly be holpen, when Judah had no Ministers in the Captivity, their souls starved for want of good feeding, thousands perished, and their souls were quite lost for lack of Vision. What says Christ to them. Turn ye backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you, and I will take you one of a city, and two of a Family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you Pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding, Jer. 3:14,15, people are

subject to murmur, and this is long of such and such, that we have no better Ministers, whereas the Truth is, it is long of ourselves, iniquity abounds everywhere, the love of many waxes cold, people grow weary of wholesome Doctrine, they have itching ears, they are full fed, any Ministry is good enough for them, if a man prophesy of Wine and strong drink, he shall even be the Prophet of this people, Mich. 2:11, that is, any Prophet is good enough for them, fitter than a better. One that would show people how to get Bread and Drink, and Wine, and profits, and pleasures; People would rather hear such a one preach, than to hear of Repentance and Mortification; and Faith, and Holiness, and the ways of God, they care not for these things. The true Preaching of the Word, is as contrary to the disposition of men as can be. Nothing is more irksome unto them, as the Word rightly taught. It goes against their lusts, it crosses their wicked wills. They are weary of it, they say unto God depart from us, they will not let Christ reign in their hearts, therefore we may rather wonder that there is any good Minister in the Kingdom anywhere, we are to bless God, and pray for our Governors, that we have any good Ministers at all, the truth is we deserve not any. There is so little Religion everywhere, so much hypocrisy, so much profession without any power of godliness, such a deal of vanity, and unsoundness, and hollow-heartedness; nay, among such as have gone for good Christians, so much falsehood and rottenness, and apostasy, to what end should Christ let us have any more Preaching. We give the world occasion to think, that Preaching is the cause of all this wretchedness. What a dishonor is this to Jesus Christ? And therefore no marvel we have no more, we may admire the patience of God that we have any.

Fifthly, Hath Christ the placing of Ministers? Then see whether to go for good Ministers. Christ is the general Patron of all Livings. He can present whom he will to a Parish, and therefore we should pray unto

him. When our Savior Christ preached here and there, and saw how the people came out of all Parishes to him, it seems, though they had Levites in their own Synagogues, yet they did not know how to feed their flocks; they were as sheep for all them without a shepherd, there was hardly ere a good Minister among them all. Mark, what the Text says. Jesus had compassion on them, because they were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd: O says he, Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest, Mat. 9:38, so much for the first.

Secondly, Now as Christ hath the placing of Ministers, so he hath the continuing of them, as long as he pleases. He continued the Prophet Isaiah in his Ministry during the Reign of four Kings. He kept the Prophet Hosea in his function, during the reign of five Kings, though the times were very bad. When it was told Christ that Herod sought his life, that he would not only put him besides his Ministry, but also his very life; says he, Go tell that Fox, Behold I cast out Devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfect, Luk. 13:32. Christ had his time appointed him by his Father himself, and he would Preach all that time out, and all the devils in hell, and all his Enemies on earth should not hinder him. So, Beloved, it is with all his Ministers, he hath set them a time, and he hath power to continue them all that time. I shall preach today, and tomorrow, and such a day, do the world what they can, they cannot hinder his ministers from preaching, till Christ please, as he told his people: Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into a corner anymore: But thine eyes shall see thy Teachers. Isa. 30:20, q.d. though thy Ministers have been put by, yet I will restore them again, and they shall not be put by anymore. I have power to continue them as long as I will; when he called Noah to preach to the old world, he

appointed him 120 years, and he continued him all that while, whether the wicked world would or no.

And the Reason is, first, because Ministers are his Ambassadors. Now a King it is in his choice, how long his Ambassadors shall lie Lieger in a foreign Country, he hath so many businesses for them to do, and so long they shall continue there. So, true ministers are the Ambassadors of Christ, as the Apostle Paul speaks, Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 5:20, we are Christ's Ambassadors, and therefore he will continue us as long as he list; as long as he hath any business to do; as long as he hath any souls to save, any men or women to reconcile to his father, or to build up, so long he will continue us. Its a doleful sign when Christ takes away his Ministers from a place, its a sign he hath no more souls to save; if he had, he would let his Ambassadors lie beseeching still: so that this is one great reason, because, Ministers are His Ambassadors.

Secondly, Because Christ hath all power in Heaven and in Earth, as he told his Apostles, when he sent them out to preach, All power is given to me in Heaven and in Earth, Math. 28:18, q.d. I have power to send you, and I have power to continue your Ministry as long as I think fitting, and I have power to take you away, I have power to ordain you either for salvation or the damnation of men. Whom I will I can convert by your Sermons, and whom I will I can deliver up to the counsel of their own hearts, that they shall not be converted by you. Now: if Christ have all power in Heaven and in Earth, then he hath power to continue his Ministers as long as his will is. I need not stand to prove this, it is too evident: he hath power to lengthen his Ministers lives, to prolong their liberties, when he takes away one, he hath power to put in another as good: when he meant to take away

Elias, he anointed Elisha in his room. If their enemies be never so many, he can tie up their hands; he delivered Paul from the mouth of the Lyon: though forty men had vowed to take him away by death, he diverted their plot, and continued him still: nay, when he was in Bonds, yet he was able to get him liberty to go abroad with his keeper, and to preach the Kingdom of God to as many as came. Suppose the world be never so mad against Christ's Ministers, yet as long as he hath anymore work for them to do, he can hold off their singers from meddling with them, till they have finished the Taske that he hath given them to do.

The Use of this is; first, That Ministers should not fear to be deprived of their liberty, so long as they do well; indeed if they do ill, if they be wicked or idle, or unworthy, such Ministers should fear they do deserve to be put down. But if we be godly Ministers, it is our baseness to fear any such thing. Christ hath the continuing of us, our times are not in men's hands, but in his. What a horrible thing is it, that we should go against our conscience in anything, or be afraid to speak what God bids us, to be mealy-mouthed, to be discouraged with rumors, or dangers, we should keep nothing back of the whole counsel of God, we are stars in his hands, and he hath the continuing of us; though men fight against us, they cannot prevail against us, till our business is all done. As the Lord told the Prophet Jeremiah: They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, Jer. 1:19. Let us then be afraid of nothing but sin. Let us be afraid to do any evil, either towards God or towards man; let us be harmless in the midst of a crooked, and a perverse generation. Let us deal faithfully with our people, let us undauntedly Preach, Rebuke, Exhort, with all long suffering and Doctrine, make our faces hard against the wicked's faces, no matter for their railings, their threatening speeches, their malicious accusations, and not fear, the Lord Jesus hath the continuing of us.

Secondly, Here we may see the reason why the Gospel continues in any place, a man would wonder it should continue anywhere, because the world cannot abide it. Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted? Saves Stephen, Act. 7:52. They that do evil, hate the light, it cuts them to the heart; Everyone hates me, says the Prophet, he was reproached for the Words sake. Report, say they, and we will report it. One time they put him into a dungeon; Another time they would have killed him. Shemaiah writ Letters to the high Priest against him, Jer. 29:25. And yet he continued his Ministry, until the day of the Captivity. Nay, he had liberty, when others had their liberty taken away. Ye know Christ himself Preached daily in the Temple, and they took him not, though they gnashed their teeth at his Doctrine, and sometimes were in the mind to throw him down headlong and break his neck, sometimes to stone him; yet till his hour was come, he had his liberty.

And the truth is, a man would wonder how any of God's Ministers have their Liberties continued; when there be so many Drunkards, so many Enemies of all goodness, so many that follow their own ungodly lusts, and the Gospel is an eye-sore unto them, and yet in many places it stands still. This is God's doing. You see here Christ hath the continuing of his Ministers; they shall have their liberty, as long as God hath any use for them.

Thirdly, Is it so, that Christ hath the continuing of his Ministers? Then this is of use also unto you; Now you hear whence to have your good Ministers continued, even by seeking to Jesus Christ, he can lay a charge upon all the world where they are, to let them alone. He can say, Do my Prophets no harm, Psal. 105:15, you will say, why? What shall we do?

I Answer; first, let us repent of our sins, it is our sins that removes the Ministers of God, if we would repent us of our sins, and turn from our wicked ways, and let the Word work upon our hearts, this would continue the ministry of the Word, as God told Judah, when they should repent of their sins, O says he, I will be your God, and you shall be my people, and my Sanctuary shall be among you for evermore, Ezek. 27:27,28, that is, by Sanctuary he means his public Worship, the preaching of his Word, and other of the means of grace, when they repented of their sins, then these should be continued: So, Beloved, if ye would repent of your sins, I do not mean one or two, or a few, or so; But if there might be a general Reformation among us, this would fasten the Word among us, as in a sure place.

Secondly, Let us prize the Gospel, the Gospel loves to stay there where it is welcome: it will never go away, if it might have good entertainment, if we would honor it, and glorify it, and pluck up our affections, in the dearest manner to it, this would preserve it among us forever. The Church of Philadelphia, that used the Word best, had it longest, &c. Our Savior Christ hath a saying, Into whatsoever Town or City ye enter, inquire who is worthy, there abide, Matth. 10:11. And as he says, Luk. 10:7. Go not from house to house. The Gospel does not love to change houses till it be urged; so it does not love to change Towns, if it may have good usage; So, Beloved, if we would give the Gospel good usage, the Lord would continue it; like a Guest that is the willinger to stay when he sees he is among Friends.

Thirdly, Let us bring forth the fruits of it. The Husbandman will ever continue ploughing of his ground, as long as he sees it will give him a good crop. But when he perceives it will not quit charges, then he lays it Fallow. So Christ would have stayed his word still in Judah and Jerusalem, if they would have brought forth competent fruit. But when once they grew barren, he said he would take his Kingdom

away. The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a Nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof, Matth. 21:43.

Fourthly, Let us be earnest with God, to have his Gospel continue. Importunity may do much: Importunity held Christ a night longer with the Disciples, Luk. 24:29. Importunity held the Levite three or four days longer then otherwise he would, Judge. 19:4,5,6,7. O If we would be importunate with Christ to stay his Gospel still; as Jacob did the Angel, Thou shalt not go till thou bless me, Lord thy Gospel shall not go till it convert me; and it shall not go till it convert me, and it shall convert me first; if everyone would hang upon Christ, to stay his Gospel still, and thou shalt not let it go till it hath done my soul good, till it hath enlightened mine eyes, and quickened my heart, this would obtain much; may be some do do thus! As Jeremiah did: O thou hope of Israel, Why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the Land, and as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to stay for a night, Jer. 14:8. Alas! That would not do, if there had been many Jeremiah's, to do thus, then they might have gotten him to stay longer. So, may be some do cry importunately thus, O thou hope of Jerusalem, &c. And so I fall upon the third thing: ye have heard; first, how Christ hath the placing of his Ministers; secondly, he hath the continuing of them.

Thirdly, Now it follows, he hath the removing of them too. People are prone to look upon second causes, But Christ is the supreme, he is the principal cause of this judgment upon men, to take away his Ministers, as the Prophet Isaiah speaks, The Lord of Hosts doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the mighty man, and the Judge, and the Prophet, Isa. 3:1,2. Whether it be by death, or removal, or imprisonment, or suspending, or any other way: It is he that deprives a people of his faithful Ministers, whosoever be the instrument.

First, He can take them away by death out of the world, Thus the Lord took away the Prophet Enoch, Genesis 5:24.

Secondly, He can take them away by removal, thus he took away Jonas from Israel, and sent him to Nineveh, Jon. 3:1. Ye know he was a Prophet in Israel, and the Lord removed him thence to the Land of Assyria.

Thirdly, He can take them away by letting them be imprisoned, thus he took away John the Baptist, by letting Herod put him into prison, for telling him of his sins, Mark, 16:17. So, Ahab imprisoned Michaiah for telling him the truth.

Fourthly, He can take them away by letting them be suspended, and inhibited from Preaching, by letting wicked men have their wills, That say to the Seers, see not, and to the Prophets, prophesy not, Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Isa. 30:10. Thus King Amaziah silenced the Prophet that reproved him, 2 Chron. 25:16.

Fifthly, He can take them away by silencing them himself, this is as bad as taking them away for the time, thus himself stopped Ezikels mouth, and made him dumb.

Now the Reason why Christ does do thus, is; first, because of the wicked, they will not receive their Doctrine. Thus the Lord Jesus took away Paul out of Jerusalem. Make haste, get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me, Acts 22:18.

Secondly, The Lord does it in regard of his own people, because they begin to forsake their first love. This was the reason why the Lord threatened to take away the Ministry of the Word out of Ephesus, I

will remove thy Candlestick out of its place, except thou repent, Revelations 2:5.

Thirdly, The Lord does this sometimes in regard of the Ministry itself, that it may be more precious afterwards, as it is said there in Samuel, when the Lord had deprived Israel of his Prophets, for a matter of fourscore years together, O says the Text, The Word of God was precious in those days, because there was no open Vision, 1 Sam. 3:1.

The Use of this is, first, Is it so, that it is Christ that removes Ministers? Then this should teach us to mourn before him, if ever any of our Ministers be taken away by any means, we should see whose hand is upon us, the hand of the Lord is gone out against us, it is he that inflicteth this judgment, and therefore we should mourn unto him, as the Church did. When all their Prophets were gone, and all Religion went to wrack, and the enemies had burnt up their Synagogues, and broken up all their godly Assemblies: O how they mourned unto God for it. O God, why hast thou cast us off? Why does thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy Congregation, which thou hast purchased of old. Remember mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt, Psal. 74:1,2, this was a heavy judgment indeed, they felt the Lord's anger smoke against them then. Why? What was the matter? We see not our signs, there is no more any Prophet, Ver. 9.

Secondly, Another Use is, Let us look into the meritorious cause, which is nothing but our sins. If God's Ministers be put down at any time, it is our sins that put them down. For if Christ be the inflicting cause, certainly our sins are the deserving cause; we can blame none but our own sins, if anything stop any good Ministers mouth, it is they, it is people's drunkenness, and disorder, you are the cause,

your unfruitfulness, and security, and hypocrisy, and formality, you do not learn goodness and godliness under the Word, ye remain vain and blind, and hardened in your hearts under the same. What Parishes more disorderly, than those where most preaching is, where is more hatred of word, and virtue, and piety then there? Where is more railing at a good life, and holy walking, and such as desire to do well? The more preaching people hear, for the most part, the worse they grow. People come to Church it may be, but they make it a cloak for their villainies, they will give us the hearing, but no obedience, no practice, no Reformation, no sign of amendment, no love, no truth, no faithfulness, no communion at all, well-a-neighbor, where most Preaching is! If anything stop our mouths, this will do it. And indeed what may men think of us, but that we are a company of hypocrites, and teachers of vanities; what are these Preachers, we see little good they do, what becomes of all their Preaching, factions and odd opinions, in one Town, and dissoluteness and all manner of licentiousness in another. If the whole world should let us alone, I verily fear God himself would put us down immediately, in the end. So many scandals, so many thousand offenses are given every day, that its a wonder we stand as we do. That the Lord of heaven lets any Minister in England, come into a Pulpit more; nothing but pride, and self-conceits, and self-trusting's, and feared consciences, dead hearts, and profaneness; unless it be a very little handful; O Beloved, if where preaching is, it were honored as it ought to be, and obeyed as it should, if people would do as we teach, I dare be bold to affirm we might Preach long enough. If our Towns would sweetly reform, set up good Government, root out all disorders and cursed abuses, live like Christians indeed, be humble, and sober, and loving, and dutiful to God and Man; Giving to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. If we would fear God, and honor the King: Reverence God's Courts, obey the voice of his servants, love Christ and his word, above our appointed food, this would lengthen

the Ministry of the Land, this would be a means for the establishing of God's Kingdom among us, Christ would never repent that ever he sent his Gospel unto us, where we have some, we should have more, where we have more, we should have a hundred times more, as the Apostle Peter says, Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good, 1 Pet. 3:13.

Thirdly, Another Use is, is it Christ that takes away Ministers, either by death, or restraining, or by any other way? Then let it be a means to exhort us to repent of our sins, that Christ may still give a door of utterance to his Ministers, that they may still speak in his name. This should move us to seek God. When Peter was cast into prison. O what fasting, and crying, and praying was there to God for him, till he was restored again, Act. 12:5, they did not go to Herod to restore him; No, they knew Christ was he that took him from the Church, whoever were the instrument, therefore they sought to Heaven for him again, if any people's Ministry be gone, this is the best way to fetch them again. Paul knew this to be true, and therefore when he was in prison at Rome, he writes to Philemon thus. I trust that through your prayers, I shall be given unto you. Philemon v. 22. Nay, he is so confident that if people would but cry hard for him to God, that he should quickly be enlarged. Nay, says he, prepare me a lodging, for I trust that through your prayers I should be given unto you. q.d. I make no question but I shall out of prison, if you will but be earnest with God. So, also it seems the Author to the Hebrews, was restrained from Preaching. Now mark what an exhortation he uses, Pray for us, says he, and I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored unto you the sooner, Heb. 13:18,19.

Thus I have finished this part of the Description of Jesus Christ, That hath the seven Stars in his hand, and the whole Subscription too: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the

seven Stars. I come now to the Epistle itself. I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead, but of this more, &c.

SERMON X.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. - REVEL. 3:1.

I know thy works, &c.

Ye have heard two things concerning this Epistle. First, the Inscription, that declareth the person to whom it was sent, To the Angel of the Church in Sardis write. That is, it was sent principally to the Minister of the Church in the Town of Sardis, and also to the Christians that were in that Church.

Secondly, the subscription that declareth from whom it was sent, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars: that is, it was sent from Jesus Christ.

Now we come to the third thing, and that is the subject matter of this Epistle, which consists of three things.

First, a Reprehension of the sins of the Minister, and the body of his congregation.

Secondly, a Direction, or the showing of the remedy, for the curing of their sins.

Thirdly, a Commendation of some particular persons in that Congregation, that were not carried away with the sins of the times.

The reprehension is either in general, I know thy works, that is, I know them all, and I know them to be stark naught for the most part, whatever they seem, they may seem to be very good, but I tell you plainly, I know them all what they be, q.d. Generally they are stark naught.

And then in particular he instances in two: first, the sin of hypocrisy, or seeming to be good, Thou hast a name that thou livest. Secondly, the sin of deadness of heart; But thou art dead. This is the reprehension, or the reproof.

Then follows the Direction, or the showing of the remedy, for he does not reprove them out of any ill will, but for their good. And therefore he prescribes them a remedy, and the remedy is twofold: The first is, to strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die. v. 2, q.d. as many of you as are not quite and clean dead, stir up yourselves, quicken up your hearts; and this is, first illustrated by showing how they should do thus. Be watchful says he, q.d. that's the reason why ye languish on this fashion, and ye will languish more and more, because ye are not watchful, therefore be watchful: and then it is urged by rendering a motive to use this remedy: For I have not found thy works perfect before God, that is, thou art hardly sincere a jot, thou art full of hypocrisy, and formality, and thou wilt lose all thy labor, if thou dost not look well about thee; therefore shake up thyself, and strengthen the things, &c. this is the first remedy. The second remedy is to repent, v. 3, and this is amplified by showing how, and that is two ways, 1. Remember how &c. i.e. consider how thou hast been taught, and bewail thy declining's, for thou art horribly departed from what thou hast heard out of the Word. 2. Hold fast. i.e. so bewail thy warping's and degenerating's, that thou mayest get up again, and hold thee fast there, when thou art up.

Now lest they should neglect the using of this remedy, the Lord Jesus sharpens his speech with a threatening, telling them the danger if they will not be awakened, if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know, &c. Thus you see the remedy.

Then the next thing is the commemoration of some slain persons, raw Birds, that were not carried away with the sins of the times, and in the common deadness of the Congregation, where they lived, and these he does commend very much.

And then an encouragement to give them an excellent promise. The commendation is in these words. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, verse. 4. That is, there be some among you, though they be but a few; and he commends them for two things. 1. From the place, that they could be in Sardis, and yet keep their quickening. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis. Even in Sardis, q.d. in dead Sardis, even there be some lively Christians, that are not dead. 2. From the quality of their care expressed by a metaphor of keeping their garments clean, which have not defiled their garments, that is, they have been very careful indeed, that they are not sooted and soiled with so many ill examples; though others be dead, yet they will not be dead too for company.

And then their promise follows for their encouragement in these words. They shall walk after me in white, in the same verse; that is, I will give them the grace of presence, and will keep them unspotted unto my Heavenly Kingdom and Glory; and he adds a reason why he makes them such a promise, in these words. For they are worthy; not as though they did merit presence and glory; no; but they are worthy

in Christ, and Christ hath made them meet to be made partakers of this mercy. Thus you see the matter of the example.

Well, now to come to the reproof, and first in general, I know thy works, that is, I know them all, and I know them to be stark naught for the most part, whatever they seem; they may seem to be very good and godly; but be it known unto you, I know them all, what they be, q.d. generally they are stark naught. The first point we hence gather is that the Lord knows every man's ill courses; he is privy to every man's sins, though men carry them never so cleverly and closely, yet he knows them.

First, he sees men's sinful works; they can do nothing, but he sees it, as Elihu speaks, his eyes are upon the ways of men, and he seeth all their goings. There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the works of iniquity may hide themselves, Job. 34:21,22, whatever evil men do, they cannot hide it from him; they may go into a house, and think to shut out all men from seeing of them, but they cannot shut him out; they cannot get out of his sight be they never so private, and who sees them? Yet the Lord sees them.

Secondly, he knows every syllable that men speak at any time, as David says, There is not a word in my Tongue, but lo O Lord thou knowest it altogether, Ps. 13:4. The Prophet Elisha could tell what the King of Aram spake in his privy chamber, 2 Kings 6:12, the Lord can tell what words people speak under the Rose; what they say in their beds, what they whisper in their close meetings, what they belch out on their Ale-benches. Enoch says he will have them all up at the day of judgment, nay if a word be but at the Tongues end, he hears it.

Thirdly, he knows every thought in men's hearts, as Moses says, and God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the Earth, and the very imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

continually, Gen. 6:5. Though men's thoughts be sly things, and are out of men's eyes, and Devils eyes, and Angels eyes, yet they are not out of his eye, he sees what men think.

Fourthly, he knows all that ever a man hath done in times past; he revealed unto Moses what Adam did in the Garden, what Cain in the field, what brags Lamech used before his Wives, what villainy Lots Daughters did in the night time, many 100 years after they were done. He knows what was done yesterday and the other day, and the other day, seven hundred hundred years ago. He hath a Calendar of all the sins of men ever since the beginning of the World; what people did in their childhood, what in their youth, what in their manhood, though they themselves have forgotten, yet he remembers; Ther's no time out of mind unto Him: as Solomon says, God requireth that which is past, Eccl. 3:15.

Fifthly, he knows what sins men will commit hereafter; Christ told his Apostles beforehand, what wicked dealings they should meet with; the Lord told Moses what Pharaoh would do, before he went to him, I know he will not let you go, Exod. 3:19. So likewise when the children of Israel were in the Wilderness, the Lord told them even then that he knew all the wickedness that ever they would do when they came into Canaan. I know their imaginations even now says he, before I have brought them into the Land which I sware, Deut. 31:21.

Sixthly, He knows not only what sins they have committed heretofore, nor only what they will commit hereafter, but also he knows what they would commit, in such and such cases. He knew Abimelech would have taken Sarah, if he had not hindered him. He knew that the men of Keilah would betray David, if he should stay there, 1 Sam. 23:12. He knows what a rich man would do if he were poor; what a poor man would do if he were rich; He knows that such

a one would play the apostate, rather than lose all his living; He knows that such a man would do mischief, if he had wherewithal; he sees what is in every man's heart, what lies particularly in every man's nature; It may be her's one that dies in his infancy, the Lord knows what he would have done, if he had lived till he was a man; here's one that dies at 40, the Lord knows what a wretch he would have been, if he had lived to twenty or thirty years longer; here's one that dwells now in a good family, it may be now he conforms to good duties, he does not fly out, but the Lord knows how he would be a very rake shame; if he lived in another place.

Seventhly, the Lord knows what men are and what they have been, and what they will be, as he knows all their thoughts, words and works, He knows all their dispositions, their persons, their natures, their qualities, their affections, and ends and aims, and motives and estates; he knows how many are rotten though they profess never so much, how many are unfound though they be never so well esteemed in the Church; He knows in what estate every man stands in. He knows vain men, he seeth wickedness also; will not he then punish it? Job. 11:11. The reasons of this point, that God knows all men's sins and sinful courses, he knows all that they ever have done, or do do, or will do, or can do or would do are:

First, because God is infinite in knowledge, as David says, his understanding is infinite, Psal. 147:5 as the Prophet Isaiah says, there's no searching of his understanding, Isa. 40:28, well, if he be infinite in Knowledge, what can a poor Creature keep close from him? Who can hide his iniquities from him? Who can set such a color upon his wicked devises that he cannot discover them? Let a man excuse himself, may be his excuses may pass currant among men, but God must needs know the falseness of his excuses, and that they are but Fig leaves: men may pretend what they will, and deny what

they will with an impudent forehead, and set a good face upon what they will and this may go unperceived among men; but God's understanding is infinite, and therefore he knows all that men do, he knows how every man stands affected unto him, he knows how people come to Church, and whether they mean to do what they have been taught, whether they mean to reform what they have been reprov'd for; for, He is infinite in Knowledge, and therefore he is privy to all the sins of men.

Secondly, as he is omniscient, so he is omnipresent; he is present everywhere; whether can any Creature go from his presence? If he go into Bed, or Chamber, or Closet, or Street, or high way, or Alehouse, or Drab-house, home or abroad, he can go nowhere but where God is, and how can he do ought, but God must needs see him? God himself argues on this manner, Can any hide himself in secret places, that I should not see him? Do not I fill Heaven and earth? Saith the Lord, Jer. 23:24, q.d. if I be everywhere, I must needs be able to see everywhere.

Thirdly, the Lord is omniprovident, as I may so speak, he hath a hand either in the making of all things, or at least in the permitting and disposing of all things. All that is good, he does it himself, or else it cannot be done. All that is evil, he must permit it to be, or else it cannot be committed; nothing is done without his concurrence or sufferance; therefore he must needs know all men's sins he knows what he hath suffered to be, or does suffer, or will suffer; not so much as the sins of men can fall out without him; as Peter speaking of Judas his sins, and the Jews, and Pilate's, and Herod's, they did nothing but what he knew they would do; why they did nothing, but what his Hand and Counsel determin'd before to be done. Acts 4:28, therefore he knew the Jews would betray Christ; he could tell the Prophet Zacharias diverse hundred years before, that he would take

30 pieces of Silver to do it. He could tell the Prophet Isaiah that they would smite him, and buffet him, that they would reckon on him among transgressors; he could tell the Prophet David that they should pierce his hands and his Feet, and that they should offer him Vinegar to drink, the Lord knew all these sins of yours; why? Because he had decreed them. True he did not decree that he would make them commit them, but he decreed that they themselves should be the agents of them, it should be merely their fault, their covetousness, their malice, their men-pleasing, their wicked disposition; I but he ordered these things, and therefore he must needs know them. The drunkard could not hold up the cup to his mouth, if God had not intended to preserve his arms, and his mouth, at that time; he could not go to the tippling house, but that God intended to continue him his feet, and his health; no man could think a wicked thought, nor speak a naughty word, but that God upholds his heart and his tongue in the interim; if God should forbear his goodness to them, he would be speechless, and not able to think so much as any thought at all, and this aggravates man's sins, that he hath need of God's goodness at the same time, and yet that he should sin against his Maker.

Fourthly, the Lord knows every man's sins, because he hath a Candle in every man's bosom; he hath made men's hearts on that wise, that he hath a Candle in them all. Ye know there is a spirit in a man, that we call conscience, that is God's Candle, as Solomon says, The spirit of man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly, Pro. 20:27, well, if he have a Candle shining in every man's bosom, what can there be hidden in the dark? Nay he knoweth men's hearts and ways better than they knew them themselves, as the Physician can better judge of his Patients body than himself; Christ knew Peters unbelieving heart, when he knew it not himself, though all men be offended in thee yet will not I; Christ knew he would be

offended in him that very night; so he knew Hazael's wicked life, when the man that owned it, would not believe it; is thy servant a Dog says he, that I should be so wicked? Yet he knew he would be so wicked and cruel; and therefore God can bring to a man's mind a thousand things that he never dreamt of before; many a man deceives himself all his life time; But when he comes to sicken and die, then God shows him what he is, and what he hath done, and now he sees he is a damned wretch, and yet before though all the Ministers in England had told him so much, he would not have believed it.

Fifthly, he must needs know every man's sins, because he is the Judge of all the World, and he is to judge every sinner according to his deeds; now if he should not know all his sins, he could not judge righteous judgment. The Judge must know all secrets, otherwise he cannot well judge. Now beloved God is a righteous Judge, and therefore no sin can scape him; God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil, Eccl. 12:14. True it is, he shall not want witnesses in the day, for conscience shall be a thousand witnesses; yet it is needful that himself should have perfect knowledge of all the actions of men. For why is conscience so ready to accuse a man, when it is awakened? It is only because it is conscious that God knoweth all its doings; now if God had not perfect knowledge himself, conscience would not witness all then, neither could it make a sinner confess all. But God's knowing all, this is it that will make conscience to speak truth. The Psalmist being to dispute against a company of Atheistical people that said, tush God shall not see, Psal. 94:7, mark how he reasons against them. He brings an argument from God's judging of men to prove that God must needs see; O says he, it is he that chastiseth the he hen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? Verse. 10, q.d. ye deny God to be judge; if he say he

does not know, how can he correct them? Will he judge men for that he knows not what? No, if he be the judge of the whole World, he must needs know all that men do.

The use of this is, First, is it so that God knows all men's sinful courses, if men be dead-hearted, he knows it; if they be heartless in good duties, he knows it; though they would be loath that men should know what they are, and do keep it from them, yet they cannot daub it before God; he knows it; then this may serve to confute them that say God does not know sin. This was Averroes his opinion, who says God does not know sin; God knows all that ever he knows by knowing of himself, and how can he know sin, because he can see no such thing in himself? I answer this is to derogate from the knowledge of God, and to deny the perfection of it. True, sin is an evil, yea the greatest evil of all evils; yet the knowledge of it is good: nay, it were strange to say that God does not know who sin against him; that were a pity; if men be abused, we say it were pity but that they should know of it; and if we do love them, we tell them who they be that abuse them, and what the abuses are. Certainly God knows who do abuse him, and how people carry themselves towards all his Commandments and worship; it is a part of his perfection to know it. Again we ourselves may know sin, and may know sin by the contrary, as we know what darkness is by the contrary, which is light; and shall we say that God do not know it? God damns all the wicked one after another for it, and therefore he does know it, nay we see that God brings secret things to light here in this World, when people had thought that nobody should ever come to know it, yet he does often bring secret sins to light here in this World, how much more at the last day? And though God knows all that ever he knows by looking upon himself, and sin be not there, but nothing but good and goodness itself, yet he can know it as a Medium to bring good out of it; And so it is good as he wills it, and therefore he decrees it, and

therefore he must needs know it and know it in himself. For the permission only of it is in himself, and the acting which is evil is out of himself, neither does it follow that God's understanding should become vile by knowing so many vile things, as Vorstius and others do blasphemously affirm, and thence they would conclude their cursed Atheistical axioms; we indeed may make ourselves vile by looking upon vile and base things, because we cannot keep our hearts from savoring of them; whose end is damnation, &c. who mind earthly things, Phil. 3:19, that is, their mind becomes vile by so doing. Hereby people come to be unacquainted with God, and with Heavenly things. They know how to buy and sell, how to earn and get gain, how to plough and sow and such earthly things, and they do so savor their minds, that they make their minds base with them, and therefore we are commanded to ennoble our minds and understandings, for these things make them vile, and therefore we should think of them no oftener then needs must, for our minds are debased by base objects; This is to be meant in regard of us, not as though anything that God hath made were vile, but our corruption makes us vile; when we look upon vile things, we are apt to run a whoring after them, and our affections to be hampered by them; but God can daily and every hour see and look what vile things men do; for he keeps a continual and an uninterrupted hatred of them, as the Psalmist says, he is angry with the wicked every day, so he hates their courses every day.

Again does God know all men's sins? Then this confutes the Anomists, that say God cannot see the sins of his people, God sees no sin in his people say they; abusing that place there of Balaam. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen transgression in Israel. Numb. 23:21, what's this but to pervert Scripture, he speaks there of the eye of his Justice, He does not speak of the eye of his Knowledge; He speaks of such things as is in the wicked: That indeed

God do not see in his people; for it is not there to be seen; otherwise, if God's people sin, God makes them know and confess that he sees it; as David says, O God thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee, Psal. 69:5. The garments of salvation that God puts upon his people, are not to hoodwink God's All-seeing Knowledge, but to keep of the destroying Angel.

Secondly, another use is to condemn the most sorts of men, that do not consider of this truth; they little think that God sees all their doings. I fear there is hardly any among us, that will seem to deny but that God can see all his ways; and yet we see it is too apparent by men's lives, that few men do believe this indeed. There is this vile Atheism sculking in all our hearts naturally (otherwise we durst not do as we do) that either God is such a God as the Epicures made him, that sits in Heaven and regards not what men do here below, or at least we do not charge this truth on our hearts, that God sees us; this is the cause of all the sins that are among us; That there is so much luke-warmness in the better sort, so much heartlessness in holy performances before God, so much wickedness among others; for why? If men did seriously consider that God's sees all and marks all, nay he marks all that men do, so curiously that he can set them in order before them, all that ever they have done, Psal. 50:21, in the same order that they committed them; mark he can set before us in order all that ever we do from day today; this sin then, and that sin then; such a sin we did at such a time, such sins in the morning, such at noon, such the last night, such lusts were in our hearts in such a place, and such in such a place; he can set them in order before us, he knows them so well, and will too before he hath done; I say if we did charge this upon our souls, we could not live so loosely as we do.

You will say, yea, but we are Christians, why do you tell us such a known truth? What need so many arguments to prove that God

knows all our sins? We know that already and nobody will deny it, we are Christians. I answer, this is the hypocrisy of men hearts; their hearts will confess it to be a truth, but in their works they do deny it. The Prophet David speaks of men that were in the visible Church of God as well as we, and that would confess this truth as well as we, and yet he says of many a one of them; He hath said in his heart God hath forgotten, he hath hid his face, he will never see it, Psal. 10:11. And the truth is, this is the cause of all the boldness of people to go on in their sins, or to yield to sin at any time; they put this out of their bosoms that God sees them; As Ezekiel speaks, the land is full of blood, the City is full of perverseness, for they say the Lord hath forsaken the Earth, and the Lord seeth not, Ezek. 9, they say so in effect; they put God afar of, and they do not consider that he sees them. Beloved there's none of us all but hath need that this truth should be urged upon us, that God beholds all iniquity and evil; we can never do amiss, but he takes notice of it.

Thirdly, another use is; is it so that God sees all men's sins? Then this is a terror to all that go on with a self-condemning heart. O consider what the Apostle says, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows all things, 1 Joh. 3:20, q.d. if we have a self-condemning heart, how much more shall we find a self-condemning God? If our own heart can find us out, if that can find out our worldliness, or our irreverence, or our carelessness of God, how much more will God find us out? He knows all our sins better than we ourselves; and therefore, O let us quake all of us to go on with a self-condemning heart; it is a bad badge, it is a prodigious token of the fearful judgment of God; if we do not get our sins done away, by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by his sanctifying Spirit, God will find us out; for he knows what we are, and what we do daily, and how we live every day and hour. Again, this is a terror to them that are Hypocrites; If God could not see a rotten heart, he should speed as

well as the best. O but says God, I the Lord search the heart, J try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings, Jer. 17:10, and therefore woe be to such as are otherwise within then they seem to be without; without they are painted sepulchers, but within they are full of rottenness, they profess godliness, but they suffer within a Worldly spirit, a guilty conscience, a vain mind, an unbelieving heart, no love of God, no zeal to his glory, no feeling of the Churches misery, no compassion with the Saints, no delight in them that fear God indeed; and yet they will go for Christians forsooth. God sees all their works, and will unmask them in his due time, either in this world, or in the world to come, and will pour everlasting contempt on them.

Fourthly, this is comfort to good people, for if God see all men's sins, then he sees all men's goodness much rather; what a comfort is this in prayer to consider, that he that searcheth the heart knows what is the mind of the spirit? Rom. 8:17. He knows all thy groans, He knows all thy desires; what a comfort is this whenever an honest soul is put to it soundly in temptation, when the soul is accused by Satan, hardly thought on by men, and God lets bitter temptations to come on? I say what a comfort is this, that God knows all the good things that are in man? All ones affections, all ones endeavors, ail ones combats against sin, all ones griefs for corruption, as Peter said, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, Joh. 21:17. Peter was put to it soundly at that time; But yet this was his comfort that God did know all things. He had many tokens of God's gracious goodness about him, he had love to Jesus Christ, he had deep desires to do all that he bade him. O says he, and thou knowest it. Again this is an excellent comfort in time of affliction. When Job was in affliction, and his friends scorned him, then did he go and pour out his Tears unto God, and this was his comfort, Behold my witness is in Heaven, and my record is on high, Job. 16:19,20. Again this an

excellent encouragement to serve God in these bad and sinful times; people generally never look after God, nor holiness; the World looks after their pleasures and their profits, and preferments, and friends, and the like; but Religion and Devoutness, and Godliness of living, few people look after that as though God did not regard what people do. Now beloved, when we hear that God sees all that men do, and marks it, and will call all men to accompt, what an encouragement is this to serve God, as David said to Solomon, Know thou the God of thy Fathers and serve him with a perfect heart, for the Lord searcheth all Hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts, 1 Chron. 28:9. Again, what a comfort is this against false accusations? He knows all our innocence, when our Neighbors say all manner of evil of us. He knows we do that in simplicity, which others think we do out of a sinister respect, or out of pride, or popularity, or for applause. What a comfort is this, when we can appeal to God, as Paul says, the Lord knows that I lie not, as David says, I have not refrained my lips from Preaching thy Righteousness O Lord, thou knowest, Psal. 40:9. He knows the uttermost endeavors and desires of our hearts is to be as good as we seem, though the World take us for Hypocrites He knows we be true men, that reverence every power that is of God, though the World esteem us factious and humorous. Little does the World think what the Saints do every day, what wrestling's with God, what conflicts in their minds they endure; this is sufficient, the Lord knows.

Again, what a comfort is this? If we desire to know our sins, God is able to show them unto us. He can open our eyes to behold them for our humiliation, that we may say with the Prophet, I know mine own iniquities and my sin is ever before me; if we want a right sight of our sins at any time, it is but going to God, He knows them all, he can help us to see them aright.

Fifthly, does God know all men's sins? Then this should make us afraid to do evil at any time, or in any place, yea in the secretest; we can never do any evil, but God will spy us out; we cannot have a thought in our heart, but he does discern it; nor omit any duty but he does perceive it; nor slubber over any good duty, but he stands by and looks on; may be when ye are among yourselves, ye can shoot out your Arrows even bitter and malicious words, may be nobody can tell what ye said, tush it shall never come to such a ones Eare; Who can tell that you did say so? Who? Why God can Thus ye said and thus ye said, says the Lord; That have you said O house of Israel, for I knew the things that came into your mind every one of them, Ezek. 11:5. He knows thy adultery and with whom and in what Bed; neither Curtains, nor Doors, nor Lock and Key can hide from him. He knows how thy heart hath risen up against the Word, He knows how many times thou hast smothered thine own conscience, and gone against it, and outwrestled it; He knows how thou lettest thy mind rove in Prayer, how many times thou hast come to the Lord's Table unworthily, omitted Family duties or huddled them over without due regard; He knows what tricks thou hast to put off conviction, what a base esteem thou hast of the strictness that God's Word doth require, when thou hearest it laid open. O I say, this should make thee to fear God, this should make thee to fear everywhere as the Psalmist says, Thou compassest my paths and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways, Psal. 139:3. Thou hast beset me behind and before, within and without; thou possessest all my reins. O what an awe should this breed in us! But I let this Use pass. This Use will better come in the next Doctrine.

Well then, the next Doctrine is this. The knowing that God knows all our works, is the powerful means to all God's elect, to do them good, and to quicken them, and to make them take heed of all manner of sin; when the Lord would quicken his people here in Sardis, he uses

this as his first means to do it by, I know thy works; we may see this in David. I have kept thy Precepts and thy Testimonies, for all my ways are before thee. Psa. 119:168, when Solomon would confute a whorish heart, he uses this for his argument, Why wilt thou my Son, be ravished with a strange Woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his goings. Prov. 5:20,21, why wilt thou doth us? Q.d. thou art mad, thou art desperate, if this argument will not prevail with thee.

The reasons of this point are, First, because the Lord's knowing of our works is not only a mere knowing of them, but also a marking and a pondering of them too; He diligently observes what we do, he ponders and considers whence it proceeds, and whether it tends, as the Prophet says, The Lord's Throne is in Heaven, his Eyes well consider, his Eye-lids try the Children of men, Psal. 11:4. And therefore when the Scripture would tell us that God knows men's hearts, it sometimes expresses it thus, The Lord pondereth men's hearts, Prov. 24:12, if God did only see what we do, it were another matter, but when the soul shall hear that he marks, and that he ponders, and considers men's sins, and weighs them how heinous they are, what punishment they deserve, and how horrible it is that they do, how much it is against his glory; its a sign of a desperate heart, when this will not work.

Secondly, because when God sees all our sins, it is with a most holy and pure Eye, and such an Eye as cannot abide such an object before him, as the Prophet Habakkuk speaks, Thou art of purer Eyes then to behold evil, thou canst not look on iniquity, Hab. 1:13, if God saw our sins with such an Eye as men see them now and then, it were no such great thing; for we know that most men can endure to see our sins well enough, and like us little the worse; but they are infinitely

offensive unto God, he sees them with such an eye, that if ever the conscience be a wake but to perceive how he looks, it will burst the very heart of a man.

Thirdly, because when God sees our sins, he records them, he notes them in a book, that he may never forget them; as he told the people of the Jews, behold it is written before me, I will recompense and render it into your bosom, Isaiah. 65:6, if God did see our sins, and there's an end, then indeed this doctrine of God's seeing would do little; may be God would forget them again; yea, but when he sees, he registers too, nay he lays it up in record to be in store by him against another day; nay, he seals them up in his treasure; is not this laid up in store by me, and sealed among my Treasures? Deut. 32:34, now when the Soul shall come to mark this, this will wound it to the quick, this must needs do a man good, and strike an awe into him of God.

Fourthly, because when God's sees our sins, it is even all one as if all the world should see them too; as Origen notes; for let our sins be never so secret, our inward unsoundness never so unknown, yet if God know it, it is as bad and worse than if all the world knew it; for all the world shall know it one day, God will lighten all things that are hid in darkness, and will make manifest the secret counsels of men's hearts; then shall every man have praise of God, 1 Cor. 4:5, that is, whosoever have been godly, God will bring all their godliness forth, and every one of them shall have praise of God; this shall be an honor to them before all the world: so if a man have been evil, then God will produce all his naughty courses forth, then shall he have shame from God, God will shame him before all the World. There is nothing now covered that shall not then be revealed, nothing hid that shall not then be laid open; what a shame then will this be for thee, that thou which hast gone so many years for an honest man, and may

be hast been somebody here in this world, when all the Saints shall see thee standing as a wretch, as a hell-hound as a limb of the Devil, on Christ's left hand? What a shame will it be, if we that are now earnest Preachers, if any of us shall then be found among the goats? What a shame to any of you, that would count it a sore disgrace to be called a wicked man, to be led forth with evil doers, and shoaled among the damned? Well then, if God's seeing of men's sins be such a kind of seeing as this is, no marvel it work so effectually on them that are of God.

Fifthly, another argument may be taken from our disposition; our disposition is such, that we cannot abide that our wickedness's should be seen of anybody that we know cannot abide them; Which among us when we pray and have base roving thoughts, would not be ashamed that a man should see our thoughts rove? Which of us, that are unsettled and dead-hearted, would not blush that men had a casement to see how dead he sits at a Sermon, and how dead at a Sacrament, how dead in other of God's Ordinances; what base and impure thoughts sometime do arise in his mind; if he did think that any man should see them, he would not hardly be able to show his face among men. Let but an adulterer that is naught with a whore, have but a few men, or but one man come and take him in the act, O how it will gall him and vex him to be seen, as Job speaks, if one know them, they are in the terror of the shadow of death, Job. 24:17, they abhor the light, they cannot abide to be brought out to be known. Now beloved if this be our disposition by nature, that we cannot abide that so much as a man should know us; nay, not a child of six or seven years of age, then O what a terror is it that the God of Heaven and Earth should know us, that he should see all our lusts, all our sinful and vile thoughts, all our unclean and noy some affections, all our by ends and carelessness of God! O what a powerful thing is this to work upon the heart, except it be delivered

up to a reprobate sense, to sleight God, and care less for him then for a little Boy, or a mortal man? So then ye see, this is a powerful means to work upon a soul, to know that God knows all his works; though the Woman of Samaria stood jesting, and playing, and contesting with our Savior a good while: yet when she perceived that he knew all her villainy, this burst her heart; O says she this is no other than Christ, he hath told me all that ever I did, Joh. 4:29.

The use of this is. First, here we see they are desperato that this point cannot work on; its certain they are graceless that can hear that God sees all their works, and yet it does not purge them from day to day; its an evident argument that a man contemns God, and makes nothing of him. When David had showed that the wicked care not for God's eye, they make a matter of nothing of it; tush God does not see, Psalm. 19:11, say they; that is, they knew he saw indeed, but they made nothing of it; as long as men did not see them, they counted God's seeing as nothing; now mark what follows, wherefore do the wicked contemn God? Psalm. 13

Secondly, is it so, that this is such a powerful means to work upon our hearts? Let us not harden our hearts, but let us consider of it, that it may cut between the bone and the marrow, and divide between the soul and the spirit; God sees all our works. This point should fall upon our hearts, like the almighty hand of God, as it did upon Job, I know thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be hid from thee, Job, 42:2.

SERMON XI.

That thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art Dead. - REVEL. 3:1.

We are come to the subject matter of this example; and First, we meet with the reproof that Christ gives to the Church of Sardis; the reproof is either in general; I know thy works, i.e. I know them all to be stark naught for the general; and then in particular, first, their hypocrisy, thou hast a name that thou livest; secondly, their deadness indeed, and art dead. The general reproof we spake of the last day, I know thy works, and there ye heard that God knows all the sinful courses that any man takes; he is privy to every man's sins: though men carry them never so closely and cleverly, yet he knows them.

First, he sees all men's sinful actions, as Elihu speaks, his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he sees all his goings; there is no darkness or shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves, Job. 34:21,22, people cannot get out of his sight, they cannot sin so in private but he seeth them; they may go into a secret room, and shut every living creature out, but they cannot shut God out.

Secondly, he knows every syllable that men speak, I have heard what the Prophets said, they prophecy lies in my name, Jer. 23:25, the Lord can tell what men speak under the rose; look what the King of Aram spake in his bed chamber, he could tell Elisha. As Enoch speaks; he knows all the speeches that wicked men speak, and will have them up at the day of judgment against them.

Thirdly, he knows every sinful thought that is in men's hearts, as Moses says; God saw the wickedness of man was great upon the

earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, Gen. 6:5, though men's thoughts be sly things, and are out of men's eyes, and Angels eyes, and Devils eyes, yet they are not out of his eye, he sees what men think.

Fourthly, he knows all that ever a man hath done as the woman said of Christ; come see one that hath told me all that ever I have done, Joh. 4:29.

Fifthly, he knows all the evil that ever men will do hereafter; the Lord told Moses what Pharaoh would do before he went to him; I know he will harden his heart and will not let them go, Exod. 3:19, while the Children of Israel were in the wilderness, he knew what they would do when they came into Canaan; I know their imaginations even now before I have brought them into the Land which I sware to give them, Deut. 31:21.

Sixthly, he knows all the evils that men would do in such and such circumstances; he knew Abimelech would have taken Sarah, if he had not hindered him; he knew that the men of Keilah would betray David, if David should stay there, 1 Sam. 23:12, he knows what a rich man would do if he were poor, what this or that poor man would do if he were rich; one dies in his infancy, he knows what he would have done if he had let him live to be a man: here's a man that lives in a good family, and may be carrieth himself very squarely, but the Lord knows what he would do, if he lived in another place.

Seventhly, the Lord knows men's dispositions, their natures, their qualities, their projects, their intentions; he knows how many are rotten, though they profess never so much; he knows men's persons, he knows vain men, Job. 11:11.

I told you the reason of this, First, because he is omniscient and knows all things, his understanding is infinite, Psal. 147:5, let a man set as good a color, as he can upon his wicked devices, God can discover him, let a man have never so many excuses; though they pass for currant among men, yet God sees what they are; men may pretend what they will, and deny what they will, and set an impudent forehead and face on the matter, and go unperceived among men, but they cannot go unperceived by Almighty God, his understanding is infinite.

Secondly, as he is omniscient, so he is omnipresent, he is everywhere; whether can any creature go from his presence? If he go into the street, or ale-house or drab-house, or his house or his closet, or his privy chamber, he can go nowhere but where God is; and therefore how can he do ought but God must needs see him? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I should not see him? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord? Jer. 23:24.

Thirdly, the Lord hath his providence in everything, nothing is done without his concurrence or sufferance, if it be good, it is done by his assistance; if it be evil, it cannot be done without his permission and disposition; therefore he must needs know everything. He knew whether the Devils should enter into the herd of swine, for they could not enter in, until he suffered them: he knew all that Judas, and Pilate, and Herod, and the Jews and the High Priests did against Christ, because they did nothing but what his hand and counsel had determined before to be done, Act. 4:28.

Fourthly, the Lord knows every man's sins, because he hath a candle in every man's bosom. The Spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly, Prov. 20:27, that is a

man's conscience, that's the Lord's Candle; well, if He have a Candle standing in every man's bosom, what can be done there in the dark?

Fifthly, because He is judge of the whole World; O Lord of Hosts that judgest righteously, that tryest the Reines and the Heart, Jer. 11:20. He could not judge every man righteously else. A man may do well, and yet seem to do evil; again a man may do very evil, and yet seem to do well; ye know the heart is all in all; now if God did not know all men's hearts, all men's looks and aims, and intents, and meanings, the circumstances, and everything that men do, He could not judge every man according to his works, as he will for a certain. He will judge every man according to his works, and therefore He knows what every man's works be.

The use of this was, First. To confute Averroes and others that say that God does not know men's sins; O say they, God sees all things by looking on himself; now there is no such thing to be seen in himself. Beloved, here you see that this is a blasphemous Doctrine; for God knows what ever men are, or think, or speak, or do, or have done, or shall do, or would do in any case; and though sin be not in God, yet the suffering of it is in God and He may suffer it in his just judgment and wisdom; though the committing of it be wicked, yet his suffering of it is good, and just. The Eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good, Pro. 15:3. But I let this pass.

Secondly, to condemn the most sorts of men that do not consider of this truth; for though men will grant that God knows all the evil that they do, yet this vile Atheism is lurking in men's hearts, they either make God as the Epicures hold, that he sits in Heaven, and regards not what men do, or at least God will not require it, Psal. 10:13, they do not charge this truth on their hearts; This is the cause that men are so daring to do evil.

Thirdly, this is a terror to all that do evil. This is a terror to them that have condemning hearts, as John says, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and He knows all things, 1 Joh. 3:20, again this is a terror to all Hypocrites; if God could not see a rotten heart, then a Hypocrite should speed as well as the best. But God sees what men are; seem they what they will, He sees what they be.

Fourthly, this is comfort to good people, for if God see all men's sins, then He sees all men's goodness; what a comfort is this in Prayer to consider, That He that searcheth the Hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit? Romans 8:27, He knows all thy groans and sighs; though thou canst not utter what thou wouldst in Prayer, yet He knows what thou wouldst have. What a comfort is this in temptation, in the midst of the accusations of Satan, when a man is pitifully put to it in spiritual conflicts, that God knows what is in us? All our secret affections, our mourning's after him, our private seeking's of him, all our hidden meanings to him, all our combats against sin, all our griefs for corruptions; as Peter says, God thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, Joh. 21:17. Peter was put to it soundly at that time, yet this was his comfort that God did know all things; and as He knows more evil by us then ourselves, so He knows more good by us then ourselves.

Again, what a comfort is this against the nick-names and false judging's of wicked men? He knows all our innocence, when men say all manner of evil of us; He knows we do that in sincerity, which men think we do in Hypocrisy; He knows our simplicity, when men judge that we do it out of by and sinister respects; what a comfort is this when we can appeal to God as David says, the Lord knows that I lie not; as David says, I have not refrained my lips from preaching thy Righteousness, O Lord thou knowest, Psalm 40:9, little does the World think what the Saints do every day, what wrestling's with God,

what goings out unto him they have; this is a comfort; the Lord knows. Again, what an encouragement is it to serve God in these bad and sinful times? People generally never look after God, nor holiness, as though God had forsaken the Earth; most people are of the mind, that if a man be precise, he is little the better; and if he be not so precise as some be, he shall never be the worse for that, as though God cared for no such matter. Beloved, when we hear that God sees all that men do, and marks and will call all men to an accompt, what an encouragement is this to serve God? As David says to Solomon, Know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him with a perfect Heart, for the Lord searcheth all Hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts, 1 Chron. 28:9. This was the first point.

And then the Second point was this. The consideration of this that God knows all our works, is a powerful means to all God's elect, to do them good, and to quicken them and to make them take heed of all manner of sin; when the Lord would quicken his people here in Sardis, he uses this as his first means to do it by; I know thy works; we may see this in David; I have kept thy Precepts and thy Testimonies; for all my ways are before Thee, Psalm 119:168, when Solomon would convert the whorish man, he uses this for his argument, why wilt thou O my Son be ravished with a strange Woman, for the ways of man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and He ponders all his goings, Pro. 5:20,21.

The reasons of this point, are. First, because the Lord's knowing of our works is joined with a marking and a pondering of them too. He diligently observes what we do; He ponders and considers whence it proceeds, whether it tends; what light we go against, what checks of conscience we meet with, what mercies we abuse, what pricks we kick against; He does not barely see what we do, but He considers what we do, how heinously we sin, what a vile thing it is that we do;

He considers how cursed we are, what a great One we offend. The Lord's Throne is in Heaven, his Eyes do consider, and his Eyelids try the children of men. Psalm 11:4. He ponders men's hearts, Prov. 24:12, if God did only see what we do, it were another matter, but when the soul shall hear that He marks and considers, and that he ponders men's sins, and weighs them how horrible they are, how much against his glory, what punishments they deserve, how inexcusable they be, how just it is to damn them, its a sign of a desperate heart when this will not work.

Secondly, the Lord's seeing of our sins is with most holy and pure Eyes, and such Eyes as cannot abide such an object before Him, as the Prophet Habakkuk speaks; Thou art of purer Eyes then to behold evil, thou canst not look on iniquity, Hab. 1:13. If God saw our sins with such an Eye as men see them with, it were no such great thing; many men can endure them well enough, and like us little the worse; nay may be they will like us the better; but they are infinitely offensive to God. He sees, them with such an Eye, that if the soul did but see how God looks, it would burst the very heart of it; as when Peter had denied Christ, Christ looked upon him; But it was such a look, that burst his very heart and made him go out with shame, and weep bitterly.

Thirdly, the Lord's seeing of our sins is joined with recording of them; He notes them in a Book that he may never forget them, as he told the Jews, Behold it is written before me, and I will render it them into their bosom, Isaiah 65:6, if God did see our sins and there's an end, then indeed this Doctrine of God's seeing of our sins would do little good, may be God will forget them again; yea, but when he sees them, he registers them too, and he will never forget them; now when a soul shall come to consider them, this will wound it to the quick. O he will never forget them, he sets them on our

score, and we shall hear of them another day, except we make our peace with him.

Fourthly, when God sees our sins, it is even all one as if the whole World saw them; nay he will show them before all the whole World, He will bring to light things hidden in darkness, 1 Cor. 4:5, wouldst not thou be loath that all the World should see all thy thoughts, and hear every word that thou speakest, and know all the evil thou hast done; would it not much bridle thee, if thou couldst do nothing, not think a thought but all the whole World should see it? Why man, the Lord sees thee, and that is all one and more too; for he will open it before all the World, before he hath done.

Fifthly, another argument may be taken from our disposition; our disposition is such that we cannot abide our wickedness should be seen by anybody; which among us when we pray, would not be ashamed that anybody should see how our thoughts rove? Which of you that are unsettled and dead-hearted would not blush that men had a casement to see how dead he sits at a Sermon, how dead and blockish at a Sacrament, how dead at other of God's Ordinances? What base and unclean, and blasphemous thoughts do sometimes come into our hearts? If a man did think that any man should see them, he would hardly be able to show his face among men: should an Adulterer be but taken in the act by any Man or Woman or Child, O how it would gall him and vex him to be seen! As Job speaks, If one know them, they are in the terror of the shadow of death, Job. 24:27, now beloved if this be our disposition by nature, that we cannot abide that a man should see us do something that we do, nay not a child of seven years old, then O what a terror is it that the God of Heaven and Earth should see us and know us; that he should see all our lusts, all our noisome and unclean affections, all our vile and hideous thoughts! O what a powerful thing is this to work upon the

heart, except it be delivered up to a reprobate sense? The Woman of Samaria she was brisk and frolic a great while, till she perceived that Christ knew all her villainy, this made her ashamed, and break her very heart.

The use of this was: First, here we see they are desperate that this point cannot work on; its certain they are graceless that can hear that God sees all their works, and yet it does not purge them from day today, its an evident argument that a man contemns God, and makes nothing of him.

Secondly, is it so that this is such a powerful means to work upon our hearts? O let us not harden our hearts, but let us consider of it, that it may cut between the bone and the marrow; God sees all our works. This point should fall upon our hearts, like the Al-mighty hand of God; so it did on Jobs. I know thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be hid from thee, Job. 42:2, so much shall suffice to have spoken of the reproof in general.

Now we come to the particulars. And the first is in these words, thou hast a Name that thou livest, and the other is, and art dead.

That thou hast a name that thou livest; This is the first particular whereby the Lord Jesus, proves that which he had implied before, viz. that the works of Sardis were all stark naught, because they had only a name to live, they rested in a mere outward name to be Religious and good Christians, and people of God, and believers and a Church of Jesus Christ; they had the name, and that was all; they had a name to live; well, says he, for this very thing, I know all thy works, (i.e.) I know them to be all stark naught. Some think this is an allusion to the Minister of Sardis his name, who (they say) was called Zosing, that is Living. Thou hast a name that thou livest, but the truth is, thou art dead; whether that be so or no, I know not; but this

is the meaning of the words, that both the Minister and the Church seemed to be alive towards God; he to be a very good and godly Minister, and they very good and godly hearers, they were all professors, they were all very devout and forward in all their duties of Religion to see to; Thou hast a name that thou livest.

By name is meant a mere name, as we see by the clause following, and art dead; for when a man is dead, the name to live must needs be a mere Name.

First, a Name in regard of themselves, they took themselves to be alive; as Paul had a name to live before his conversion, while yet he was a Pharisee, he had then a name to live, I was alive without the Law once, Rom. 7:9. That is, I had a name to live then, I taking myself to be alive; I thought verily in those days that I had true Grace, true Faith, and true Hope, and true Love, and the true fear of God before my eyes. So this Church had a name to live, they thought themselves to be alive.

Secondly, a name in regard of other godly Churches; others in the judgment of Charity conceived they were alive; as the Scribes, the Pharisees, our Savior Christ told them they had a name to live, Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited Sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, Matthew 23:27, that is, ye seem to be alive, ye have a name to live, but indeed ye are dead; They had such a great name to live that our Savior Christ had much ado to keep his own Disciples from over-weening of them; beware of them says he, q.d. whatever ye may think, they have a mere Name to live.

Thirdly, a name among poor ignorant and simple people; ye know there be abundant of poor simple people that are led away with shows, that know not what true Religion is, nay may be hate it, but

yet they are led away with the show of it; now they that seem to be religious, they are the only Men and Women with such; they are held for the only good people in a Country, they are admired, poor silly people take them for their Ghostly Fathers, if they can have but their Prayers, they think their Prayers can do much; when they are sick, they love a life to have such by their bedsides, they give them a great deal of comfort, like Absalom that comforted the people that came to him, O your matters are good; so the Apostle shows that they that had a form of godliness, had a name to live among a company of poor silly people, 2 Tim. 3:5,6.

Fourthly, a name among the persecutors of Religion, and so they are persecuted too among them that live indeed; for mockers take them to be of the same number. So Alexander the Coppersmith, had a name a great while, and the enemies of goodness persecuted him even as Paul; so Demas for a time had a name, and was persecuted as well as the Apostle, till afterwards he was weary and forsook him. This is one of your Precisians, this is one of you purer people, this is one of them that call themselves the people of God, These are the people of the Lord, Ezek. 36:20, as a Bat hath a name to be a Mouse, and so the Birds persecute it, and cannot abide it.

Now the point of Doctrine is this, that it is a horrible thing to rest in a mere name of being Religious; it is the argument that Christ uses, to prove that Sardis works were all stark naught, because they had a mere name to live; so when the Lord would declare how the Jews were grown to be stark naught, he lays this to their charge, that they had only a name to be his people; They call themselves of the holy City, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel, the Lord of Hosts is his name, Isaiah 48:2, that is, they got themselves a name to be his people, and there was all; they had not the thing itself, but they took the name; thus he proved them to be stark naught.

The reasons are; first, because this is to be farthest off from Religion; religion is a real thing, and therefore he that rests in having the name of it, is farthest off from it; as Christ says of Nathaniel, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile, John. 1:47, so when a man is religious indeed, humble indeed, fears God indeed, this is religion; when a man is freed indeed from his sins, and from the power of them, this is religion: if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed, Joh. 8:36. Now when a man hath only the name, he is farthest off from this; Religion is a real, solid, and a substantial thing; as John says, my little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth, 1 Joh. 3:18, what though a man have the name to love God and goodness? How far is this off from doing of it in deed? A man may go for one that is converted; but he is converted that is converted indeed; so he is godly that is godly in deed; the name is nothing where the thing is wanting; all religion is in deed, to believe in deed, to deny a man's self every day in deed, to be sensible of God in deed in all ones ways; not to say ones prayers, but to pray in deed; to give God thanks in deed; to worship him in deed; as Paul says, when a man can say God is in us in deed, 1 Corinthians 14:25, when a man hath only the name, this is a mere fancy and conceit.

Secondly, it is a very blasphemy to get the name for good people, when we are not good people; indeed the reason is this, Religion hath an inward dependence upon God, it unites a man to God, it hath an internal relation unto God, it puts a man in a propriety with God, that God is his God, that he is borne of God, it puts the very Name of God upon a man; now if a man take the name without the thing, it must need be a very blasphemy as he says, I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan, Revelations, 2:9, as if a man should say he were of the blood royal; ye know the blood royal hath such a dependence on the Crown,

that that man that should say he were of the blood royal, and is not, he must needs blaspheme the King. So beloved, Religion hath a near dependence on God, and therefore he is a blasphemer of God, that gets the name of it, and lets the thing alone; and therefore how should we take heed, how we have the name for Religious people, except we be Religious indeed, and holy indeed, and Heavenly indeed, as Ambrose says; *nami sit nomen inane, & crimen immane*, a bare name is a horrible blame unto any man, whosoever he be.

Thirdly, it is a flat lie; when a man hath the name for a good Christian, and hath not the thing signified by the Name, this is a flat lie; as God says, Note it in a Book that it may be for time to come, forever and ever, that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the Law of the Lord, Isaiah. 30:8,9, that is, they had the name of his children, but they had not the thing signified by that name; they would not do as children should do, they would not be ruled by their fathers Laws, therefore they are lying children, they lie in bearing such a name; the Lord notes it in a Book, that it might stand forever and ever against them at the day of judgment; this was nothing else but to lie before God; you go for my children, what? And will not do as I bid you? You lie in having the name of my children; when a man shall have the name of a child of God, or the name of a Minister of the Lord Jesus, or the name of a Christian baptized into Christ, he had need to take heed what he does; for if he do not answer this name, he does but play the Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost: Look into thy general calling; look into thy particular, look into thy carriage; look into thy manner of good duties, whether thou do behave thyself answerably to this holy name whereby thou art called, knowing thou dost but lie to God, if thou dost not.

Fourthly, it is an unreasonable thing; when a man hath not the thing, there is no reason that he should have the name; when God gave Abram the name of Abraham, he told him there was a reason why he should be called by that name; thy name shall be called Abraham, for a Father of many Nations have I made thee, Genesis 17:5, so it is an unreasonable thing why we should have the name of God's servants or Christians, unless there be some reason why we should have the imposition of this name; now when we make it a bare title, and do not obey Christ, nor make conscience of all his holy ways, this is very unreasonable; as Abigail reasoned about her Husbands name; as his name is so is he, Nabal is his name, and folly is with him, 1 Samuel 25:25. So my brethren, as our name is so should we be; if Christian be our name, true Christianity should be with us; humility, love, meekness, patience, faith, holiness, and all other parts of Christianity should be with us; now if we have the name without these things intimated by the name, this is a very unreasonable thing; nay, it is not only unreasonable, but also ridiculous; who will not count the names that the Papists give to their blockish Friars ridiculous? Subtilissimus Doctor, Doctor Angelicus, Seraphicus, these are ridiculous, as a drunkard a Christian, a whoremonger a Christian, a worldling a Christian, a vain man a Christian? What a ridiculous thing it is to call such the Saints of God? Strangers here on earth, such as have their conversation in Heaven, such as are buried together with Christ in his death; such as are men of another World; mortified, justified, sanctified, crucified to themselves, loving the things above, and not the things that are here beneath; If these things do not agree with us, what a ridiculous thing is it that we should be termed good Christians; here be Christians indeed? This is a mere mockery.

Fifthly, it is an impudent thing; when we have a name to live and to be wrought upon by the word, what an impudent thing is it if we do

not look to it that we be so indeed; one would think we should blush to think what a name we have, and how little we make good our name, between God and our own souls. When the men of Bethlehem said, is not this Naomi, O how she was ashamed of herself; call me not Naomi, call me Marah, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me, Ruth. 1:20, so when we are named Christians, we should even blush, call me not a Christian, call me a wretch, call me a vile creature, a hell-hound, a limb of the Devil, a cursed sinner; for the Almighty never yet turned my heart; he never yet purified my Soul and life, I never yet have resembled Christ to this very day; I say the most of us should even be confounded to think what a name we have. I a Christian, and do no more good, and live no better life? I a Christian, and not humbled, not abased yet before God, so dull to all goodness, so carnal, so dead to all God's Ordinances, so void of all grace, so senseless of my sins? How can this be? We are impudent, if we have our name for naught, our name may upbraid us; the good opinions that others have of us, may fill our faces with shame to think how short we come of it.

Sixthly, it is an inexcusable thing; if we have a name to be alive, we are without excuse if we be not.

First, because now out of our own mouths God will judge us; we said we were his people, we took the name of his servants; why then he will say why had I not your service? Why would you do no more for me? Why were you covetous, why were you proud, why were you hardhearted, why were you so careless of me? You wore my livery, you shrouded yourselves under my name. So the Lord did with the Jews that had the name of his children and servants; see how he judges them out of their own mouth; a Son honors his Father, and a servant his Master; if then I be a Father, where is my honor? And if I be a Master, where is my fear? Malachi. 1:6, q.d. you say I am your

Father, and I am your Master, and I am your God; well, out of your own mouths I will judge you; why then did you honor me no more? Why did ye regard me no more? Ye cared not for me, ye did not look after me, you had little or no heart after me; your own mouths have even cast you.

Secondly, ye can have no other excuse; can you say you could not believe in my name? Ye could not forgo such and such lusts at my command? Why then would you go for my servants? You should have said so plainly, and not daily have come into my Courts, as if you would obey me; nor taken up the profession of my Worship as if you would go through with it; why would you come to my Table, as though my promises belonged unto you? If ye could not do as I bade you, you should not have borne me in hand as though you would; now ye have played the Hypocrites and drawn near to me with your lips, and taken my name into your mouths, whereas ye would not be reformed by me; What had you to do with my Covenant, that you must needs be meddling with it? Psalm. 50:16, if ye would not obey it, ye should have let it alone; so that ye see, that to have a naked name to live, is an inexcusable thing.

Seventhly, it is an unprofitable thing; a naked name will do us no good; when the Jews trusted in the name that they had, O they were the children of Abraham, they were God's only people, they had his Covenant, and his Oracles, and his Temple; O the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord; they hoped well, having thus much to say for themselves; but mark what God tells them, behold you trust in lying words that cannot profit, Jeremy. 7:8, this would not profit them one jot, because they did not verify the name they had. So the Galatians they presumed mightily on this, that they were Christians; as for making good this holy name, that they gave no heed to at all; they would have the Ceremonies; when Paul told them of their faults,

they would not listen unto him may they counted him their Enemy; they would have the Ceremonies of the Law; well, the Apostle told them plainly, that if they would not be ruled, their name would do them no good. Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. Galatians. 5:2, q.d. you bear yourselves upon Christ, and yet will not do as he would have you do, ye will do what ye list; but let me tell you, if ye will not reform, Jesus Christ shall profit you nothing; you say you believe in Jesus Christ, I but it shall profit you nothing: So when the people there in Isaiah rested in this, they came to God's house, they gave him Sacrifice every morning and evening, they did thus and thus, and so they had a name for his peculiar people; the Prophet assures them, this should not profit them one whit. I will declare thy righteousness and thy works, for they shall not profit thee, Isaiah. 57:12. Thou prayest and doest many good duties, and so thou gettest thyself a name; yea but if thou dost not soundly and thoroughly answer that name, God will declare all thy righteousness and all thy profession, and all thy good duties, and none of them all shall profit thee; in that day he will declare what rotten things they have been, how heartless, how lifeless, how dead-hearted all thy duties have been, and they shall do thee no good; and indeed what good can a name do a man? True faith alone does justify, not the name of it; true peace of conscience does comfort, not the name of it; true interest in God gives a man a cheerful access to God, not the name of it.

Eighthly, it is not only unprofitable, but also it is hurtful. It is hurtful unto others; a bare name I say without substance and truth is hurtful unto others. It is hurtful unto them that are without; for when they see how lazy such as go for professors, be, how they have little else in them but talking and professing, and prating and hearing, otherwise they are as vain and as covetous and as having as other men, no strictness no pureness, no holiness, no humbleness of mind, no love,

no forgiving one another, no forbearing one another, no brotherly Kindnesse, no Union nor Communion, no power in their Prayers, no gravity nor authority in their speeches, no Heavenliness in their conversation, no brokenness of heart, this hardens the hearts of them that are without, and makes them all think that Religion is a matter of nothing; thus they do a great deal of hurt unto others; the professing Wife to the profane Husband, the professing servant to his profane Master, the professing Neighbor to his profane Neighbor; whereas if they were godly indeed, and humble indeed, and as their name does import, indeed they would do a great deal of good, but now they do a great deal of hurt.

Again, they do a great deal of hurt unto comers on; many a man that is smitten at the Word, that begins Reformation and amendment and gives good hopes that he will come to something in the end; when he lights upon such Sardian Saints, that are so in name, but there is no life at all in them, these put him back again, and make him set up his staff before he sees half way, like the dead body of Amasa that made the people stand still.

Again, they do a great deal of hurt unto the Saints of God, sometimes by deceiving of their hearts and cooling of their zeal and fervor, or if they cannot do that; then they hate them, and prove very shy of them, and gird them behind their backs, and do them much mischief, as Paul complains, he was in perils among false Brethren, 2 Corinthians 11:26, that is, those that had a name to be Brethren in Christ, but were not so indeed, he was in perils many times and often by them; again they increase the disgraces and sufferings of God's true Saints and Children; for while they seem to be Saints good enough themselves, the other that are Saints indeed, are rejected of all, and thought to be besides their wits.

Again, they do a great deal of hurt to themselves, for it had been better for them they had never had a name, then having a name not to be as the name does require.

The use of this is, First, let me tell what use ye must not make of it; namely, to beat down the having of a name, for all the Lord's people should be careful of having of a name. I will give them a name of Sons and Daughters, nay a better name then so, Isaiah 56:5, yea, and the people of God should make conscience of a name before men; A good name is better than precious Ointment, Eccles 7:1, and the servants of God have had a name; Demetrius had a good report of all men, yea of the truth itself too; and therefore they are black mouths of Hell that object against good people, that they are Hypocrites, they do thus and thus to have a name. This is no news, for the World hath always dealt thus with the Saints in all Ages; Paul was counted the great imposter of the World; O say ye he, we are deceivers and yet true, 2 Corinthians 6:8, that is, the World gives us a name for deceivers, and yet we are true; Ye know what was said of Christ Jesus himself, some said of him he was a good man, others said nay, He was a deceiver of the people; it was said of David, that He was a subtle man, a crafty Fox, and that He was a mere Politician, it was Saul's judgment of him. Thus the Saints have a nick name put on them; the World thinks they are Hypocrites, and that they have sinister ends in what they do, and whereas they make such a show, it is but in Hypocrisy, that they may deceive, and that they may have a Name for Religious people; so that the World would fain put down the having of a Name. But that is a Devilish use; we must not make such a use of this point, No; the Lord does not find fault with Sardis for having of a Name that they lived, but that they had this Name when as they were dead; if they had been alive, the Name to be alive had been well; well then what use must we make of this point?

The First Use then is this, to show the misery of the Church of Rome, which hath a Name to live, and in their own judgment and a great part of Christendom, is the only true Church, but in the judgment of God it is dead, and therefore stark naught; some say its a body full of diseases, and whose throat is cut, but yet the heart pants, and life is therein; But the truth is, its stark dead, and hath no manner of spiritual life, What though they have the Sacrament of Baptism? So had Edom circumcision, and yet they were never counted a Church of God; And what's a Seal to a blank? What though they have the Scriptures among them and the Articles of our Creed? That does not make a Church; for Ptolemy and all Egypt had the Bible, and yet that did not make them a Church; if the Scriptures might have their own sense, it were another matter; but they overturn it with their exposition, and make it in their sense to be a fardel of Doctrine of Devils; and what though Antichrist be said to sit in the Temple of God? Yet his Body is a Synagogue of Satan. There is no life in that Church. But to come nearer to ourselves.

This may be said of them, of our Churches too, and of our Congregations; they have only a Name to live, though we might live well enough; for we have the Doctrine of Life, in many places, yet in regard of our conversations for the most part, we may say it is but only a Name. For how does sin reign among us everywhere, Covetousness, Profaness, fullness of Bread, Lust, Security, as it were in Noah's time, deadness of heart, Formality; now where such sins do abound, there the power of godliness must needs be away; generally our Assemblies content themselves with an outward profession, if they go so far, they have but a Name to live. True, we are a Church, so was Sardis though she had hardly anything but a Name, yet she was a Church, as Saint John shows, washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ, Revelations, 1:4,5, for they had a few Names that were so, but the body had only a bare name; so it is with us, we are not nullified

from being a Church, for God hath his chosen among us though they be very few, here one and there one that live indeed and in truth; yet the Bodies and Bulks of our Congregations, have only a Name, if that; no Discipline, no good Order, no thorough Reformation nay Cages of unclean Birds; nay such as profess better than the multitude, little better then titular and moral Christians.

Nay, are not all things almost grown to be a sole Name? What is the Preaching almost but the bare Name of Preaching? For conversion of Souls where is it? The pulling people out of the Kingdom of Satan where is it? A thousand Sermons may be, and hardly one wrought upon? We may be said to be fishermen; but it is turned only into a name, for when do we catch any?

So for hearing of the Word. True, it is very common, and yet not so common as it ought to be, for many care little whether they hear or no. But that that is, there's hardly ought left but the Name; for who hears with trembling, who mingles his hearing with faith, who drinks the Word, as the Earth doth the Rain, who does what he hears, without which all hearing is no better than an empty Name?

So for coming to the Sacrament, is not that made a name too? Setting aside the Name of a Sacrament now and then, what have we else? Who feeds upon Jesus Christ? Who comes to the increasing of his Faith? Who hath Faith at all, that it may be increased? Who comes to it with preparedness? Who sits at the Lord's Table with a Wedding Garment? Who goes away nourished up anymore unto eternal Life? Without the which all our Sacraments are but natural things.

So for holy Conference, unless it be the Name of it, what is there of the thing itself left? May be a few cursory words of goodness, before we part, but no quickening of one another up, no exhorting of one another, no comforting of one another, or admonishing one another;

may we are grown to be ashamed of these duties; and for Prayer, but that we take Cushions and fall down on our Knees, and say a company of Confessions, and Petitions, there is little else done.

Come we to the Graces of God's Holy Spirit, without the which a man is Dead in trespasses and in sins, &c. as Faith, Repentance, peace of Conscience, and Love, &c.

Secondly, another use is of terror against us; do we think that the Lord will endure this at our hands? He hath endured it too too long, but He will not suffer it always. He hath a Spiritual thunder-clap that He lets sly against this sin; The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the Churl be said to be bountiful, Isaiah, 32:5. That is, the Lord will unmask all such persons, He will pluck of all their Names, and they shall have a Name fit for their natures, and He will do this.

First, in their own Consciences, if we will not be awakened to be as we have a Name to be, the Lord will make our own Consciences to call us Reprobates as we are, and then what will our Name do us good, when our own Consciences shall tell us we are naught, and condemn us in our Bosoms? What shall we be the better for our Neighbors judging well of us? Our Neighbors may be think we Pray well; what a poor thing is this, when Conscience shall say no? Our Neighbors may hope we stand upon good ground, when Conscience shall say no; Men call us godly, and Conscience shall say nay but ye are not. What a shame was it to the Jews when they were convicted by their own Consciences? Joh. 8:9. It is not the Name of joy and holiness that will give their Consciences true Peace, no, no; Conscience knows another name is sit for us. Unbelief, and Ungodliness, and Hardness of Heart.

Secondly, again He will do it in the judgment of others; if we rest in a Name, the Lord will detect us at last before others; and then what a

shame will this be? As David says of Doeg, the Lord would discover him; He would make all the good people round about say of Him, Lo this is the Man, that took not God for his strength, Psalm 52:7. So he will do with us. Lo, this is the Man, that had such a Name to Live. Lo, this is the Man; now we see here's a wretch, now we see how he deceived his own soul; he never truly sought God in all his life; he was not the Man that we took him for; he built upon the Sand, he did not lay a good foundation, and therefore now he is tumbled down, and what is become of his name? Now he shows himself in his Colors, now we see he is an Enemy of God, he can side with the Times, he can embrace this present World, he hath no eternal life abiding in him.

Nay, the Lord will not only do thus with us, if we rest in a Name, but also he will pour his Wrath upon us otherwise too; ye may read how that this was the reason why the Lord drowned all the old World; not only the wickedness of them that were without; for if they that professed Religion, had been sound, they might have prevented the Deluge, and prayed it away. But they that professed Religion, had only a Name. The Sons of God saw the Daughters of men that they were fair, Genesis 6:2. That is, the Sons of God, they were only so in Name, their works plainly showed that they were only so in Name, therefore the Lord swept them all away; So the Lord will pour bitter things on us, if we be Christians only in Name, and the servants of Christ only in Name, if we be not so indeed; nay, this is not all, but we shall have a deeper Portion in Hell too then Pagans or Papists, or any in our own Land; the more we have borne of his Name, the surer shall our damnation be, if we do not really answer the Holy Name wherewith we are called. We may see this in the Man in the Gospel; Friend, how camest thou in hither? Bind him hand and foot, cast him into utter darkness where is weeping, &c. Matthew 22:12,13. Come Friend, how came you in hither? Mark, he had the Name of a friend

of Jesus Christ; therefore the Text says he was speechless, he had nothing to say for himself, his damnation had nothing to lessen it; other people shall have something to say for themselves to lessen their damnation; but those that have a Name to live shall not have the least syllable.

Thirdly, then let another use be to humble our hearts, let us go to God in humiliation of heart, as the poor prodigal Son did, and down on the knees of our souls and bodies, and say, Lord, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy, to be called thy Son, Luke 15:21. So as many of us as are guilty of this sin, (as who almost is not and that in a horrible manner?) let us say, Lord, I have been called a Christian, I have been called a child of thine, I have had the Name a good while; but O what a Wretch have I been! I am not worthy of this Name, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, I have not answered the Name I have had, and therefore it were just with thee to cut me asunder with Hypocrites, and so fling me down to Hell.

SERMON XII.

And art Dead.- REVEL. 3:1.

These words are a part of the Epistle, that Christ sent to the Ministers and Church of Sardis. Ye have heard the inscription, to the Angel of the Church in Sardis write. Ye have heard too of the subscription, These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven Stars. We are come to the Subject matter, and therein first to the reproof in general, I know thy works: and secondly to the particulars of the reproof. The first particular was this, Thou hast a

name that thou livest: all these have been delivered already, now follows the second particular reproof, And art dead. Here the question is, what Christ means by dead. By dead, he does not mean dead in errors and heresies, though these be called deadly poisons, and may make a Church dead. For the truth is called the word of life, Phil. 2:16, and wholesome Doctrine, as the Apostle calls it, and ergo errors and heresies, these poison and dead any people that drink them in. But this cannot be the meaning here, for we see no such thing here laid to their charge, it should seem this Church was an orthodox Church; neither by dead does he mean profane wicked manners, though they make a people dead too, as we see the prodigal Son that had been given to profane and dissolute courses, his Father says, he was dead in those days, Luke 15:24. Yet this cannot be the meaning neither; for this Church had a name to live, and it had this name among the Churches of Jesus Christ, which had more wit, then to Judge them to be alive, if they had been so palpably wicked; no, it seems they were an excellent Church to see to, a good Ministry to see to, but both dead; so then this is the meaning. For all their seeming to be alive, they were indeed dead; as the Apostle says of himself, before he was quickened by Christ Jesus, He was dead, sin revived, and I died Rom. 7:9, yet he was as jolly a good man as any other, and yet he confesses he was dead; so they were dead for the most part; and those that were not all out dead, yet they were dead-hearted, and without life in God's ways. For as it was with the Moraller Heathen they did the things contained in the Law, yet they were dead; so a people may do the things contained in the Gospel too, and yet be dead; people may believe; yet as James says, their saith be dead saith, Jam. 2:26, namely when their faith is without works, so people may have goodly works, for the moral part of them, and yet do them with a dead heart; to be sober and temperate, and loving, and chaste and civilly humble, and meek and diligent in their calling, and known to frequent all the ordinances of God, in public and in private, these

are outwardly good works, and yet may be in the number of those works that the Apostle calls dead works, Heb. 6:1. namely when there is no life of God in them. Thousands deceive themselves in this, when they have a kind of faith, and a kind of particular faith, and such works as these flowing from their faith, they think this to be a lively faith; no, no, a man may be dead for all that. This truth will not sink into men's minds; fancies, fancies say they, these are nothing but the whimsies of a company of giddy brains; what would they have? If this be not true religion we wonder what is; thus they jeer these things but beloved tis certain; for it is not enough to believe, except we do it with life, he that liveth, and believeth in me Joh. 11:26, faith without life is but equivocally termed faith; so it is not enough to hope in God, except we do it with life; he hath begetten us again to a lively hope says Peter. So it is not enough to be a member in God's Church, a Stone in God's building, except we be lively Stones, Ye also as lively Stones says he, 1 Pet. 2:5. The like I may say of all the duties of Religion, it is not enough to do them, but we must do them with life, as to pray, to pray with a dead heart is nothing; no says David, Lord quicken us and we will call upon thy name, Psal. 80:18. In a word not to heap particulars; we cannot walk in any of God's ways aright as long as we walk in them with a dead heart, as the psalmist says; Lord quicken thou me in thy way, Psal. 119:37, it is a poor thing to walk in God's ways only for the matter of them; That indeed a dead heart may do, there's no duty that God bids a man do, unless it be them that consignify life, but flesh and blood may do it, for the matter of it, if there be matter and form in it. True, some duties are simple that flesh and blood cannot do, as to love God, to delight in God, to have communion with God himself; to take God for ones Portion and Lot, and inheritance, and to be all in all to him, these are simple acts, they are not compounded of matter and form. But when a duty is compounded of matter and form, flesh and blood may do the matter of it, whatsoever it be; now then as the essential form is the life of the

matter, so the matter without it is a dead matter; and the doing of it dead.

Well then now we see what is meant by dead; the next is, what is the meaning of Thou? Thou art dead, the word hath a double relation, the one to the Minister of the Church in Sardis; thou art dead, thy Ministry is dead; the other to the Church in Sardis itself: thou art dead, thou art a dead people. First it hath relation to the Ministry, thou art dead, thy Ministry is dead, there's no life in it at all; hence the Doctrine is this, that a dead Ministry is as good as no Ministry at all, for this our Savior means, in regard of the Angel of the Church in Sardis q.d. thy Ministry is little better than no Ministry; it is stark dead well near, it is not lively at all, there is little or no warmth to be had by it. Like the Ministry of the Scribes that had no authority nor power at all in it, Mat. 7:29. As Luther said when he heard a cold Sermon, cold, cold, cold, says he, this is cold Preaching, here is no heat at all to be gotten; as God says of the Ministry of Laodicia; Thou art luke-warm, Rom. 3:16, that is, as there was no heat in his people, so there was no heat in his Ministry; this is little better than no Preaching at all, it is even as good as nothing. First, because true preaching is lively preaching when the Minister is a stirring Minister, as Peter speaks, I think it meet to stir you up, a Pet. 1:13, when the Minister is earnest to save the people's souls; as the Lord says, I earnestly protested to your Fathers, Jer. 11:7. He speaks of the Ministry of Moses and the prophets down along until the Prophet Jeremiah's time; they did not only witness the word of God unto the people, but they did it in a lively and earnest manner; as Paul did, I have striven to Preach the Gospel, Rom. 15:20, mark he belabored him in the Pulpit, he lay about him soundly, that his Ministry might have life in it. Saint Luke shows, that he had sweaty Handkerchiefs, Act. 19:12. <H&G>, as Hugo says upon the place, it seems he sweet much in preaching, and so Christ compares Ministers to Harvest

men, that labor in God's Harvest; ye know Harvest men are hot at their work, so Ministers should be Harvest men, they should be hot at their work. Thus ye see dry and dull Preaching is little better than no preaching at all, it is contrary to the manner of preaching, contrary to the practice of all true and right preachers.

Secondly, a dead Ministry is called no Ministry; the Scripture calls it no Ministry in effect. The Scripture is the best Judge what is a true Ministry, and what is not? Now the Scripture makes a dead Ministry, and no Ministry all one: the Scribes and the Pharisees, ye know were partly moral men most of them, as we may see by Paul's Testimony of himself, and they were orthodox Ministers, as our Savior witnesses of them in the main, for our Savior bids people hear them, yet their Ministry was little better than no Ministry; as the Text shows, the people that sat under their Ministry, are said to be as sheep having no Shepherd, Mat. 9:36, they preached as if they did not preach; people might come to their Sermons and be near a jot moved; nay, such as came with a desire to be quickened, could get no quickening at all under them, Matthew says they sat under darkness yet for all them. These are Idol Shepherd's; woe to the Idol Shepherd's, Zach. 11:17.

Thirdly, a dead Ministry does do little or no good; though it be never so true, yet it is very unfruitful; it does not awaken any of the auditory, it does not startle any of the hearers, it does not rouse up men's hearts, it does not grapple with the obstinate, it does not pull down the proud, neither does it carry life at all with it, neither is it fitted to work upon the conscience; you may see an example of this in the Angel of the Church of Sardis, a dead Minister, a dead people, as he was dead himself, so his people were dead too; a lively Ministry does a great deal of good, it even is the savor of life unto life unto those that be of God, or else the savor of death unto death, unto

those that be not of God, 2 Cor. 2:16, it ever works one way, either it makes people rage, or it fets people up, or else it drives people home unto God; which way so ever it works, it is a sweet savor unto God, it glorifies God; but a dead Ministry does neither, it is a flat weapon and cuts not, it is a blunt Sword and wounds not; may be it hath the true words of God, but they are not in a wise work man's hands to make them as Goads and sharp Nails; partly good points, but not pointed to prick any bodies heart; it is said when Paul Preached, some went away converted, others went away blaspheming, Act. 13:45,48.

Fourthly, a dead Ministry, God seldom goes along with it, nay, that's the life of a Ministry, when the Minister seeks God to go along with him; now a dead Ministry God goes not along with it, a lively Ministry Christ goes along with it, So I am with you to the end of the world, Matth. 28:20, if there be any of Christ's sheep in the parish, a lively Ministry does assuredly one time or other find them out; those that are not Christ his sheep, a lively Ministry hews them all down, slays all their Souls, ripens them apace for hell and for the pit. But a dead Ministry, the Lord does not go along with that, the Lord does not Crown it.

Fifthly, a dead Ministry profanes the word of God, it makes it seem nothing worth; it does not hold forth the glory of the Lord, nay, it hides it, and keeps it from being seen, either by dwelling upon Generals, and whats that but hiding? For people will confess the word in general, they see it the general, all their blindness is in particulars, there they slip away, like Fish out of a broad Net; or else by delivering it so coldly, that people think it no great matter; a lively Ministry holds forth it lets out God into the conscience, it gives people to understand they come upon life and death, it makes people look about them, it makes people consider all that ever they have

done, it slashes the word of God into their hearts, as a light to discover all their ways; it gives them a view of their Christian estate, either one way or other; as it is said of Paul's Ministry, The word of the Lord was glorified by it, Act. 13:48. But a dead Ministry profanes it, it veils the glory of it, it lets people sit quiet under it; it diseases no sinner, where as if it glorified God's word, it would either trouble them, or turn them.

The use of this is, first here we see the reason why a dead Ministry is not shouted at but applauded in the world; why, it is as good as no Ministry at all; it does not make the devil roar, it lets people sleep in their sins; whereas a lively Ministry can hardly come into a pulpit but presently he is half a martyr, Briers and Thorns were with Ezekiel, Ezek. 2:6, lively Ministers cannot give the world any good content; they fought against Jeremy, they played the wolves against the Apostles of Jesus. John the Baptist was counted too stern and austere, and Luther says it is impossible for a man to be a true lively preacher of God's word and not be persecuted; there's an utter antipathy between the world and such a one, the world and such a Minister can no better agree together then light and darkness; such a Ministry stands in the worlds light, it makes the world see their works are evil, it detects, it shames, it opposes their sins that the world tumbles in, as Christ says, I have given them thy word, and the world hates them because they are not of the world, Joh. 17:14 and therefore there cannot be a lively Ministry anywhere, but the world hath a sling at it; but now let a man have a dead Ministry, thats let alone, that may stand long enough; that never comes home to men to show them their ill estates, the devils daubers, the devils upholsters, that do not pluck men's pillows away from under their armholes, that deal gently with men, and they may do what they list for all them, these are the worlds minions, and applauded at all hands; what a

thing is this? Whereas a dead Ministry is the undoing of men's souls; it lets men perish and never draws them back.

Secondly, this may serve to reprove us, that are the Ministers of Jesus Christ, I desire to speak to myself, especially that we are no more lively in our Ministry; that our Ministry hath no more edge upon it to enter into this horny thick skin age: we complain of much deadness now a days; alack how if we be found guilty of it, that we preach no more quickeningly! I confess, blessed be God we have so much lively preaching left yet among us, that woe be to them that are dead and have to grace of life. But O that our Ministry had more lively-hood in it; that it were more exciting, and provoking. Is the Apostles of Christ complained of dull hearers, Heb. 5:11, how many dull hearers have we! Why then shall we make our souls guilty of their dullness? The deader people be we had need to be the quicker in our Ministry, or else we cannot say we are pure from their blood, don't we see how many people are very near the Children of wrath; how they cannot be saved except they be justified and sanctified in Jesus Christ; how few are so; how hard a thing it is to awaken men's hearts; nay, the world and the cares of this life, carry their minds quite and clean away; how scarce any almost seriously consider their latter end? Don't we see how the devil tempts, how the flesh and the world reign in most, and how little religion we have up and down? The Saints scarce, the wicked many; times very bad, the shortness of life, the irrecoverable estate after death? The immortality of the soul, the pains of hell, and the joys of heaven, and how that without holiness no man shall see God, how should we bestir ourselves to beat these truths into men's minds, that they may be bethink themselves and flee from the wrath to come? The cold preaching of such weighty things clean cozens the world, so that they hardly conceive any great matter in the business; live and die, and perish forever in their sins, and we give them such faint warnings, that no

wonder so few do take any warning; we found the trumpet too too low, that scarce any almost prepare themselves; we come into the pulpit, but we do little or nothing there, may be we preach good doctrine, but we do not press it to the quick, that the conscience may feel; we do not bleed for our people's security, and though they do not hear, how little does our soul weep in secret or melt in public? Bucolcerus that admirable lively preacher, was wont to say, that a Minister should preach flebiliter, obsecratorie, anxie, humiliter, expectore, cum gemitu; that is, a Minister should preach mournfully over people's souls, beseechingly, anxiously, humbly, heartily, groaningly; as it is said of our Savior Christ, he groaned for the people's unbelief; now when our Ministry is deadish, as though we cared not much whether people do our doctrine or no, whether they be damned or no; this is a lamentable thing. The poor souls of our hearers may say to us, as the disciples of Christ said to Christ, and more justly, they said it unjustly to him, Master carest thou not that we perish? Mark 4:38, he was asleep, and they awakened him, Master carest thou not that we perish? More justly may our people say so to us, O sirs, do not ye care that we perish? They may even come and awaken us, Sirs, Care ye not that we perish? Do not you see how dead we are, how hardened, how Ignorant of God, how empty of grace, how backward to that which is good; how prone to lose our souls; and do not you care that we perish? Why do not you labor more to quicken us, and move us, and to drive us out of our by ways, that we may come into the right way and live? When Archippus was somewhat dead in his Ministry, Saint Paul bids the people of Colossae to go and awaken him; say to Archippus, Take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfill it, Col. 4:17, well then.

Thirdly, another use is a use of exhortation, that we labor for a quickening Ministry, that our Ministry be a reviving ordinance of

God; that we may as Isaiah say, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious, Isa. 49:5, so though our people be not quick end yet shall we be glorious, we have done what in us lies for to quicken them.

Consider first, this is the end of all true Ministers preaching, that they may bring life into the hearers hearts; as the Prophet says, Hear, and your souls shall live, Isa. 55:3, wherefore else do we preach, but that the dead may hear the voice of the Son of God and live? People are alive to that which they should be dead unto, and they are dead to that which they should be alive unto, they are alive to the world, and the things of the world, and dead to God and all goodness, dead to the humbling of their souls, dead to the seeking of God, dead to Prayer, dead to the holy communion of the Saints, dead to holy comfort and meditation, and whatever else may do their souls good? Now wherefore do we preach, if not to quicken up your hearts, that your souls may live forever; they have knowledge already, more knowledge then they are quickened up to; our main intention then should be to quicken them up to do what they know; are we not sowers of seed? Why then we should most labor so to plow and harrow and till the ground, that our seed may quicken; this is the very end of preaching, that our hearers may hear and live.

Secondly, as it is the end of all true Ministers preaching so it is the nature of all true and right preaching; either to quicken, or to be a fitted instrument of quickening; when David heard the word, it quickened his heart, thy word hath quicken me, Psal. 119:50, and indeed it is never heard nor preached aright, unless it be in a quickening way; and therefore let us not think it is only the taking of a Text, and the speaking of good and wholesome truths, but let us ever remember what right preaching is, that our Ministry be quickening, that God may affect our souls, and accompany our

words, and teach us how to go beyond the policy of men's hearts, and direct us how to drive the truth home to the quick, to answer the evasions of flesh and blood, and so put his live coal into our speeches, that our Sermons may be warming.

Thirdly, let us consider this is only profitable preaching; we may preach all the days of our life, and our people stirred no more than a mill-post, unless our Ministry be quickening; they may hear what we say, but unless we could quicken their hearts, they will forget all again; it may be they may remember the doctrine, but I mean they will forget to do what they hear; it is the quickening that makes any remember to practice; as David says, I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me, Psal. 119:93, we can never forget that friend whom our hearts do most dearly affect; so when our Ministry doth quicken and affect people's hearts, they will never forget what they have heard; The quickening of the come in the earth, makes it the faster in the earth, it twists about the earth, it gets a rooting if it quicken; so it is with our Sermons, if they be quickening, they get about people's souls, and will not out again; otherwise they are never the nearer.

Fourthly, let us consider this kind of preaching only will yield us true comfort; when our Ministry is lively in our parish, as Paul was at Ephesus; when we can say to our people, You hath God quickened by us, as he says, you hath he quickened, who were dead, Eph. 2:1. I dare say it was a great comfort to his soul, to see that his Ministry was quickening; nay, if our Ministry be quickening, though none be quickened by it, but two or three, nay, though none at all, yet we shall have comfort; whereas when we have preached 1000 times in a dead hearted manner never laboring to creep into men's consciences, nor to be Ministers of life, we shall have no comfort on our death-beds; nay our own hearts will tell us, we have preached often indeed, but

we never preached Christ Jesus, we never flung our hearts among our people, as one said of the good Bishop Ealton, he flung his heart among his people. But when our consciences can say, we are not hearty for God, we are not earnest to save our people's souls, we did not go the way to do them good; this will lie as lead upon our bosoms when we die.

Fifthly, a dead Ministry, is but the bare name of a Ministry, it is little better than mere voice; as the Lacedaemonian in Plutarch said, when he heard how sweetly the Nightingale sang, O thought he, surely that Bird is good meat if I had it; and so when he took it, and eat it, and found but little meat in it, he said, voxes & praeterea nihil; now I see thou art mere voice and nothing else; so a dead Ministry it may have a great name of a good Ministry, and a man may desire to live under it, O let me live under such a Ministry, but when he comes to it, and thinks to receive much benefit by it, he finds it to be little better than a name.

Sixthly, a dead Ministry is not a sign to our people; Ministers should be signs to the people, thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign, according as he hath done, so shall ye do. A voice, Ezek. 24:24, true, John the Baptist was a voice, Isa. 40:3. I but he was more than a voice, he was a burning and a shining light, there was life and heat in his Ministry, he was not a mere voice. But when ones Ministry is but a mere voice, little good comes of such a Ministry.

Fourthly, another use is for direction; to show what a lively Ministry is, and how we may have a true lively Ministry, that is in one word to preach with affection; as Quintilian says of Elocution, affections are the soul and life of Elocution; so I may say of preaching, affections are the life of preaching; now by affections, I do not mean feigned and forced affections, they are no affections indeed, but when a man

preaches so for the matter and manner indeed, affectionate matter, and with a true affected heart, that he may move the hearts of men; as one says the world is now full of knowledge, as a drunkard is full of wine, that his stomach is not able to digest; so I say, people have more knowledge, then they can well digest, the stomach wants heat to concoct it for their good; as Rodolphus Agricola speaks, any man that hath learning may teach; but to move the heart and affections, it requires more a great deal. This is lively preaching, when a Minister sets himself to be in men's bosoms; what a lively preacher was the Apostle Paul, you may see by his dealing with Agrippa, he made the Kings heart even yearn again with his speaking; the King confessed how his speaking worked within his bosom, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian, Act. 26:28, so you may see by the Galatians, his preaching did not only convert many of them, but those whom he did not convert, he did wonderfully work upon their hearts, that they could have be contented to have plucked out their eyes, and have given them to him, Gal. 4:15, such a lively preacher was he in the second of Judges, that when he preached, he set all the people a melting, a weeping, like little children that had been beaten Judge. 2:4,5. I grant it may be the best and liveliest Ministers under heaven cannot do so now, people's hearts are more hardened. But yet though we cannot undertake to move any one man's heart, that's the work of God, yet our Ministry may be lively.

First, by laboring to make the things that we preach as it were lively before people's eyes; as the Apostle preached Christ crucified, even as if he were crucified before his people's eyes, Gal. 3:1, so Moses had a very lively Ministry; the Text says, he set before them life and death; he labored to preach with that evidence, as if he had set before their eyes life and death, heaven and hell, good and evil; when a Minister preaches in the evidence, and the demonstration of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:4, when he labors to bring the Gospel plainly to men's

hearts; a man may teach the Gospel, but it is not preaching, except he set it lively forth, and labor to make people see it, this is the truth, and this is your sin against that truth, this is the doctrine, and thus you fail in the doctrine, this is the threatening of God, and thus you lie under the threatening; otherwise they hear a Sermon, as if it did not concern them.

Secondly, coming to particulars; generals are but dead; we see they leave people dead, people have a hundred tricks to put them off; but when a preacher comes to particulars, he either quickens or slays, he convinces either to life or to death; when a Minister lays the truth at every man's door, he presses it upon every man's heart, he meets with many a put off, he makes every conscience, say I am the man, except they be asleep or their minds are a wool-gathering, he darts into his hearers faces, a view of their particular estates; he toucheth their copy-hold, he confutes their false pleas, and knocks off the fingers that would be applying of a promise when it does not concern them, and puts it only upon the soul to whom it does belong. This is lively preaching, that gives to every soul his due, terror to whom terror, comfort to whom comfort belongs; milk to the Babe, strong meat to the grown, oil to the bruised, and a sword into the hard heart, a whip for the Horse, and a Bridle for the Ass, and a rod for the fools back, Prov. 26:3, application is the life of preaching; this serves to condemn such a one, this serves to confute such a one, this serves to comfort such a one, when a Minister does as Paul says, divide the word aright, 2 Tim. 2:15.

Thirdly, by worrying of people out of their sins, when a Minister will not let people be quiet in any of their sinful courses, when he labors daily to vex their guilty consciences, and to turn them from day today, as the two witnesses did, Rev. 11:10, that they may say, we cannot be quiet for this man, he makes me sit upon thorns; when a

Minister labors to make hell to have every vile wretch, and heaven and the promises to have every honest heart, &c.

Fourthly, by being piteous and affectionate towards the poor people, to let them see how we pity their condition, as we should do what we can to make them feel their damned estate, as also with bowels, and compassion, labor that they may see we do pity them, and therefore preaching sometimes is called lamentation in Scripture, Ezek. 19:1, it may be people then may say, what a beast am I; how does our Minister pity us! He mourns over us, and bewails us; what a wretch am I, that I do not bewail mine own case? O beloved, what a woeful thing is it, that any of us should perish, to be damned forever in hell! To lie in eternal pains! What a pity is this? Is it not much better ye should embrace the good word of God and believe and take Jesus Christ, and be willing to do anything he would have you to do, then to lie by it forever in the pains of hell, for the pleasures of sin for a season? Alas it is for want of bowels, that we do no more good.

Fifthly, by being deeply affected with the word of God, laying nothing on people's backs, but what we lift up upon our own shoulders; speaking the truth from the bottom of our hearts, uttering the word of God with feeling and with a contrite spirit. O if we could drop our Sermons as dew down from heaven on our people; this would be lively preaching indeed as the Prophet Ezekiel did, he dropped the word of God upon Jerusalem, Ezek. 21:2, so if our Sermons did come dropping down from us, as if they dropped down from heaven. O how coldly do our Sermons come from our mouths, we do not preach as if the word came down from heaven, as if our hearts were no higher than our pulpits.

Lastly, by getting the Lord to go along with our Ministry; for it is not our preaching itself that hath any life; no, it is but a dead letter, as

Micah says, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, Mich. 3:8.

SERMON XIII.

And art Dead - REVEL. 3:1.

These words as ye heard, have a twofold relation; one to the Angel of the Church in Sardis; thou art dead, thy Ministry is dead; there's no life, nor heat at all in thy Ministry, it is no stirring Ministry; thou art dead; another to the Church itself; thou art a dead people, a dead congregation. For the first thence we had this point of Doctrine; that a dead Ministry is little better than no Ministry at all. By a dead Ministry I mean though the matter preached be never so sound and orthodox, yet when the preaching of it is dead, this is a dead Ministry; as a Prayer may be dead, though the things prayed for, be never so honest and godly; now such a Ministry is little better than no Ministry; there's no warmth hardly to be had by it at all; like the Ministry of the Scribes, that had no power nor authority in it at all, Matth. 7:29, as Luther said, when he heard one preach very cold; cold, cold, says he; this is cold preaching; here's no heat at all to be gotten.

First, this is nothing like a true Ministry indeed; a true Ministry indeed is lively; it is a Ministry that warms and heats; it is a very earnest Ministry; as when the Lord let the Jews have a true Ministry, he says they had a lively Ministry, I earnestly protested to your Fathers, Jer 11:7, he speaks of the Ministry of Moses and the Prophets; it was a very lively Ministry; they preached in good earnest to the people; so Paul was earnest in his Ministry, I have striven to preach the Gospel, Rom. 15:20, he belabored him hard in the pulpit,

he laid about him soundly; so that a dead Ministry, is nothing like a true Ministry.

Secondly, the Lord counts a dead Ministry, even as if it were no Ministry at all. The Scribes and the Pharisees, were very moral men most of them, as ye may see by Paul's Testimony of himself, and they were orthodox Ministers for the main, as our Savior says of them, for he bids people hear them, yet he counted their Ministry even as no Ministry at all; he calls the people that sat under their Ministry, people having no Shepherd, Matt. 9:36, true they had Shepherds, but as the Prophet says of the Shepherds of Judah, they were Idol Shepherds, Zach. 11:17, they were very Idols; ye know Idols are dead Images.

Thirdly, a dead Ministry does little or no good; it is very unfruitful; it does not awaken any of the auditory; it does not stir any of the hearers; it does not rouse up men's hearts; it does not grapple with the obstinate, nor pull down the proud, neither does it carry life at all with it; as Jeremiah says of many of the Priests and the Prophets of Israel, they did not convert any; God tells them, if they had stood in his counsel, they should have turned many, Jer. 23:22. But as the matter went, they turned none, they converted none; a lively Ministry doth a great deal of good; but a dead Ministry is a flat thing.

Fourthly, a dead Ministry God seldom goes along with it; nay, that's the life of ones Ministry, when the Minister seeks God to go along with him; now a dead Ministry, God goes not along with it; a lively Ministry God goes along with that; as Christ says, Lo I am with you to the end of the world, Matth. 28:20, such a Ministry God blesses, it gathers up God's Jewels, it builds up God's Church it helps to perfect the Saints. But a dead Ministry, the Lord does not go with it, he does not work with it.

Fifthly, a dead Ministry profanes the word, it makes it seem nothing worth; it makes people think there is no great matter in it; a lively Ministry glorifies the word, it lets out God into the conscience, it gives people to understand they come upon life and death, it makes people look about them, it makes people hear over all that ever they have done, it flashes the word of God into their hearts, as a light to discover all their ways; it gives them a view of their eternal estate either one way or other; it is the savor either of life unto life, or of death unto death; as it is said of Paul's Ministry, the word of the Lord was glorified by it, Act. 13:48. But a dead Ministry profanes, hides the glory of it; it lets people set quietly under it; it diseases no sinner.

The use of this was first, here we saw a reason why a dead Ministry is not shouted at, but applauded in the world; Why? It is as good as no Ministry at all, it does not make the devil roar; it lets people sleep in their sins; such Ministers are daubers, they are the devils upholsters they do not pluck away men's pillows from under their arm-holes; people may do what they list for all them. The world will let such alone, they may sleep long enough; whereas a lively Minister can hardly come into the pulpit, but presently he is half a Martyr; as the Lord said to Ezekiel, Briers and thorns are with thee, Ezek. 2:6. The world fought against Jeremiah; they played the wolves against the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Lively Ministers cannot give the world any good content; there's an antipathy between the world and such; they cannot more agree then light and darkness; such a Minister stands in the worlds light; he makes the world see their works are evil, he detects and shams, and opposes the sins that the world wallows in; such a Ministry is a differing Ministry, it makes a division among men. There cannot be a lively Ministry anywhere, but the world hath a sting at it. But a dead Ministry may go Scot-free, it does not torment them that dwell upon the earth.

Secondly, this may serve to reprove ourselves that are no more lively in our Ministry. That our Ministry hath no more edge upon it to enter into this horny thick-skin age; we complain of much deadness now a days, alas how if we be found guilty of it, in that we preach no more quickeningly? If the Apostles of Christ complained of dull hearers, Heb. 5:11. O how many dull hearers have we! The Lord awaken our hearts! The deader people be, we had need to be the quicker in our Ministry, or else we cannot say we are pure from their blood. Don't we see the damned estate that our people are in by nature? The carelessness of getting to be delivered out? The necessity of faith, of repentance, of holiness, the danger of sin, the multitudes of them that perish, and the fewness of them, that strive to enter in at the straight gate? The deceitfulness of the heart, how the world and the cares of this life, carry almost all clean away? The badness of the times, the shortness of this life, the irrecoverable estate after death, the immortality of the soul, the pains of hell, the joys of heaven? O how should we bestir ourselves, to beat these truths into men's hearts, that they may bethink them, and fly from the wrath come? The cold preaching of such weighty things quite cozens the world; we give them such faint warnings, that it's no wonder that so few do take any warning; we sound the Trumpet too too low, that scarce any almost prepare themselves; we preach as though we did not care much, whether our people be damned or no; this is a lamentable thing, people may say to us, as the disciples said to Christ; they said it unjustly to Christ, but our people may say it justly to us. Master carest thou not that we perish? Mark. 4:38, he was asleep, and they awakened him; Master carest thou not, &c. O Sirs, don't you care that we perish? Awaken, awaken, don't you see how dead we are, how hearned, how Ignorant of God, how empty of grace, how backward to that which is good! How prone to lose our souls! And don't you care that we perish? Why don't you labor more to quicken us, and move

us; why don't you rub us, and pull us, and prick us, and drive us out of our security?

Thirdly, another use is, that we labor for a quickening Ministry. This is the end of all true Ministers preaching; that they may bring life into their hearers hearts; as the Prophet says, hear and your souls shall live, Isa. 55:3, wherefore else do we preach, but that the dead may hear the voice of the Son of God and live? People are alive to that which they should be dead unto; and dead to that which they should be alive unto; dead to God and all goodness, dead to reformation and amendment, dead to Prayer, and the communion of the Saints; dead to holy conference and meditation and whatever else may do your souls good: now wherefore do we preach, if not to quicken up your hearts, that your hearts may live forever? Are we not sowers of seed? Why then we should most labor so to plow and harrow and till the ground that our seed may quicken.

Fourthly, now another use is how to get a Ministry to be quickening. First let us consider the worth of a soul, our Savior Christ says, its of more worth than the whole world, Matth 16:26, if one soul be of such worth, O then what is the worth of so many souls as God hath given us the charge of, wherefore do we stir up ourselves no more in our Ministry? Its a plain sign, we don't consider the worth of souls, that we have the care of; the blood of the Son of God was shed for them. O if we would but consider this, this might whet us up if by any means we might gain some souls to God's heavenly Kingdom.

Secondly, as we must consider the worth of the souls of our people, so we must get bowels to tender their souls. The Apostle Paul says, he had the bowels of a Father towards the souls of the Thessalonians, you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father these his Children, 1 Thess. 2:11, nay, as a Mother to

the Babe of her womb; nay, says he, we were ready not only to impart the Gospel of God to you, but also even our own souls, because ye are dear to us; as it is there in verse 8. Is a Father dead-hearted toward his dear child? Or a kind Mother toward her dear babe? No; if we were set to do our people good, if our bowels did yearn after their everlasting good, it would appear in every Sermon we make, yea, it would appear in our delivery, in our faces, in our carriages, in our earnest endeavor for their comfort; the earnestness of a true Ministers preaching, Saint Jude compares to the snatching of a child, that is fallen into the fire; other some with fear, plucking them out of the fire, Jude. 23, if we did see our poor children fallen into the fire, how would we bestir ourselves quickly to pluck them out again? Would we go about it coldly? Nay, would we not run, and snatch and pull, and cry out, and alas my poor child, nay, we would shriek out, O woe is me my child will be burnt; O how our bowels would yearn, so we should do to our people, this would quicken our Ministry, and so I full upon a third.

Thirdly, then as we should dearly love our people's souls, so we should be piteous and affectionate towards them; we should let them see how we pity their condition; we don't only tell them their sins, and threaten against them the Judgments, but with pity and compassion; lamenting their condition, as Jeremiah said, O my howls, my howls, I am pained even at the very heart, Jer. 4:19, we should not mouth hell and damnation and roar out against their sins in a sturdy manner, as if we had Iron sides, but in a relenting piteous wise, bewailing their case. Preaching sometimes is called lamentation in Scripture; take up a lamentation for the Princes of Israel, Ezek. 19:1, that is, go and preach to them; this is to quicken in our Ministry; may be people now will say; what a beast am I! How does our Minister pity us? He mourns over us, and bewails us; what a wretch am I, that I do not bewail mine own miserable condition! O

beloved, what a woeful thing is it that any of us should perish! To be damned forever in hell? To lie in everlasting burnings; what a pity is this? Is it not much better, we should embrace the good word of God, repent and believe, and take up Christ's Yoke, and to be willing to do anything, to part with anything, then to lie by it forever in the pains of hell for the pleasures of sin for a season? Alas brethren it is for want of bowels; that we do no more good; O we should fling our hearts among you, as was said of that good Bishop, the People said of him, he flung his very heart among them; so should we do, we should even melt over you, the Lord give us tender bowels for you; this is a quickening Ministry.

Fourthly, We should worry our people out of their sins; we should not let our people be quiet in any of their sinful courses; we should daily labor to disease them, to make them set upon thorns, as is said of the two witnesses, they tormented the earth, Rev. 11:10, so we should torment and vex guilty consciences, gall them, and pierce them, and make our Sermons haunt them; we should be eager and earnest with them to let go their sins; we should be like the importunate widow, that would have justice, she would never let the Judge be quiet for her; as God says there, return return, O Shulamite, return return; compel them to come in, Luke. 14:23, repent repent, O wretch, repent repent; O do not go on, thou wilt perish, turn back, turn back, thou wilt be in hell in a moment else; it is not enough to deliver a good doctrine, and then to say thus and thus ye are guilty of sinning against this good doctrine; but we should labor to lay it home, and to impose it firmly on their conscience, to haunt them with the danger; O how dull, and blockish and secure in their heart how apt are people to forget anything that is good, to put off anything that should pull them down before God? And therefore we should labor to help our poor people, that if it be possible, we may stop them from going down into the pit.

Fifthly, we should labor to make the things that we preach as if it were lively before people's eyes; as the Apostle preached Christ crucified to the Galatians, even as if he were crucified before their very eyes, Gal. 3:1, so Moses had a very lively Ministry; the text says he set his points before their very eyes. I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, Deut. 30:19, mark he set before their eyes, life and death, heaven and hell; he preached so evidently, that the people might see, as it were with their eyes, the things that he preached; this is lively teaching; as the Orator says Hypotyposis is an excellent means to persuade; when the speaker does as it were point before the hearers eyes, when he represents the things he speaks of, this is preaching in the evidence, and the demonstration of the spirit, 1 Cor. 2:4. <H&G>, when a Minister demonstrates his points, and this it is, this is the sin, and this is the case, and this is the misery, and thus it stands with you, when he labors to make people see it, and they must needs see it, unless they be willful and shut their eyes; otherwise people hear a Sermon as if it did not concern them; there's a man in the pulpit, and they hear what he says, but they never consider how deeply it concerns them.

Sixthly, we should be truly affected with the word of God ourselves; laying nothing on our people's shoulders, but what we lift upon our own; we should speak the truth from the bottom of our hearts, uttering the word of God with feeling and with a contrite heart; we should be heavenly as the word is; that lip and heart, and word may be all alike. O if we did drop down our Sermons as dew down from heaven on our people, this would be a lively preaching indeed; as the Prophet Ezekiel did, He dropped the word of God on Jerusalem, Ezek. 21:2, if our Sermons did come dropping down from us, as if they dropped down from heaven. O how homely do our Sermons come from our mouths, as though they never were higher than the

pulpit; we do not preach, as if the word came dropping down from heaven; and therefore people do not look up to heaven, while they hear, their minds are no higher than our pulpits: whereas if we had heavenlier hearts and lips, it would more quicken a thousand times, or at least be a sifter instrument to quicken.

Seventhly, and lastly, we should get the Lord to go along with our Ministry; for it is not our preaching itself, that hath any life; nay, it is but a dead letter as it issues from us; if we were such men, that had the Lord going along with us throughout all our Ministry, what a deal of profit would there be in our Ministry? As Micah says, I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, Micah. 3:8. But I let this point pass; thus ye have heard the words as they have relation to the Ministry of the Church in Sardis. Thou art dead; that is, thy Ministry is dead.

Now I come to the words, as they have relation to the Church itself. Thou art dead. Thou art a dead people; though thou hast a name to live, yet, thou art dead; that is, thou art outwardly reformed, thou hast goodly ordered congregations, good sober, civil and fair carried people, all professing the true religion, and frequenting the good Ordinances of God, yet, thou art dead; that is, thou art even as good as nothing; the doctrine hence is, a dead Christian is as no Christian at all. Ye know we are all dead by nature, in trespasses, and in sins; that is, we are alive to the works of the flesh, and to the world, but dead towards God. And a true Christian is he that is made dead unto sin and the world, but alive unto God; as the Apostle Paul says. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 6:11, this is a true Christian, that so leaves his sins, and so takes up the worship and service of God, that he is dead to his sins, and alive towards God; now when a man it may be leaves his sins after a manner, and takes

up the profession of God's Service, and yet he is alive still unto the flesh, and dead towards God, this is just nothing.

By dead I mean things; first, deadness of guilt; when a man is guilty of any offense, that is death by the Law, he is said to be a dead man; therefore every man hath sinned against God, which is death by God's Law, so that every man is dead by nature; when a man is pardoned of God, then he is alive again; and therefore it is called justification of life, Rom. 5:18, now when a man is not pardoned of God, he is dead, though he have never so many hopes and conceits of forgiveness, thought to apprehend himself to be pardoned, yet as long as God hath not pardoned him indeed, he is a dead man.

Secondly, deadness of mind, when the mind is Ignorant of God, in regard of saving knowledge, when a man's mind is without saving understanding, then his mind is said to be dead; true saving understanding is the life of so many minds; as David says, give me understanding and I shall live, Psal. 119:144, then my mind shall be alive says he, then I shall know thee aright; now let a man have never so much knowledge and learning, yet, in divine things is otherwise, and have nothing; his mind is still dead; he is a dead man to all the things of God; he cannot see God in all his ways no more than a dead man; he cannot mind God; he may mind earthly things; but he cannot mind God; nay, though he can mind learning and divinity, learning and learning about God, yet he cannot mind God; his mind is dead to such savory knowledge; even as dead as a dead man; he knows not how to pray to God, as a child to his Father; he knows not how to do any duty, in a godly gracious manner; his mind is as dead to these things, as a simple Country-man's is to Latin, or Greek or Hebrew.

Thirdly, deadness of heart when the heart is not inclined towards God, then we say it is dead towards God and all goodness; though he go to good duties every day, yet as long as the heart is not inclined to them, it goes about them in a dead manner; when a man's heart is once inclined towards God, now it begins to be alive towards him; as David says, the heart shall be alive that seeks God, Psal. 69:32, that is, you whose hearts are inclined to serve God, your hearts are alive; now when a man hath no divine inclinations to all heavenly duties and courses, though he do never so much profess the following of them, he follows them with a dead heart.

Fourthly, deadness of conscience, when the conscience hath no force; it may be it finds fault with such and such ways, but it hath no power over the man, to make him to leave them; perhaps it approves such and such holy performances, yea, but it hath no power over him, to cause him to buckle to them indeed; this is a dead conscience; it hath no life at all in it; when the conscience hath life in it once, then it hath power; it hath a mighty force over a man; as the Church, my soul made me like the Chariots of Aminadab, Cant. 6:12, that is, my conscience was very forceable and powerful in me, it made me not only to go after God, but it carried me as it were in a Chariot very willingly. But when the conscience can whisper only and find fault, and hath no power at all with it to make one obey from day today, this is a dead conscience.

Fifthly, deadness of affection; when the affections are clumsy, and will not stir towards God, and all heavenly things; when a man is like a block in good duties, he hath no affections to them nor in them; when the affections are all alive to earthly things, when they are still out of order; as the Apostle Paul says, mortify your inordinate affections, Col. 3:5, that is, your affections must not be out of order, if they be alive to other things ye must kill them, that way, that they

may be alive towards all the things that are above; now when the affections will not move that way at all, then they are dead. But I will speak no more of this; well then let us come to the doctrine; a dead Christian is even as good as no Christian at all; go through all Christianity, and we shall see this to be true in every passage; should a man have all Christianity in him, and yet be dead and dull and without life, it is even all one, as if he had just nothing.

First, for conversion; should a man seem to be converted. O what a changed man is this, he was a drunkard, and now he is sober; he was a whorer, and now he is chaste, he was a Profane beast, and now he is clean another man; this is well; I, but if thou beest dead to the ways of God; if thou beest not quickened up to them, this is magnum nihil; conversion is a quickening; when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together which Christ, Eph. 2:5, conversion is not only a turning of a man from wicked ways to good, but to be quickened up in them; conversion puts another life into a man; a man may be converted from profaneness to civility; from not praying constantly to praying constantly, from not hearing to hearing, from not preaching to preaching, from not professing to professing. True, this man shall have the less hell, yea, but this is nothing towards heaven; except a new life be put into this man; to be alive in all these good ways; except he be quickened together with Christ.

Secondly faith; should a man lean himself upon God, and upon Christ, should a man apply all the promises of the Gospel to his soul, and believe all that's contained in the covenant of grace; alas what of all this? If this man be dead still, without such a faith as produces life; it is little better than nothing; as Christ says, He that lives and believes in me, Joh. 11:26, true faith carries life with it, wheresoever it is; and therefore if a man's faith be without life, it is but equivocal faith. faith it may well be, But true faith it cannot be; for if thou

wouldst be able to say thou believest in Jesus Christ, thou must be able to say that thou livest too in him; it's impossible a man should rightly believe in Christ and be dead; so, he lives that believes in me, says Christ.

Thirdly, as ye heard heretofore, to be a member of the visible Church of God, to be a stone in God's building; were a man the finest and the most carved stone of all, put in by Baptism, kept in by profession of the Christian faith; this is a poor thing, if this man now be not a lively stone; ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy Priest-hood, &c. 1 Pet. 2:5. The right stone; in God's spiritual house are all lively stones; if thou beest but a log, a heartless, dull, dead member, thou art none of God's spiritual house, house, no part of his holy Priest-hood, thou art no more a Christian then a dead man is a man. Thou art but a sit room, thou hast nothing but a name of a true Christian; The body of Christ, is all full of life, derived from him the head; all the branches that are in him, have the life of the root in them; if thou beest but a dead branch, thou hast no communion with Christ at all, though thou beest in the body.

Fourthly, for hope; it may be thou hast hope that thou art a good Christian, that thou hast a part in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, thou hast a hope of the heavenly inheritance, that thou shalt be saved in that day; now if thy hope be a dead hope, if it do not quicken thee up to trample on the world, to beat down thy worldly lusts, to screw thee up to a gracious life more and more, to carry thee on through thick and thin, this is not a gracious hope; no, no; the grace of hope is a lively hope, as the Apostle speaks. Blessed be God, and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again, to a lively hope, 1 Pet. 1:3, this grace of hope it quickens up all them that have it, it is not a dead hope, that lies sluggishly and blockishly in the soul, and does not stir it up every

day; no, it revives him towards God, it makes him eager after the best things; if thy hope be a dead hope, that lies like a carcass in thy heart, to little or no purpose, it is no good hope through grace, but a hope in a dream.

Fifthly, for repentance; whatever thou hast to say for repentance, canst thou plead a 1000 changes and reformations, yet if thou hast not gotten out of a dead temper, thou art yet under an impenitent heart. That repentance that is the gate of heaven, the Evangelist calls it repentance unto life, Act. 11:18, true repentance it rends the heart, it shows sin to be the greatest evil, and it rouses a man up daily to take heed of it; it makes us see what a God we have dishonored, and therefore it awakens the soul to be earnest to please him in all things for the time to come; the soul was dead and careless, and drowsy, and neglectful of obedience, goodness, holiness, humility, pureness, strictness, preciseness of walking, it cared not for these things afore, but when true repentance comes in, it wheels about the life of the soul towards God, now the cares shall be to him, now the endeavors make after him; pains, labors, cautious, watchfulness, considerateness, studious strivings, and all's active that way now; so that if a man be still dead, his repentance is false.

Again to go over all the duties of religion; they all must be done with life; to do them with a dead heart, is as good as not to do them at all. First prayer, suppose we pray at Church, and pray in our families, and pray in our closets, is this all? To pray with a dead heart, as if we cared not whether we sped or no, no pulling's of our heart down before God; no wrestling's with God for what we ask, no liftings of our souls up, no fastenings of our minds upon his presence, no cries, no mourning's, no importunity, but the heart as lumpish and unwieldy as a stone; is this praying? No, says David; quicken us O Lord that we may call upon thy name, Psal. 80:18.

Secondly, for hearing of the word: It is not thy hearing of it so many times a week, though thou must hear it as often as ever thou canst, and those that will not no hearing as frequently as they may, are high despisers of God and his Ordinances; but yet if thou hearest the word with a dead heart, thy hearing is made as no hearing; it is said of those primitive converts that they were pricked in their hearts as they were hearing, Act. 2:37, they only got good by their hearing, they heard the word with life; so it is said of many of Christ's hearers, they did <H&G>, they lay upon him, they pressed upon him, Luk. 5:1, in another place, it is said that they hung upon him, they were attentive and eager to him; our Savior Christ says, it is a very great judgment to be dull of hearing, Matth. 13:15, when people set as if the word did not concern them, when they hear without any motion or affection, the word hardly joggeth their hearts, it hardly shaketh their conscience at all, the word does neither delight them, nor wound them, nor pierce them, it heals none of their sins, it cannot get between them and their lusts; when they have heard a Sermon, they go away just as they came, they find nothing now to do, it does not drag them one jot more out of the world, nor an inch nearer heaven; their carriage is much at one as it was; when they come home, it cannot be perceived that ever they were at the word; as earthly as ever; as carnal as ever; as backward to all goodness as ever; this is no hearing at all.

Thirdly, for sanctifying of the Lord's day; it is said of the Sabbath, that we should call it our delight, Isa, 58:13, that is, we should keep it with life it should even quicken up our hearts to think it is coming, we should be revived to consider God's goodness, that he would give us such a day, seeing we have so much need of it; when we have been six days about our own business in the world, that we should have a seventh given us of God, lest we should be over head and ears in the world to take off our hearts; now when this is no delight to us, our

hearts are dead to it, we do not sanctify it indeed but profane it, as though it were not honorable and the house of the Lord.

Fourthly, for taking hold of an opportunity to do good; this is a duty too to be done with all life; how glad should we be; if there be any opportunity for us to show our love to God, or our hatred to sin; we should be willing to ride or go, or be at charges, nay we should deny ourselves, and lay down our gains and credits, and goods, and friends, and all that we have at Christ's Foot, and bless God that gives us such a price in our hands; but now we have a dead heart to this; what a horrible thing is this? Though we do take the opportunity, yet to go about it as though we were sorry that God hath given it unto us; this is mere folly; as Solomon says; Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a Fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? Proverbs 17:16.

Fifthly, In one word for all the ways of God, there's near a one of them all, that can be walked in aright, without a live heart as the Prophet says. Lord turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way, Psal. 119:37, now when we go dreamingly on, as though we could not do withal, though the way be God's, yet our going in it is stark naught, and little better then not going in it at all; and therefore the Lord accepts not of it, when we humble ourselves before God, to hang down our heads like a bull-rush, it's naught, it's naught, the Lord cannot away with it; when we confer about the word, or any gracious and Godly theme, to speak as if we had no savor of it, no pleasure in it, when our hearts would rather be on another subject, and never relent till they have wound all good talk out; if we speak one word to edification, there shall be twenty to that one, that shall serve to no other end, but to the hardening of one another; when Christ and the two disciples were communing together, their hearts burned in them; did not our hearts burn within

us, while he talked with us by the way? Luk. 24:32, that was talking with life. But when our hearts are as cold as a flint, this we may call talking, but holy conference it cannot be termed

Thus ye see a dead Christian, is as good as no Christian at all, no grace is without life, no duty can be done without life; the reasons of this are.

First, because this is all one as to have no grace at all; though a man be a member of the congregation of the Lord, though he have the seals of the covenant, and profess the faith of Jesus, and be as moral in his life as ever any of the heathen, and as full of good duties as ever any hypocrite was, and more too, yet if he have not life yet, he is but a tinkling cymbal; he hath no grace at all. I mean no saving grace at all; saving grace the Apostle calls it the grace of life, 1 Pet. 3:7. It is the grace of life, it breeds life in him that hath it, it makes him alive towards God, it lets out the life of his heart in every good word and work; it makes him pray with life, hear with life, use the ordinances in public and private with life; the natural life that is in the soul it turns it to God, it turns the man about, as a ship is turned on the Sea; that sailed before towards North, now it sails towards South. So when grace comes into the soul; ye know the man had life afore, but it sailed towards the world, and the things of the world, but when grace does come in, it makes it row and sail and steer towards God; so that when a Christian is dead, he is as no Christian at all.

Secondly, a dead Christian hath not Christ dwelling in his heart by faith; he is no Christian indeed, that hath not Jesus Christ dwelling in him by a truly and a lively faith. It is the indwelling of Christ that makes one a true Christian; now when Christ does dwell in any man, Christ is a quickening spirit; as the Apostle speaks, the second Adam was made a quickening spirit, 1 Cor. 15:45, that is Christ; he is the

second Adam; he is a quickening spirit where ever he dwells; he quickens all the soul. He makes it dead to that, which by nature it was alive to; and alive to that which by nature it was dead to; he inclines the soul unto God, he infuses a principle into it to shine with life towards God, he does more and more hale the strength of the soul towards him; though he do not do it at all once, yet he does it more and more; now when a man is still dead to God and all goodness, he hath not Christ dwelling in him by a lively faith; for if he were in once, though the soul may complain still of deadness, as commonly those that are alive complain most of deadness, yet it hath a supernatural quickening, and it shall have more and more.

Thirdly, a dead Christian was never yet soundly wrought upon by the word; the word of Christ is a word of life, and it quickens where it do effectually work; and therefore though such a one have heard a 1000 thousand Sermons, he never fed upon them in all his life; as Christ says, If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, Joh. 6:51, it is better than ordinary bread; ordinary bread indeed, if a man have a natural life, it will feed it and preserve it. But if a man be dead, it will not revive him. But the word of God is such a bread, that as it feeds a spiritual life in them that have it, so it is able through the eternal spirit, to quicken the dead; it is able through God, to put life into men, that never had any; and it does so to all that are of God, sooner or later; now when a man is dead, it's a plain sign that the word hath not yet wrought upon that man; it may be it hath shaken him many a time; yea, but if he be yet dead, it never wrought upon him soundly; the oracles of God, are lively oracles, as Steven calls them, Acts. 7:38, they make their hearts lively that they come to work soundly on; though they were never so dead to God and good things afore, yet now they wax lively, they make their hearts to receive a divine strength, that now they wax able in some measure to live towards God, to hunger and thirst after God, to delight in the seeking of him;

be their lusts never so mighty, now they can compose themselves to oppose them, and to swim against the stream; now they can pray, and they cannot abide to have blockish hearts in that nor in any other duty, they have a life that resists that same deadness that dwelleth in them. So then this is another reason, that a dead Christian is as good as no Christian at all, the word hath never wrought soundly on that Man.

The use of this is; first, if the dead Christians in Sardis be as good as nothing, what are the riff-raff in the Town, that are not so much as Christians in name? If a dead Christian be rejected of God, what's a dead drunkard? A dead whoremonger, a dead prophaneling, if one that walks in good courses be refused because he is dead in them, then what shall become of them that will not follow good courses at all? If such that are Saints to them, cannot be saved, where shall they appear? It is said that Christ loved the goodly fine carriaged young man, Mark. 10:17. Christ is never said to love a drunkard; a profane wretch; no, he regards one that carries himself in a fair civil honest way, more than all the world besides, except only his own children; and therefore if he counts mere civil men stark naught, how much more does he thee, that art a very beast compared with them? Thou art so vile, that we that are men do know thou art in a fearful estate; nay, the Lord pronounces a woe upon them that dare speak well of thee; these sins are to be punished by the Judges; if thou hast lived in Israel, thou shouldst have been put to death; a drunken Son should have been stoned; an adulterer, a fornicator should be burnt; a blasphemmer should be brained to death. Thy sins are so palpable, that pillories, and stocks, and prisons, and gallows, should be thy fare, if thou wert well served. Thou art not only dead, for the manner of thy life, but for the matter too; not only the Saints do abhor thee, but all that have any civility in them, do loath thy filthy doings; and would not do as thou doest; no, no, for a world; as Solomon says

such as thou art, are not only dead but in the depth of hell, Pro. 9:18. There be many though they be not right, yet they are so much reformed that the Saints of God cannot say but that they may be good Christians; But thou art so foul, that he that hath but one eye may see the devil leads thee; there be some that a man may be to blame for judging them wicked, but he that judges thee otherwise, hates his own soul; poor creature, does thy foolish heart promise thee hopes to find mercy? Alas the devil does but lead thee in a string, he knows well enough, though he will not let thee see it, there is no mercy for them that go on still in their wickedness. Thou hast not so much as a name that thou livest, how dead then art thou? Thou art dead and rotten, and stinkest not only in the nostrils of God, but of all that have any common grace in them. Others may be in a damned condition for all their profession, but to be sure thou art in a damned condition, there's nothing between thee and hell, but only the poor thread of thy life; How canst thou keep out of hell, that canst hardly keep out of the Ale-house. O hear this ye that have not so much as any face of Religion. See the word of the Lord, and think upon it for your good, if ye have any ear to hear before it be too late.

Consider first, thou art far from the Kingdom of God; such as are sober and moral and frequenters of the ordinances of God, and profess godliness, though they be not alive, yet they are not far from the Kingdom of God; as Christ said of the discreet Scribe, Mark. 12:34. But thou art a hundred hundred degrees farther off; thou art so far off, that thou hast need to hasten quickly, thou hast a 1000 degrees of reformation to pass over, before thou canst get so near as some of them that are short.

Secondly, thou art altogether become unprofitable, as the Apostle speaks, Rom. 3:12, thou art good for nothing, but to do mischief in a parish, to infect, to spoil youth, to trouble thy wife, and thy poor

Children; to corrupt thy servants and thy neighbors, to spill the good creatures of God, to be a very slave to thy fleshly-lusts; others that are well governed in their lives, though they be dead, yet they do a great deal of good, they help the Saints, they are I say gotten to stand for good order; but thou art a very burden to all well-disposed people, the very shame of the Town, the disgrace of the family where thou art; what will people say yonder's a drunkard, yonder goes a fornicator a dissolute fellow, though he be a gentleman, yet he is fit for none but rogues, and rascals, and tinkerly companions, a man that hath but a spark of honesty would be ashamed of him; a Christian? No, he is a very beast, he cannot govern himself. But what do I stand spending of time to speak against such ways which the Apostle says should scarcely be named in Christians mouths? The very heathens shall judge thee; the Lord open thine eyes, to see what a cursed creature thou art, that thou mayest come out of the snare of the devil.

I have hindered myself from going on; I should show you, first, a reproof of those that are Christians and yet dead.

Secondly, I should show you the danger of being a dead Christian.

Thirdly, what it is to be a lively Christian.

Fourthly, how we may know whether we be dead Christians or no.

Fifthly, how far forth a child of God may be dead.

Sixthly, what is the reason that so many are dead.

Seventhly, how we should all come to be lively.

Eighthly, what motives there be to induce us to labor for life in our Christian course. But of these at another time.

SERMON XIV.

And art Dead - REVEL. 3:1.

The last doctrine that we gathered out of these words was this, that a dead Christian is as good as no Christian at all; though a man be orthodoxly converted, baptized, reformed, though a man profess the true faith towards God, repentance and amendment of life, and follow all manner of good and honest courses for the matter of them, yet if he be dead to them, he is even as good as nothing.

I told you what I meant by a dead Christian. I showed you this in five things.

First, deadness of guilt; when a man is guilty of any offense, that is death by the Law, he is said to be a dead man; so every man hath sinned against God which is death by God's Law, and therefore every man is dead by nature; when a man is pardoned of God, then he is alive again; and therefore it is called Justification of life, Rom. 5:18, now when a man is not pardoned of God he is dead; though he have never so many hopes and conceits of forgiveness, yet as long as he is not forgiven indeed he is but a dead man. Let a man have never so much Christianity about him, if he be not forgiven indeed, he is a dead Christian.

Secondly, deadness of mind; when the understanding of man is dead; my beloved ye must know it is not bare knowledge that quickens the mind; a man may have the knowledge of all Christian divinity, and yet have a dead understanding; it is said of Christ, and every true Christian, that he is of a quick understanding in the fear of

the Lord, Isa. 11:3, then is the understanding quick, when it is quick in the fear of God; when it feels the weight of all divine truth; we may see this in worldly minded men, their understandings are quick in the things of the world, if there be any booty to be had, presently they feel it, you may lead them any way, so you do but let them see profit and gain, there is weight in such reasons. But now show them divine reasons, why they should believe the sacred writings of the holy Prophets and Apostles, and yield obedience unto the form of wholesome words delivered in the Gospel, though they understand well enough what we say, yet they feel no weight in these reasons; whole Sermons do not stir them; their understanding is here dead; so that this is a dead Christian, who though he have never so much knowledge, yet his understanding is dead, he feels not the weight of divine things; he hath divine things in his speculative understanding, and carnal in his practical; gracious truths in his fore dictates, and carnal in his last; when he knows heavenly things, but minds earthly; my meaning is this. O says his understanding, I should live thus and thus, this is the rule, this is the will of God. But then his own corrupt will suggests unto him for to do otherwise, and His understanding does not hinder.

Thirdly, deadness of heart, when the heart is not inclined towards God. The life of the heart, consists in the inclinations and bents of the heart; as David says, Incline mine heart to thy Testimonies, Psal. 119:36, what follows? Quicken thou me in thy way, This is the quickening of my heart to thy Testimonies, when it is inclined unto them; now though a man go to good duties every day, yet as long as the heart is not inclined unto them, it is dead to them all; it goes about them in a dead manner; as a Boy that is not inclined to his Book, though he do go to School, it is with a dead heart. This then is another expression of a dead Christian; he is a man though he be a professor of Holiness, yet his heart is not inclined towards God, and

all goodness; and therefore he goes on in good duties with a dead heart.

Fourthly, deadness of conscience; when the conscience hath no force; it may be it finds fault with such and such ways, but it hath no power over a man, to make him to leave them; it approves such and such holy courses, yea, but it hath no power over him to make him to buckle to them indeed. O says the conscience, I should not do thus; I should be more mindful of God, I should not be so vain, I should not spend my time as I do, I should make another use of God's warning than I do; I should be better. But it hath no force over the man whose conscience it is; this is a dead conscience; there's no life in it at all; when the conscience hath life in it once, then it hath power over a man; as the Church says, my soul made me like the Chariots of Aminadab, Cant. 6:12, that is, my conscience was very forcible and powerful in me; it made me go after Jesus Christ, nay, it carried me freely like the Chariots of Aminadab. But when the conscience can whisper and only find fault, and hath no power at all with it to make one obey from day today, this is a dead conscience.

Fifthly, deadness of affection, when the affections are clumsy, and will not move towards God, and all supernatural things; when a man's affections are lively enough in other things, and too lively; But he's like a block in good duties, he hath no affections to them nor in them. These are affections out of order; mortify your inordinate affections says the Apostle, Colos 3:5, that is, your affections must not be out of order; if they be alive to the things here below, ye must turn the life of them another way; ye must kill them that way, and let the life of them run out towards God, and his service and worship; now when the affections will not move this way at all, then they are dead. Thus ye see what I mean by a dead Christian. Now that such a

one is as good as no Christian at all, is very plain; go through all Christianity, and you shall find this to be true in every passage.

First, for conversion; conversion is not only the turning of a man from wicked ways unto good, but so as to be quickened up in them. Conversion puts another life into a man; when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ, Eph. 2:5, that is, conversion is the quickening of a man, not only the turning of a man from not praying to praying, from not hearing of the word to hearing of the word; from not sober to be sober, from not chaste to be chaste, from not professing Christian religion to be a professor of it, but also it is the quickening of a man up in it; it is the putting of a new life into a man; and therefore to be converted merely from the one to the other is just nothing; as long as a man is dead -hearted to the same.

Secondly, for believing; should a man lean himself upon God, should a man apply all the promises of the Gospel to his soul, and credit all that's contained in the Covenant of grace, alas what of all this? If this man be dead still. True faith produces life; as Christ says, he that liveth and believeth in me, Joh. 11:26. True faith carries life with it, wheresoever it is; and therefore if a man have such a faith as lets him be dead still, it is as good as nothing; faith it may be, Put true faith it cannot be; if thou wouldst be able to say thou believest in Jesus Christ, thou must be able to say that thou livest in him too, it is impossible that a man should rightly believe in Christ, and be dead.

Thirdly, for hoping in God; it may be thou hast hope that thou art a good Christian, that thou hast a part in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, thou hast a hope of the heavenly inheritance that thou shalt be saved in that day; now if thy hope be a dead hope, if it do not quicken thee up, to beat down thy worldly lusts, to serve thee up towards God more and more, to carry thee on through thick and

thin, thy hope is not worth a rush. True hope is lively; he hath begotten us again to a lively hope 1 Pet. 1:3, it is not a dead hope, that lies sluggishly and blockishly in him that hath it, not stirring him up every day, but it lies like a carcass in the heart to little or no purpose; no, no, this is as good as no hope at all. True hope is a lively hope; it revives a man up to the Kingdom of God, it bears a man aloft in good duties, it fortifies a man against daily temptations.

Fourthly, for repenting; whatever thou hast to say for repenting, canst thou plead never so many tears for thy sins, a thousand changes and reforming's, yet if thou hast not gotten out of a dead temper, thou art yet under an impenitent heart, true repentance is to life, Act. 11:18. True repentance rends the heart, it shows sin to be the greatest evil, and so it rouses a man daily up to take heed of it; it makes us see what a God we have dishonored and therefore it awakes the soul to be earnest, to please him in all things for the time to come. The soul heretofore was dead to all holiness and pureness, and preciseness, and humbleness, and mortifiedness of walking, it was dead to such things heretofore, but when true repentance comes in, it turns about the life of the soul towards God, now the cares shall be to him, now the endeavors make after him; pains, labors, cautiousness, watchfulness, circumspection, consideration, all are active now towards him; so that if a man be still dead, his repentance is false.

Fifthly, for praying; suppose we pray at Church and pray in our Families, and pray in our Closets, is this all? Alas if we pray with a dead heart, no pulling's of our heart down before God, no wrestling's with God for what we ask, no heaving of our souls up, no fastenings of our minds on his presence, no favoring of Jesus Christ, no yearnings to the throne of grace; this is as good as no praying at all; no; says David quicken us O Lord, and we will call upon thy name, Psal. 80:18.

Sixthly, for hearing of the word. Though thou hear it never so often and duly, yet that is not it; if thou hearest it with a dead heart, thy hearing is little better than no hearing; our Savior Christ says, it's a great Judgment to be dull of hearing, Matth. 13:15, when the people sit as if the word did not concern them, when they hear without any motion or affection, the word hardly joggeth their hearts, the word does neither delight them, nor warm them, nor pierce them, nor touch them, it heals none of their sins, it cannot get between them and their lusts; when they have heard a Sermon, they go away just as they came, it does not drag them one jot more out of the world, nor an inch nearer heaven; the carriage is much at one as it was, when they come home, it can hardly be perceived, that ever they were at the word; as earthly as ever; as carnal as ever; as backward to all goodness as ever. This is as good as no hearing at all.

Seventhly, for taking hold of opportunities to do good. This is a duty too to be done with all life. How glad should we be if there be any opportunity for us, to show our love unto God, or our hatred to sin, we should be willing to ride or go, or be at charges, nay, we should be willing to deny ourselves, to lay down our names and goods, and friends, and respects, and all that we have at Christ's foot, and bless God that gives us such a price in our hands. But now to have a dead heart to this, what a horrible thing is it? Though we do take the opportunity, yet to go about it, as though we were sorry that God hath given it unto us; This is mere folly; as Solomon says; wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? Prov. 17:16.

But I will not repeat anymore; you see now that a dead Christian is as good as no Christian at all; I showed you the reasons of this point: but I will let them pass. I come now to the uses.

And first this is for the reproof of the deadness that is now among us; the Lord may say to us, as he did unto Sardis, I know thy works, thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead; for notwithstanding the great means of life, that the Lord hath placed among us, O how does deadness of heart reign; we are like them the Prophets speaks of, that drew nigh to God with their mouth, and honored him with their lips, but their heart was far from him; Matth. 15:8, they had no heart to his holy worship. So it is with most of us; we draw nigh to God with our outward man, but our heart is far from him; no heart to prayer, no heart to the word; we hear it peradventure, but no heart to it at all; how ordinarily do we come to God's house, but heartlessness hath dominion over the most of us; the doctrine of the Gospel does not quicken up our hearts, we deal with it as Phinehas his wife did with her Son, when the women about her told her she had a Son, the text says she did not regard it. So what little regard have we of the Gospel of God! I stretched out my hands and no man would regard, Prov. 1, tell us of our damned estate by nature, how cursed we are from the womb, what infinite need we have to be sensible of it, we know it, but how dead is our knowledge of it? It does not stir up our hearts to consider of it; neither does it prick us so much as the pricking of a pin; tell us of the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, his precious blood, his passion and merits, whose heart is enlivened and quickened up by them? Nay, our souls are hardly moved at all at the hearing of them. Tell us of the Kingdom of heaven, the marriage Supper of the lamb, his Oxen, and his fatlings; O they are all ready, come Sirs, come to the marriage; we are even as they in the parable, they made light of it, Matth. 22:5, these things are made as if they were of no moment, as if they were light matters, they find poor entertainment at our hands; what little irksomeness do we feel in sin, what little dejectedness of heart, what little remorse of conscience nay, few know by experience, what humiliation means; we can confess in our prayers, how vile we are, and how unworthy

and how wretched and sinful but as though these were words of course, our hearts are so dead, that there is little or no relenting at it; we can say we are undone if God do not hear us, our prayers are all nothing except they be with faith and life, and yet who strives to awaken and rouse up himself? We can say, O how are we beholding to God, for life, for health, for his daily good providence, for his patience, his bounty? And we can say it is not the bare naming of his Blessings before him that is counted thanksgiving without being affected with his infinite goodness; and yet who does unfeignedly labor to be affected with them from day today? Nobody of us dares deny but that we should set the Lord always before us, that he may be at our right hand, and yet who hath the heart to provoke this hereunto? The devil may be of their right hand and not God for all the pains that they take to have him there. So that dead-heartedness is a common evil, now a days; as Christ says of the last times. Because iniquity shall abound, The love of many shall wax Cold, Matth, 24:12, so it is now; because iniquity abounds the most are profane, and dissolute, and licentious and loose, therefore many that profession love to Jesus Christ, their love does grow cold; and dead no life hardly at all, no sign that they are alive from the dead; if they do believe after a manner, there's all, they do not live in Jesus Christ; if they have any hope of mercy or heaven, that's all they have, it is not a lively hope, that may quicken them up in God's holy ways, if they do see their sins, there's the utmost, it is a dead sight, that does not excite them up unto strictness and preciseness of living, if they do follow good and godly duties, alas there be few that do so, but if they do go so far it is clean without heart and life; as though anything would serve God's turn well enough; what a horrible thing is it when a dead Christian is as good as no Christian all. No matter how many Christians we have, alas none of us are true, but such as are alive from the dead.

Secondly, is it so that a dead Christian is even as good as no Christian at all; then learn hence my Brethren, what a dangerous thing it is to be a dead hearted Christian.

First, all that we do with a dead heart, 'tis as good as nothing; as Paul says of love; had we all faith, and all knowledge; yet if we have not love, we are nothing, 1 Cor. 13:2. Whatsoever we do, if we do not do it out of love, all's nothing; so I may say of life, whatsoever good duty we do, if we do not do it with life; it is but a dead work; and therefore it is no more than nothing; when the prophet David would do good duties, so as to do them to good purpose indeed, you shall see how he labors against a dead heart, Quicken me after thy loving kindness, so shall I keep the Testimony of thy mouth, Psal. 119:88, so we may say too, Lord quicken me after thy loving kindness, so shall I preach, so shall I hear, so shall I do thy holy will, so shall I go up and down doing good; now as long as a man does it with a dead heart, it is even all one as if a man had not done it at all; a dead man is no man, as the Apostle says; God quickens the dead, and calls things that are not; mark, dead things are no things; so dead works are no works, as Solomon says. There is no work, and no devise, and no wisdom, and no purpose in the grave whether thou goest; that is, when men are dead, then they can do nothing, so it is here; as long as we are dead, we can do nothing. True, because we have the life of sense and of nature, and of a natural conscience in us; we may counterfeit good works as a painter may make a man. True he cannot make a living man; so as long as we are dead-hearted, we do but paint out good duties before God; all our Prayers are but painted prayers, all the good works we do, are but paint; there's none of them to the life; as God says of the Jews; you will say they did very many good works; they fasted and prayed, and sacrificed, and many other things they did. But what says God? They are vanity, their works are nothing, Isa. 41:29, as a dead Corps; there be eyes, and nostrils and ears and

mouth; But when the life is out, they are as good as nothing; so it is with a dead heart; we may think we preach much, and study much, and hear much, and profess much, and do much; the truth is, we do nothing.

Secondly, all that we do with a dead heart, it does not please God; God says, my Son give me thy heart, Prov. 23:26, ye know the heart, that is *primum vivens* that's the first living thing in us; now if we give God never so many performances, yet if all our heart be not with them, what cares he for them all, when they are a company of heartless things? When the Apostle had said, that to be fleshly minded is death, by and by he concludes; so then says he, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God. Rom. 8:8, would that please any of us, that one should come and rake up a dead stinking carcass, and lay it before us? No more can it please God, to lay a dead duty before his heavenly Majesty; ye know a dead carrion it is loathsome, as long as life remains in it, that's a sweet thing, and it preserves it from stinking; and therefore the heathens called the soul the salt of every living thing; because the life is a preserving thing it preserves a thing sweet; but when the life is gone out, presently it becomes odious; so is all that we do, when we do it with a dead heart, it is odious with God, it cannot be accepted of him; as the Apostle Peter speaks; 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, 1 Pet. 2:5, that is; the Apostle had compared true Christians unto stones, now he correcteth himself, did I call true Christians stones? I pray do not mistake me, I do not mean for deadness, but for firmness; a stone is a dead lifeless thing. O says he, ye must be stones I, but ye must take heed of deadness, ye must be lively, otherwise ye cannot offer acceptable sacrifices unto God; this is even as if a Jew should have taken a dead sheep out of a ditch, and laid it on God's Altar. This is abomination to God; even so are dead doings to

Almighty God; as Vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes. so is a sluggard to him that sends him, Prov. 10:26, that is, when a Master sends a servant on his errand, if he go dully about it, even as if he had no life nor heart in him at all, to do his Masters business; this will not please him, nay, it will offend him, as smoke does the eyes; or as Vinegar does the teeth. it will make him look with a sour look upon such a servant, so beloved when God bids us serve him, in all our ways may be we are not so gross, as not to go about it at all. But we go about it with a dull and a dead heart, this does not please God one whit, nay, he takes it ill that we should think he will accept it at our hands; as when the Jews had no heart to God's holy and pure worship, it was too chargeable to them, it put them to too much charges; what a whole sheep, and a whole lamb every morning, besides many whole ones at other times, whole Bullocks, whole Oxen, and whole Goats, this was even as death to them, they went up to God's Temple with a dead heart, nay, they thought much to give him of the best, they gave him the torn and the maimed, now mark what he says; should I accept this at your hand, saith the Lord, Malac. 1:13. He took it ill, they should think he would accept it, so when we think much to be so precise and so strict, to pray so much, to hear so much, to mind him so much, and to deny ourselves so much, to watch so much over our hearts, to humble ourselves so much, what? May we not keep one lust? May we have no more liberty then so? Maybe we do something this way, but God knows how with a dead heart it is, the Lord takes it ill, that we should hope he will accept this at our hands.

Thirdly, all that we do with a dead heart, it cannot yield us any comfort true if we were quickened up towards God, if we served God with all our heart and soul and life, this would comfort us indeed; to seek him daily in a lively manner, to go into his presence with all our mind; if we went eagerly a days to the throne of grace, if we were

earnest in prayer, earnest against sin, earnest for all goodness, this were a sign of his favor, and a Testimony of the true grace of life this would comfort our hearts exceedingly; this would breed peace in our conscience as the Apostle speaks. To be spiritually minded is life and Peace, Rom. 8:6, there's life, and therefore there is peace. The reason is thus; because lively works alone can truly pacify conscience; when a man hath been a professor all his days, and done never so many things; yet if the conscience can say, yea, but all these are dead works, all this while I have gone on with a dead -heart, this fowls the conscience; it can never have true peace. How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God, Heb. 9:14, it shall purge the conscience from dead works; dead works foul the conscience; whether they be dead for matter or manner; sin is a dead work for matter, and good duties heartlessly done are dead works for manner; now both foul the conscience; the conscience remains under guilt; continues without peace; it is an ill conscience; why? Because the conscience knows it hath the living God to serve that will not like of such works; when a man pays in his rents only by halves, or by driblets or with light money, the Kings receiver will not give him an acquittance; my brethren, conscience is God's receiver, no wonder it does not give you an acquittance, when ye pay in only wash duties, clipped obedience; if ye served God with life, conscience would give you an acquittance; when ye have prayed, it would give you an acquittance; when ye have done a days work in his harvest, it would acknowledge the receipt of it, well done good and faithful servant; it is well done in some measure. This made Paul full of life every day. Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards men, Act. 24:16, that is, I do not only go on in good duties both towards God and towards men, but this I do always, I do even exercise myself, that I may have an acquittance from mine own conscience when I have done; that my conscience may give me a true discharge; well done, I

have done well in some measure; now as long as we are dead-hearted and hollow in God's ways, our conscience can never give us a discharge, no marvel, that so few of us have Peace of conscience, when we are so dead-hearted as we are; if we would stir up ourselves to serve God with all heart and life, we should have Peace; but till this will be once, we can never look to have Peace and comfort.

Fourthly, Though we have comfort in time of prosperity, yet we cannot have comfort in affliction, if we be of a dead heart; how many are there that seem to have comfort while they are well, but when they come to be sick, and at death's door, then they are all to pieces? Then they see they have no grace, no faith, no good cards to show; then they are stripped stark naked, then their conscience sees what they are; O, I am a wretch; how have I deceived myself; so beloved, though we have comfort in time of prosperity, yet if we be dead-hearted, we can have no comfort in affliction. As David says, this is my comfort in affliction, thy word hath quickened me, Psal. 119:50, when the word of God hath quickened our hearts, and made us lively in all manner of goodness, this will yield us comfort in affliction. But if we be dead to all spiritual ways, though we scramble up hopes now, they will not hold when affliction comes; now what a fearful thing is it we shall all come to affliction ere long; for man is borne to trouble as the sparks that fly upward, as Job speaks; nay we know not how soon; man knoweth not his time as Solomon speaks; but as the Fishes are caught in an evil Net, so are the Sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly on them. And God only knows what sore afflictions we may have; the Cup of affliction is in God's hand, and he tempers it and pours it out as his pleasure is. I say what a fearful thing is it not to have comfort then; then we have most need of comfort, and if we have not comfort then, we are utterly undone; now my brethren it is not a dead dull profession will yield us comfort then? Let us think of this; as God says, What will ye do in your day of

visitation? To Whom will ye fly for help then? Isa. 10:3, so may I say, though ye can be quiet and comfortable enough now, in the days of health and peace, your deadness does not trouble you now; but what will ye do in the days of visitation? Do but consider what a sorry comfort ye shall have then; assuredly a dead heart will afford not a syllable of true comfort then.

Fifthly, we can never bless God with a dead heart; a dead heart is not able to affirm upon any good ground that God is his, or that the promise is his; or that Christ is his; the soul knows Christ is a quickening spirit, and they that have him, are quickened up by him, the promise is a promise of life, and they cannot be dead that are the possessors of it, we cannot bless God either for love or mercy or grace, or anything else, when we would bless God for any of these things, the deadness of heart, it will be objected to us, O I am so dead, that how can I hope that these things belong unto me? Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, Psal. 119:175, when the soul is alive towards God, then it can praise God; then it knows all the good it hath, it hath it in mercy; doubting and deadness do ever go together, or it's a great marvel. And indeed what is deadness of heart towards Christ, and all his holy Gospel, but a secret doubting whether it have any part in it or no; as when a poor man sees a rich treasure, it does but dead him the more, because he sees no interest he hath in it; if he could see he had an interest in it, this would quicken up his heart, and put it out of its dumps. And is not this now a miserable condition when a man cannot praise God? If he pray, it is but in a sorry manner, no life, no heart at all. But for blessing and praising of God, that he cannot do at all, except he be in a fools paradise; and dream of a false gift. This is a dreadful condition, when we are hindered from that which God most delighteth in; what is there that more delighteth God, then to bless him and praise him? The Lord says we never honor him otherwise, who so offereth me praise, he glorifieth

me, Psal. 50:23, now we can never offer God praise, except our heart live.

Sixthly, Religion is a very irksome thing unto us, as long as we are dead-hearted; what is it that takes away the grievousness of it, but a lively heart? When the heart is dead, it must needs be very tedious; very tedious to be thinking of God, to be meditating of death or the world to come; to be employed in prayer, to be constant in the humbling of the soul, or the abstaining from our natural inclinations, to be discoursing of repentance, or studying of God's heavenly Kingdom; to be employed in the word, or to go through dirty and frozen ways to it, to go and repeat it in our Families or to urge it upon our hearts, O what weary tedious duties are these, when the heart is a dead heart! This is the reason why the world lets them all generally alone, and never troubles their hearts with them at all, because they have no life in them; and many that are better minded, find them very tedious, because they are dead-hearted; as Solomon says, correction is grievous to him that forsaketh the way, Prov. 15:10, now as long as we are out of the way of life, while we are dead-hearted, we forsake the right way, and therefore correction is grievous unto us, nay, all the commandments of God are grievous unto us; does a dead heart rejoice to go to Prayer? Nay, generally he is loath to go to it; is he glad that the Sermon Bell rings; is he glad at an opportunity to do good? Nay, does he not shrink, and winch, and draw back? We see thus in the Jews, how irksome the Sabbath was to them, when they were held from buying and selling; O that the Sabbath were over, Am. 8:5, it may be men do not find the Sabbath so tedious now, because they help themselves by talking of the world, by taking liberty that way; but if they were held to it, as they ought to be, would they not wish it to be over, The like we may see in the young man, what an irksome thing was it to him, to hear that he must fell away all? The Text says, he was sad at that saying, Mark.

10:22, now is not this too a very hideous thing to be dead-hearted, when it makes all the ways of God tedious? Nothing should be more delightful unto us then they; they are perfect freedom; there is great reward in them, they are the best ways in the world; all his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace; and if we were quickened in our hearts, we would say so too; as the Apostle speaks; when he had said, that none of God's Commandments are grievous; 1 Joh. 5:3, in the next words he gives a reason of it; O says he, He that is borne of God overcometh the world; that is, he that hath the life in him that cometh from above, he hath gotten above the world, he hath past all the irksomeness of them. The irksomeness of any commandment, does not lie in the commandment, that is sweet and pleasant, but it lies in the deadness of the heart; a dead heart will ever count them grievous.

Seventhly, as religion is an irksome thing to a dead heart, so a dead heart, if it should take it up, it will in the end be weary of it; as we see in the example of Israel when they grew to be dead-hearted towards God, at last they were weary of his worship, they went and devised other gets worships, an easier kind of religion, they were weary of his. Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel, Isa. 43:22, we see this in Judah too. Behold what a weariness is it? Mal. 1:13, this is too plain and palpable; how are we grown weary of God, and of his pure service? We have had the Gospel so long, till we are even weary of it; weary of sanctity, weary of spiritual truth; whence are all innovations but because people are weary of the old way? Many that have been very forward in preaching, and in hearing, and very zealous of good courses, they begin to abate, to side with the times, to remit of their former strictness; whence is all this? Whence is it that we see so many apostates, that once loved good people, now do not; once were very zealous against disorders, now are not; once were against human devises, now are not; now they can brook anything well

enough; they are weary of their first pitch, they were wound up too high, now they let themselves down again; all this is because men have no life in them; they are dead to what they did profess; you shall see many a man smitten at the word, and there he is knocked down, and sees what wretched courses he hath taken that will lead him to hell; well, he goes and reforms and grows very precise, and now there shall not be a Sermon but he'll hear it. There shall not be any good Christian duty, but he will take it up, he'll leave his old acquaintance, he'll join himself to good people, he'll have very good orders in his Family; all this is well; if it would hold; I but if this man do not go on to get the grace of life, in the end he'll be weary; a dead heart be it never so forward, it will end in weariness. It is merely for want of quickening, that any man grows weary of well-doing; as the Apostle says; Be not weary of well-doing, for in due time, ye shall reap, if ye faint not, Gal. 6:9, take heed ye do not let quickening go; if ye let your quickening go, directly you'll grow weary; if ye suffer yourselves to faint, if ye do not get aqua-vitae, to cure your fainting sits; you'll be weary of well-doing; now beloved what a pitiful thing is this, that we should be weary of well-doing? If any of us have begun to do well, O how should we labor, that we may never grow weary; however things go, though persecution arise, whatever dealings we meet with at the hands of the wicked world, yet never to give in; whatever flesh and blood say, whatever discouragements we meet with, from without or from within, we should earnestly labor, that we may never be weary of well-doing; never weary of preaching to their conscience, never weary of attending on the word, or of preaching of our hearts, or of resisting of sin, or of redeeming our time, or of keeping our garments, never weary of washing our hands in innocence, and keeping of ourselves, that the wicked one touch us not; and therefore what a dangerous thing is it to be dead-hearted? For that's the high way, to be weary of well-doing at the last. This then is the second use,

that we are to make of this point; to see what a dangerous thing it is to be a dead Christian.

SERMON XV.

And art Dead - REVEL. 3:1.

I Come now to the fourth thing, and that is this; what it is to be a living Christian. First, I will describe it by the efficient cause. Secondly, by the Instrumental cause. Thirdly, by the parts of it.

For the first, the efficient cause that makes one a living Christian, is God; as the Psalmist says, he is the fountain of life, Psal. 36:9. He is the fountain of all life; it is he that makes one a living man. He giveth life and breath to all, Act. 17:25, if he should take away our natural life, we die and turn again unto our earth; as long as he breatheth on us we live; as Elihu speaks, the breath of the Almighty gives me life, Job. 33:4, yea all the world would be a dead Chaos, if he did not quicken it; there's a kind of life in everything that hath being. But it would be a dead Mass, if he did not concur with it; what is money, and meat, and clothes, and friends, and life, and health itself? Men think they are well to live when they have them all. True, if he bless them and quicken them unto us; but if he be wanting to them, they are dead things, and can do us no good; nay, the word of life itself, it is but a dead letter without him, all the ordinances of God, we see they Minister life to some, because God puts life into them, but if he do not put life into them, they are sapless and cadaverous things; so that God is the author, even of our natural life; as John says, in him is life, and his life is the life of men, Joh. 1:4, in him we live, and move and have our being; and therefore it is a great sin not to be thankful to him for our natural life; David blesses God for his natural life very often; life is a very great blessing, a poor thing that hath life, a living dog, is better than a dead Lyon. A man will give skin for skin, and all that he hath for his life: I am sure many of us may be very

glad of life, for if it were gone now, we should be in hell; and therefore we had need to make much of our natural life, yea, every hour of it, lest we die before we be converted, and brought home to God.

But this is not the life that we do speak of; we speak of spiritual life, and God is the author of that more especially; when a man is alive towards God, he is the only cause of it. He spiritually moveth our hearts by the holy Ghost, and begets us again after a strange, and an ineffable manner; by joining his spirit to our spirits, his mind to our minds, and his will to our wills, he revives all the powers of the soul with his presence; and therefore this life is called the life of God; which the world are strangers to and aliens from; being alienated from the life of God; Eph. 4:18, so likewise it is called the life of Jesus. 2 Cor. 4:11. He only is the author of it. Thus ye see the efficient cause of it.

Secondly, the Instrumental cause of this life, is true faith; this is the ligament that couples this life and a man together; that now he is said to be a living man; ye know God is the only living God; they that are not united unto him, remain in the congregation of the dead; now faith unites a man unto him; faith is the having of him; He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life, 1 Joh 5:12, when a man cleaves unto God, by a true and lively faith, this man hath life; as Moses says, That thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayst obey his voice, and that thou mayst cleave unto him, for he is thy life, Deut. 30:20. Though a man hath not that strong faith that some have, whereby he hath a clear evidence of God's love and favor in Jesus Christ, though a man have not this faith, yet if he have a faith of adherence, and cleaving unto God, this man is a living Christian; this man is joined unto the true life; This is the true God, and even life, and therefore whosoever cleaves to him,

hath life; if he will not away from him, he will still seek him, still pray unto him, still make him his refuge, though he have no feelings, that is not it; if a man will never give over seeking of God; He believes God is the fountain of all life and peace, and grace and comfort, and God's way, is the only way; he believes himself is a cursed wretch in himself, and that all hope is in Christ, now if this man have such a faith whereby he adheres, though with never so much weakness, this man is a live. This is the faith whereby a Christian lives; as Paul says, the life that I live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Gal. 2:20. Thus ye see the Instrumental cause of it.

Thirdly, now for the parts of it. The parts of it are three.

The first part is the life of Justification; ye know every man by nature is a dead man; as a malefactor that hath committed an offense that is death by man's Law, we say he is a dead man; so we have all offended God from the womb which is death by God's Law; and therefore we are dead men; now when God hath justified a man freely by his grace, when God hath given him a pardon in Christ Jesus; now he is a live man; and therefore Justification as ye heard, is called Justification of life, Rom. 5:18, now beloved this life is not in the man that does live, but in Christ that he lives by; this life supposeth no life in this party; no, it looks upon him as a dead man in himself. But God counts him alive in Jesus Christ; as the Apostles says, Christ is our life; Col. 3:4, q d this life is not in us, but in Christ; so that this life denominates a man alive; as Christ denominates the damsel alive, that was yet dead. The Damsel is not dead, says he Matth. 9:24, ye know the Damsel was dead at that time, when Christ said so; and yet he said she was not dead, because he had life for her; she had life in him; now when he raised her up, then she had life in her too.

And so I come to the second part of this life; and that is the life of Sanctification, and this life is in him that doth live; for though he were dead before to all goodness and holiness, and alive unto sin, yet now he is made dead unto sin, and alive unto God; as the Apostle speaks, likewise also reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 6:11, this life is called the life of grace, and new obedience, when a man is quickened up to all the ways of God; you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1, and this is the quickening that I would fain open to you.

The third part of this life, is the life of joy and comfort; ye know when a man's eyes are opened to see his sins, and his damned estate, by reason of them, the Law comes and that kills him, his very heart dieth in him; now when God propounds to him a Savior, and causes him to believe in him, this revives his heart again; this yields him some joy and comfort so that true joy is a life too; we may see this in the Children of God, let their joys and comforts be all gone, this makes them all amort, this makes them very heavy and sad, as if they had no life at all in them; as the Church says; Wilt thou not revive us again? That thy people may rejoice in thee, Psal. 85:6.

Now my brethren, all this is only by way of preface; to come then to the question, what is it to be a quickened Christian? A Christian that hath not only a name to live, but is dead? Dead towards God? Dead to all good duties? No: But is quickened up to them. I answer, that as death is taken in a metaphorical sense, when we say such a one is dead to God, dead to the holy ordinances of God, we do not mean properly dead, as if he were naturally dead, and had no soul in his body; but we take it in metaphorical sense; so is life here to be taken too; namely for the activeness of a thing; when a thing is not active, we use to say it is dead; as Sarah's womb is said to be dead; he

considered not the deadness of Sarah's womb, Rom. 4:19, that is, her womb had no activity to conceive; now when a womb is active this way, then we say it is quick; so a coal that hath fire in it, is said to be a live coal: There flew one of the Seraphim, having a live coal in his hand, Isa. 6:6, we call it alive coal, because it is active; it is able to burn; whereas if that fire were out, then it were not able to burn, and therefore then we call it a dead coal; so when a man is active towards God, Take him in prayer, there he can act now; take him in self-denial, in reconciling of himself, in humbling of the heart, in mourning for sin, in hungering after righteousness, even as a man does after his appointed food, take him in any of the things of God, though he were like a dead coal afore, yet here he can act now; now he can move this way; when one is like a block in good duties, that man is dead; we call moving things living things; Every moving thing that liveth, Gen. 9:3, when a thing cannot stir, that we call dead; when a man is not stirring in heavenly things, he is stirring enough in earthly, but he cannot stir in heavenly things; that man is a dead Christian, though he profess never so much, yet if he be not stirring towards God from day today, he is dead; I think it meet to stir you up, says Saint Peter, 2 Pet. 1:13, that is, I think it meet to quicken you up. Now beloved, this being so, if ye would know what it is to be alive towards God, let us but find out a little, what is the life of a man.

First, what is the life of a man's understanding; people think that bare knowledge is, and approving of God's ways, and thinking of them now and then; they think this is the life of their understandings. But you shall see these are not it; therefore we will search out what is the life of the understanding.

Secondly, what is the life of the will or of the heart; people are apt to think that wishing's and wouldings, and velleities, if they have some volitions towards God and all holy courses, they think their wills are

alive; no; these are not it; therefore we will search too, wherein the life of the will does consist.

Thirdly, what is the life of the conscience; people generally do conceive that if their consciences do check them for their sins, and smite them for evil, and excuse them in other things that are good, then their conscience is alive; now we desire to inquire, what is the life of the conscience indeed.

Fourthly, what is the life of the affections; I gave you a touch of these when I showed you what it is to be dead; now let me speak of them more fully, to show you what it is to be alive.

For the first, what is the life of the understanding; ye know there be many things in the understanding; knowing, approving, studying; determining; now the world thinks that when the understanding is so far wrought upon, as to know Christian religion, to approve it to study it to determine aright upon things; evil things to be evil, good things to be good; duties to be duties, sins to be sins: now they suppose their understandings are alive. But the truth is, none of all these are the life of your understandings. The understanding hath another life besides these. The understanding may have all these, and be dead.

As first, for knowledge, I need not stand to prove that; the dead Heathens, the Apostle says they knew God; when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, Rom 1:21, knowledge is not enough; as our Savior Christ speaks; is ye knew these things, blessed are ye if ye do them, Joh. 13:17, nay, literal knowledge does not so much as give them understanding, true light, much less life; a great learned divine that is wicked, his understanding is still in darkness; nay, it may leave him more dead, then those that are grossly Ignorant; as the Prophet says of them that had knowledge; I will get me to the great

men, for they have known the way of the Lord, but these have altogether broken the Yoke, Jer. 5:5, they were more dead, their hearts were more averse from all goodness. Bare knowledge is a poor thing, and yet people are apt to glory in it, the Apostle makes a pish at it; we know we have all knowledge, 1 Cor. 8:1, q.d. is that such a piece of matter? Never tell me of your knowledge; I know ye all have knowledge; but that's a poor thing; nay, the greater is thy woe, if thou hast not a quickened mind; as Solomon says, he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow, Eccl. 1:18, thou increasest thine own self condemning, the more thou hast, the greater knowledge in thy Bosom, thou knowest, the more thou seest to condemn thee; thy knowledge is like a sword in thy bowels, that daily galls thee, and wounds thee; and therefore little reason to think that knowledge is the life of the mind, it is not so much as the light of the mind; take heed says our Savior, that the light that is in thee be not darkness, Luk. 11:35, that is, thou mayst have a great deal of light, and yet be in darkness; nay, in worse darkness, then Ignorant blind people that have no light at all; if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness, Matth. 6:23, such people are more senseless at the word, harder to be wrought on, they have the more distinctions to deceive their own souls, they think too well of themselves; they are too wise to be fools, that they may be wise, they are farther of from confession; if they had less knowledge, it may be there might be more hope to do them good. But having so much knowledge in a carnal mind, it is made a strong hold against grace; it is with such people as it was with Babylon; thy wisdom, and thy knowledge hath perverted thee, Isa. 47:10, true knowledge is a good thing; but when a man is fleshed with it, that he takes himself to be somebody, this mars all; but I will speak no more of this.

Secondly, for approving of the truth; that cannot be the life of the mind neither; when a man approves goodness, and good people, this

indeed is an excellent mercy of God to make a man approve goodness, and good men, O how are such bound to be thankful! Few go so far. But alas if thou goest no farther, thy mind is not yet quickened up to God; as the Apostle shows, that a man dead in his sins still, may yet approve the best things. Thou knowest his will, and approvest the things that are most excellent, Rom. 2:18. Herod approved John the Baptist, and his preaching. Achish King of Gath approved David and all his ways; nay, the devil approved Christ. I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God; Mark. 1:24. Suppose thou approvest all the ways of Christ, O what good ways they be, thou likest his promises, thou countest his Ordinances admirable good and lovely, O consider what the Apostle says, happy is the man that condemneth not himself in that he alloweth, Rom. 14:22, so may I say to thee, dost thou allow of all strictness and pureness and precise people? O sayest thou the preciser the better! This is well; now thou art a happy man, if thou doest not condemn thyself in that which thou allowest; thou allowest of the strictest Servants of God, but if thou condemnest thy self now; and thy conscience can tell thee, I but I do not set myself to be as they are. I can lose myself; poor creature, thy allowing's and approving's will rise up in Judgment against thee; so that this is a poor thing too; approving of goodness may be in a persecutor; Saint Paul tells us that the Jews did allow of his Religion; and yet they would not leave persecuting of him, Act. 24:15, nay, Christ's persecutors they allowed of all goodness, they professed so much at least; for a good work we stone thee not; therefore approbation cannot be the life of the mind neither.

Thirdly, thinking of God and of the word, that is not the life of the mind; and yet many men hang upon this too; that they think of God, and of his ways, and of their latter end. True some are so graceless, that they come not thus far; God is hardly in all their thoughts, Psal. 10:4. But though a man do think of God, and of heaven, and of God's

Laws, indeed it's a great mercy of God; thus far it might do a man a world of good, and it did David; this made him return into the way wheresoever he went. I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies, Psal. 119:59, yet if this be all, this is no argument of life. The wicked Jews, Christ confesses they thought upon God and upon the Scriptures, nay, more they thought to have eternal life in them; Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, Joh. 5:39. This is so far from being an Act of life, as that if a man live in sin for all that, it aggravates a man's sins. The drunkard when he goes to the Ale-house, it maybe he thinks of the word of God, that says a drunkard shall not inherit God's Kingdom, and yet he will go though; a liar when he lies, it maybe he thinks at the same time, of the word of God, that says the devil is a liar, and liars shall lie in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

Fourthly, studying is not the life of the mind; this is that which bewitches many Ministers; they study all the day of God and his Kingdom and of eternal life; they are all the day studying of Jesus Christ, and of faith and repentance, perhaps they think this is heavenly mindedness. O they love a life to study Divinity; as the Jews said, we delight to know thy ways, Isa. 58:2. I grant studying is an intense act of the mind, but that it is a lively act of the mind, that I deny; that is not always so; nay, studying may be in the highest degree in a mind that is dead to what it studies, though never so eager to it, as it is scibile of divine things: for what is studying? Studying is nothing else but the boulding out of the logic in the Scripture; now if a man rest there, he is never the nearer, if it do not recoil on his own mind, when he studies of grace, if he do not seek how to get it; when he studies the fall of Adam, and original sin, if he do not get it mortified in himself, all this is nothing; we see the poor simple Ignorant people ran after Jesus Christ; who were the great students of Divinity, were so far from doing so, that they sat and

derided them for their labor, yea, and called them silly simplicians, as though it had been a giddy humor in them; therefore studying cannot be it neither.

Well then it remains to show you what is the life of the mind that if the mind do give that unto God, it is alive towards God, I answer. All these are the dull acts of the mind, they may be in the mind concerning God and all his ways, yea, in a very high degree, and yet the mind dead towards the same. The Apostle tells the Jews in his second Epistle and the first Chapter, that they knew all these things before; I says he in the third Chapter and the first verse, I would stir up your minds, that is, I would quicken up your minds; as we use to say, when a man looks about him; when a man gives his mind to a thing, this is the stirrings of the mind, now the mind is quickened up.

Now there be six stirring acts in the minds of men; now look which way they stand, it's most plain the mind is alive, whether to God, or to the things of the world.

The first, is the application of the mind.

The second, is the meditating of the mind.

The third, is the considering of the mind

The fourth, is the remembering of the mind.

The fifth, is the devising of the mind.

The sixth, is the Judging of the mind. These are all the stirring and lively acts of the mind, and the mind does not let out these acts any way, but that way, that a man is alive to, whether it be to the world or the creature.

First, I say the application of the mind; the mind hath this nature in it, though it know a thing never so much, or approve it, or think of it, or study it, yet except it do incorporate with the thing, it doth not come to apply it; if it incorporate with the mind, then it will apply it; as we see in a worldling, whatsoever good husbandry he knows, if he know any way of getting of gain, he applies it, and takes it to himself; why his mind is alive to the Profits of the world, he can relish savor in them; so when the mind begins to be applying of divine things, now it is alive unto God; as Eliphaz said to Job. Hear it and know it for thy good; Job. 5:27, that is, do not only know it, but be quickened up to apply it to thyself for thine own good; as the Prophet says; hearken diligently, and eat ye that which is good, Isa. 55:2, that is, I would have your minds not only to attend, but let them be quickened up to apply, and feed upon what ye know; let it be your food; a quickened mind is like the Disciples of Jesus Christ; when Christ said, one of you shall betray me; they were all very sorry, and they began every one of them to say, Lord is it I? Matth. 26:21, they all did apply it, you see how his speech stirred their minds, they fell presently to apply; so when a man cannot hear any sin ripped up; but presently he cries out, Lord it is I: Is it I that am guilty of this sin? O if it be I, let me see it that I may leave it; if he hear of any threatening; he says Lord is it I? O teach me, that I may be humbled; when he hears of any grace; Lord is it I, that have this grace? O if it be not I, O let it be I; a quickened mind, is an applying mind; now if the mind be yet dead, it cares not for applying, though it know never so much, yet it lets the word still be a stranger unto it, it does not take it home to itself; like the hearers there in Hosea; as God says, I write to them the great things of my Law, but they were counted as a strange thing, Hos. 8:12, they would not take them home, now a quickened mind takes them home; this reproof is to me, this Commandment is to me; this reproof is to me; nay, when a reproof to ones thinking of all other should seem least to concern him; as when

our Savior Christ spake against rich men; O how hardly shall a rich man enter into the Kingdom of God! Yet the Apostles took it to themselves; they were amazed says the Text, Matth. 19:25, one would have thought the doctrine should little concern them; alas, they were not so rich, but they applied it though, fearing least that little that they had should draw their hearts away from God; this then is the first.

Secondly, the meditating of the mind; this is another stirring act of the mind; a natural man may think of his eternal good now and then, but this is nothing, his mind is dead for all that. But when a man's mind runs on such things, now it is alive; look what your minds do run on, that your minds are alive to; Because it is most certain, that that is it which you respect most; as David says; I will meditate on thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways, Psal. 119:15. A dead mind may light on good thoughts, but when a man meditates of them, when his mind runneth upon such themes; this man's mind is alive to them, he gives his mind to them; as Paul says to Timothy; meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear, 1 Tim. 4:15, you may see this in ungodly men, they do not only think of the world, for so a godly man may do and must do, but their minds run on the world; they give their minds to it; it is the Apostles saying; they mind earthly things, Phil. 4:19, it may be they know gracious things, I but they mind earthly; they cannot find in their heart to give their minds to God's word and will, so that would you prove yourselves and your minds to be alive towards God? Labor that your minds may bend their meditations that way; let your minds run on him, and how ye may have his favor, and how ye may keep it, how ye take heed of offending of him; a man is yet dead, that does not give his mind to these things; whose mind does not run on them daily. And therefore beloved as ever ye do desire to have a proof of your life towards God, let your minds run on

these things, give diligent heed that they may not slip out of your minds; as the Apostle says, ye ought to give so much the more diligent heed to the things which ye have heard, least at any time ye let them slip. Heb. 2:1, if they do slip away ye know not how, as the flesh will let them go, if ye do not take heed, call for them again as God. says Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors, Isa. 46:8.

Thirdly, the considering of the mind; when the mind looks cursorily on things, what is this but the remissness and looseness of the mind? Now when the mind comes to consider seriously of them, now it quickens up itself, now it looks wisely and intently on them indeed; alas all our knowledge of the truth, all our approving of good courses, all is nothing without consideration; our knowledge and approbation are dead things without this; even as good, as if we had no knowledge at all, for all the good it will do us, if we do not consider; as God says; Israel doth not know, my people do not consider, Isa. 1:3, look what our minds do consider from day today, that our minds are lively on; consideration is the eagerness of the mind, when the mind cares not for an object, it will not trouble itself to consider of, a less act will serve such a thing well enough; but look what the mind is inclined unto, there it will not go slightly and lightly to work, there 'twill take pains, nay, it counts it no pains to perpend and to weigh things as in a Ballance; as it is said of Mary, look what she heard from Christ, she kept it and pondered it in her heart, Luk. 2:19, she pondered it, and weighed it in a balance, O it was matter of great weight with her mind; where the mind is alive, there it will consider and ponder and weigh, nay, there is not a circumstance, but the mind will take it to consideration. Take a man that is alive to the things here below, how considerative is that man, in all matters of that nature: As for example now, for his gain; he takes everything into consideration that may make for his gain; He will have his wits about him, when he buys or sells, when he sows or reaps; he

considers with himself; that he will not sow too soon, or too late in the year, or a grain that the ground will not bear, he considers how long it was since it was fallow, how long it will bear, till it be laid fallow again; he considers when he may sell dearest, when he may buy cheapest; when is the best time to put off a commodity. This is the liveliness of his mind in these things. Take this man now for his soul, his mind is stark heavy, any loose thoughts shall serve turn for that, he does not consider here. But when a man is a live unto God, now his considerations run out this way, now he is considerative this way, for his soul, for his spiritual and eternal good. Beloved consideration is a lively act of the mind; as you may see there in Moses. Know therefore this day and consider it in thy heart; that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, Deut. 4:39, that is, do not only know it, but quicken up thy mind to consider it; this will do thee good indeed; this is a very perfect Act of the mind; as we see in David; when I consider the Heavens the work of thy hands, the Moon, and the Stars which thou hast ordained; then I say, Lord what is man? Psal. 83,4, you see how stirring his mind was, when he considered the heavens and the earth, it wrought mightily on him; it made him the more humble. Others see the Heavens every day, and it does not move them one whit to Humiliation before God. But when the mind comes once to consider, then it shakes off its dullness and remissness, then it grows busy, such a man will not go to Prayer, but he considers what he goes about, what a great God he is to speak to, what a vile creature himself is that is to pray to him; he will consider how he may pray with faith and hope and feeling of his wants; how he may rise up from his knees not without profit. Now he will not go to the word, but he will consider what it is he repairs to, now all his mind is how he may get good, now he is busy in every duty; when he is tempted to do as others do, he considers what the issue will be, and this makes him forbear. Beloved, this is the life of our minds, when they consider

things; when we consider our latter end; when we consider God's promises; when we consider his threatening's, when we take his commandments into our deep consideration, when we consider the danger of sin, we do not only know all these things but we consider them. Though we know near so much, yet except we consider what we know, our minds are lumpish and dead; consideration is the activity of the mind; and therefore if we would prove ourselves to be alive towards God, let us put on consideration a days.

Fourthly, the remembering of the mind; when the mind forgets itself every day, this is nothing but the deadness of the mind; for if it be alive to a thing, it will be sure to remember itself of that, if it can; Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a Bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number, Jer. 2:32, that is, my people are dead-minded to me; if they regarded me, they would remember themselves every day, to serve me; look what a man is alive to, the mind will be sure to remember us of that; we can have no journey to take, but our minds remember us of it; no business to do, to feed our Cattle, to milk our kine every morning, and evening, to shear our sheep every Lammas, if we forget anything in this kind, presently it's a 100, to one, but we remember ourselves; now when a man is alive to the best things, in some measure, he will remember himself of them every day; so David did, I remembered thy name O Lord, yea, in the night too, and so I kept thy Law, Psal. 119:55. I remembered myself, and I would be sure to do what God bid me do; it may be his heart began to arise, but presently he remembered himself, and beat it down again; it may be some other lust began to be up, but by and by he remembered him, and checked his own soul; when the mind is alive towards God, the knowledge of the word does not lie dead in that man; but still he remembers it at every need; when the Sabbath is coming; then thinks he I remember what God bade me do. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; when the Sacrament

comes, then he remembers himself, O thinks he, let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup; now the mind thinks, I will labor to remember God continually; whatever I forget, I will not forget him; when I rise up, when I lie down, still I will set myself to remember him; when I go out, when I come home; whatever the Devil say, whatever the flesh whisper, I will labor still to remember God; if I be tempted to wrath; then I desire to remember what God says; give not place to the Devil; when I feel spiritual laziness, then I will unfeignedly endeavor to remember what God speaks unto me, cursed is he that does the work of the Lord negligently, &c.

Fifthly, the inventing's or the devising's of the heart; where the mind is naturally bent and alive, there it is witty, if riches, if preferment, if pleasure, if learning be a man's lust that he lives, in there he is witty; so when a man is a live unto God, his wit will have that way it's vent; as Christ says, I find out witty inventions Prov. 8:12, he speaks not only of himself, But of his grace in everyone, that is this; when the mind is alive and set towards Christ, it will find out witty inventions; nay, it's a strange thing though men have no parts, yet if they be worldly, how witty they are for such matters; and so for good people, whose minds are turned towards God, though they be of very weak parts, yet how witty they will be in good things; what pretty ways they will have to do good, to shun offenses; to break occasions of sin; as a Minister in his preaching; as Paul says, I caught you with guile, 2 Cor. 12:16, so let man have a liberal mind, the Prophet says he will devise liberal things, Isa. 32:8, mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good; Prov. 14:22, whence comes the blockishness of our minds; but from this, that our minds are so dead; if our minds were more alive towards God, it would make us more graciously witty, we should devise good things, find out admirable inventions, it would teach us plots against Satan, plots against the flesh, as the wicked,

their minds are full of sinful devises, fetches, stratagems, policies, a man would wonder to see how witty the devil is in them, to carry them headlong to hell, &c.

Sixthly, and lastly, the judging of the mind. But I spake of this not long ago; and therefore I will let it alone now; thus I have showed you, what a lively Christian is in regard of his mind.

Now the next is, that we show you what a live Christian is in regard of the heart, &c.

And then in regard of the conscience, &c. and then in regard of the affections, &c.

SERMON XVI.

And art Dead - REVEL. 3:1.

The point we are in, is this; That a dead Christian is as good as no Christian at all. First, we have opened the meaning of this point; and showed you what is meant by a dead Christian. Secondly, we have showed you that this is so, by going over all the graces of God's spirit; a man hath near a one of them all that is dead; again by going over all the duties of Christian Religion; ye heard, a man does near a one of them all, as long as he does them only in a dead hearted manner. Thirdly, I showed you the reasons of this point, why a dead Christian is even as no Christian at all; there be many reasons of it, it stands with good reason that it should be so. Fourthly, we began to show you the uses of this point.

First, how wide then are they that are profanely wicked if they that are Christians, and do the things contained in the Gospel are rejected, because they do them with a dead heart, where shall they appear that will not do them at all?

Secondly, another use was to condemn these times of ours, wherein for the most part people are dead. There be not many that do live like Christians at all in outward appearance, and yet how many of that little number are even dead and without life? They draw near unto God with their outward man, but their hearts are far from him, Matth. 15:8.

Thirdly, another use was to show you the danger of being a dead Christian, I showed it in seven things. But I will not name them again.

In the fourth place we are come to show you, what it is to be alive Christian; a Christian quickened up towards God; and here I showed you, First, who is the principal and prime cause of this life and quickening, and that is God, who quickeneth the dead; God the Father quickens whom he will; God the Son he quickens whom he will, and God the Holy Ghost, he is the spirit of life.

Secondly, I showed you what is the Instrument of this life, and that is faith; this faith when it is a true and a lively faith, it makes a man adhere to the fountain of life. That thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life, Deut. 30:20. Faith is the having of God for our God, as the Apostle says, He that hath the Son hath life. Thirdly, I showed you the parts of this life; and the parts of it I showed you were three. The first is, the life of justification, Rom. 5:18. The second is, the life of sanctification. Eph. 2:5. The third is, the life of consolation or comfort, Psal. 85:6.

Now because the life of sanctification is here principally intended, when a man is quickened up towards God, and all his holy ways; therefore I descended down to the branches of this life, and quickening in all the powers of the soul. The last day we began to search about the understanding, what is the life and quickening of that towards God.

And first, we showed you that bare knowing is not it; a man may know God and all his ways contemplatively, and yet not be quickened up to them; as Israel said, my God we knowledge thee, Hos. 8:2, and yet as it follows, they were not quickened up for all that; the Gentiles knew God, Rom. 1:21. I but they did not glorify him as God; it was dead knowledge; nay, we showed you that bare knowledge is not so much as the light of the understanding, much less the life of it; as our Savior Christ says, if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness, Matth. 6:23, that is, a man may have that light, and yet be in darkness, and therefore much more in deadness.

Secondly, I showed you that approving of God and his ways is not the quickening of the understanding neither. Saint Paul shows that a man may approve the best things and yet be dead, Rom. 2:18. The Devil approved admirably of Jesus Christ, I know thee who thou art, even the holy one of God, Mark. 1:24, suppose thou provest and allowest of all goodness; O says the Apostle, Happy is the man that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth, Rom. 14:22, so may I say, thou mayest allow of strictness, and of all the strictest orders of God, and yet have a dead mind, and condemn thyself. I but, I am not strict though.

Thirdly, I showed you that thinking of God and of heavenly things; this is not the life of the mind neither; a man may think of them all now and then, and yet be dead to them all notwithstanding; nay, this

may increase thy condemnation; therefore when a sinner sins, it may be he thinks of God's word at some time, God's word forbids this, and yet he does it, though this increases his condemnation.

Fourthly, I showed you that studying of God, and of faith, and all the Doctrine of life; this is not the life of the mind neither; and this is that which deceives indeed; when a man's studying is practical; this is an argument of life; the heart of the righteous studieth to answer, Prov. 15:28. Scholars because their minds are not of the world, may be all the day long, but from morning till night, their minds are about God, and all Divinity. And they think it maybe they are heavenly minded; alas, no, their minds may be as dead towards God for all this, as the worldlings, that is musing on his pelf as long a time.

Then I came to show you affirmatively what the life of the mind is; the life of the mind is, when it is stirred up towards God and all his gracious ways; as Peter says; I will stir up your pure minds, 2 Pet. 3:1, that is, I would quicken up your minds; when the mind is stirring towards God, it was stirring towards other things before, but now it is stirring towards heaven, towards repentance and amendment of life, and Christ, and how to please God and the like, now it is quickened up towards him. I showed you there be six stirring acts of the mind.

The first is, the applying of the mind; when the mind does not only know a thing, but it applies it to oneself; this is a stirring Act of the mind; look where the mind of man is alive, if it be alive towards the world; if it know any way unto profit, or preferment, or the having of what it likes, presently it will apply it; so when a man is alive towards God, now his mind hath a applying disposition, look what he knows about God, he applies it to himself, for his own edification, instruction, humiliation, direction and guide; as Eliphaz says; so this

it is, hear it and know it for thy good, Job. 5:27, that is, do not only know it, but be quickened up to apply it to thyself; hath thy mind an applying disposition, doest thou apply the word of God to thyself to make it thine own. Thou knowest what God is, I but hast thou a disposition in thy mind, to apply him to thyself? This is a quickened mind, a man will not let his knowledge lie swimming in his mind, but he turns it upon himself, and makes it his own.

2. The meditating of the mind; the minding of the mind a natural man may think of God and his commandments as ye heard. I but doest thou mind them? If thou doest mind them from day today, now thy mind is quickened indeed; carnal men think it may be of heavenly things, alas, that is nothing but frigus & socordia as Calvin speaks, I says as Saint Paul; but they mind earthly things; look what a man is alive unto, his mind runs on that, whether it be God or the creature; if thy mind be quickened up towards God, then thy mind runs on him from day today; how thou mayest approve thyself unto him, how thou mayest partake of his favor, how thou mayest eschew the temptations of Satan, how thou mayest follow after Christ, be sensible of thy sins be affected towards holy duties, does thy mind run on such things? This is it.

Thirdly, The considering of the mind; when the mind looks cursorily on things, what's this but the looks and remissness of the mind, now when the mind comes to consider seriously of them, now it quickens up itself, as Moses says; Know and consider that God he is God, Deut. 4:39, that is, do not only know, that's but a dead thing, but stir up thyself and consider wishly of it; hath the Lord turned about thy mind that now thou hast begun to have a considering frame in thy mind, to ponder thy ways; to weigh the Sermons that thou hearest, as it is said of Mary, she pondered Christ's words in her heart; now thou considerest how to pray, how to come to God's ordinances, how to

carry thyself in thy calling; now thou doest not go hair-brainly on his before, but thou takest things into consideration.

Fourthly, the remembering of the mind, when the mind knows how to do well, but the man does it not, he forgets himself every day, what's this but the deadness of the mind; if the mind be alive to a thing, it will be sure to remember it self of that. Can a maid forget her Ornaments? But my people have forgotten me, Jer. 2:32, therefore they are dead-hearted towards me; can a man forget to put on his clothes in the Morning? Can the worlding forget to plough his fields in time; to reap his Corn, when it's ripe; to milk his kine at night; nay, certainly he'll be sure to remember such things, why? His mind is alive to them; if he should chance to forget himself for a fit, by and by he remembers himself, so if the mind be alive towards God, it hath a remembering disposition towards him. O says David, I will not forget thy word, Psal. 119:16.

Fifthly the inventing and devising, and plotting and plodding, and contriving of the mind; if the mind be alive towards God, these Acts go towards God too, as the Prophet says, A liberal man will be devising liberal things, Isa. 32:8. Let a man be of weak parts, that's all one, yet when it is alive to the world, it's a strange thing to see how witty some are for the world to gather pelf, they have great reaches in these things; so when a man is alive toward God, though he be of weak parts, yet how witty he will be for good things; what pretty devises to do good, to understand evil, to shun offenses, to balk occasions of sin; as Paul says, I caught you with guile, 2 Cor. 12:16, whence comes the blockishness of our minds towards the best things, but merely of deadness, if our minds were more alive, they would help us to preach, help us to pray, help us with matters for edifying, discourse, they would help us from a 1000 snares, they

would be the more active, they would sooner smell a lust, spy Satan, observe the dealings of God.

Sixthly, The judgment of the mind; when the mind's lust dictate is for God; when a man is judicious, this is it that leads men a days, their judgments not all their knowledge nay, learning; you shall have many a learned man will use to play the fool, and does every day very foolishly, because his Judgment is foolish; the reason is a man never takes any course, nor speaks any word, nor thinks any thought, but first his judgment tells him, it is best to do so at that time; never does the drunkard turn in at the Ale-house, but his judgment says to his will, choose to turn in; you will say, it may be he knows he ought not to do so, I but it is not men's knowledge that leads men, but men's judgments; when men's judgment says, this is not for me, this is most pleasant, this is most profitable, this is most honorable, this is most delightful; now when the judgment of the mind is in some measure set towards God, now the mind is quickened; as David says, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way, Psal. 119:128, that is, by the mercy of God, I have good judgment, be the way what it will be, though never so pleasing to the flesh, still my judgment says choose God's way, that's ever more best.

Thus far we proceeded the last day namely to learn or see what is the quickening of the mind; that ye may know whether our understanding be dead or alive; now what remains but this that we all labor for such an understanding; many of us understand much, so much that if it were quickened up to us, it would do us a world of good; if we did use to apply it and make it our own, if we would give our minds to it, if we would ponder it and seriously weigh it, and remember it for our use in all our ways, if we had a devising mind for good a mind plotting for heaven, and continuing how we may best

glorify God, and secure our own souls. A judicious mind, a practical mind. This is a good understanding indeed; as the Prophet says, a good understanding have they that do thereafter, Psal. 111:10, when what we understand does not lie dead in our heads, but our minds are quickened up to it, this is a good understanding my brethren, this understanding is not to be had in Books, God only can help us with it, as David says, O Lord give me understanding and I shall live, Psal. 119:144 you will say what need he keep such a stir for understanding? Had not he the Law before his eyes? Could not he read there, and get understanding: O but it will be all dead, Lord unless thou give me understanding from above, if thou wilt give me understanding, then I shall live.

Now I come to the heart, to search what the life of the heart is, every Act of the heart, is not an argument of life.

First, there be outside Acts of the heart; people think if they do not dissemble before men; then they are no Hypocrites. O they are hearty they say; as there is an outside of the outward man, so there is an outside of the heart. Thou mayest be hearty in some sort in good duties, and yet be stark dead; namely if it be only the outside of thy heart; my Son keep my saying in the midst of thy heart, Prov. 4:21, not in the outside of thy heart, no, no. I would have the inside of thy heart too; a man that is alive to the world, the world hath not only the heart, but the very inside of the heart, the word is deep in the heart; so if thou beest alive towards God, God is in the deep of thy heart, the word is deep in thy heart, nor like the salt water in the Sea only, on the Top. Ye know what became of the Seed, that wanted depth of the earth, Matth. 13:5, so it is with the heart, when the word does not get into the depth of it, it never quickens in it. The heart may be so far towards goodness, as to bring a man to good duties a days, it may bring one to Sermon or to Prayer, to others of the

Ordinances of God, and other good courses, but what's all this, as long as it is dead; the life lies in the bottom of the heart, look what the bottom of the heart stands unto, that's a man alive unto, then thou art alive towards God, when the bottom of thy heart is unto him; when thou laborest to obey him from the bottom of thy heart, when thou callest upon him from the bottom of thy heart, like Sugar at the bottom of the Cup, stir up the bottom, the best is at bottom, so thou must stir up the bottom of thy heart, the heart is a deep thing, Psal. 64:6, though religion be on the top, yet if the world be in the deep, thy heart is dead towards God; as it is with a puddle, it may be clear at the top, fair water at the top, but there's nothing but mud at the bottom.

Secondly, there be flitting Acts of the heart, be they never so deep in the heart, yet if they do not stay there, the heart is dead still. Solomon says of his Father; he said unto me, let thy heart retain my words, keep my Commandments and live, Prov. 4:4, though the word does stir near so much for the present, this is not life, except thou retain it, and hold it fast, a man may have many flashes of life in him, but as long as the heart does not keep them, it remains dead, they that seek the Lord, the heart shall live, Psal. 22:26, that is, when it is not a flash, but it is an Act that abides by a man, the heart is steadfastly set towards God, now his heart lives; now when people are moved only by fits, they are humbled by fits, and startled by fits, their righteousness is like a morning dew, ye know there the dew is every morning, but all the day it is gone, may be when morning comes, there it is again, but all the day it is gone. It is true there may be horrible offs and ons in the Children of God, to the confounding of their faces before God. But I do not speak to discourage them. But let us take heed we may have admirable flashes of life, fits of humbling's, fits of enlargements, fits of self-denial, sits of great eagerness after God, the heart may be towards God for a sit, a false

heart; as the Land of Israel; their heart was firmly towards him for a sit, they remembered that God was their rock and that the high God was their redeemer, but their heart was not right with him, they were not steadfast in his Covenant, Psal. 78:37, mark, it was but a fit; like Esays crying for a fit. This is a poor argument of life then; no, no; the flitting acts of the heart, may be no acts of life.

Thirdly, there be wouldings and wishing's in the heart; and these cozen the world more than any other; these they think verily are effects of true life.

First, because these are not in the outside of the heart, but lie, or at least seem to lie very deep in the heart; it is very certain, that many natural men would give the whole world if they had it, as they do verily conceive, that they had true grace, that they were Saints, that they could leave their sins, that they were in a child of God's case, they deeply wish it, it is a profound would in their hearts; and therefore now when they see such yearnings in their hearts, they do verily apprehend, this is life certainly. Hence it is that they will say they would from the bottom of their hearts serve God, they have mere a lust but they would full fain have God deliver them from that; indeed they confess in their consciences, if they might have a 1000 worlds, they cannot give it over, I but they would fain they could, and thus they deceive themselves; because this act seems to be from the depth of their heart; this fancy you may see to be in men's hearts out of Mich. 6:6,7, where ye see, though they could not find in their hearts to walk humbly before God, to live justly and righteously, yet they would give thousands they could. O say they what would not we give for the sin of our souls? No question but they thought they were alive, but God told them they were not.

Secondly, another reason why they think this is a token of life is, because this is no flitting act neither; But they have these wouldings every day; nay, you can never come to them, but still they have these, they would do well; nay, they would do as well as the best; thus they hope they have a fountain of living water in them that springeth up daily; thus it was with them in the Prophets, they seek me daily says God, Isa. 58:2, they thought it was their every days work to serve God, and where they did fail, they thought they could say, they would do better, they sought the Lord daily.

Thirdly, because they find that this is attributed to the Saints; as the Apostle says, ye cannot do the things that ye would, Gal. 5:17, nay, the Apostle Paul himself, speaks it of himself, the good that I would do, that do I not, and the evil which I would not do, that do I, Rom. 7:19. So that thus they argue now, when they find this same woulding in their hearts, and cannot do as they would, O say they, I may say with the Apostle, the good which I would do that do I not; I cannot do as I would. Thus they hoodwink their own souls. It is very true these be the Saints groans, and a part of their sighing towards God, that they cannot do as they would, this makes them a burden to themselves; and so again when they find themselves disturbed and limited and straightened by their flesh, this is a comfort to their souls, and an argument of God's infinite goodness unto them, that they can unfeignedly say, they would do better; they do please him in some measure through his grace, and they would please him better; they do some good by his heavenly spirit, and they would do more; they do resist every sin, and they would resist it more. This is very true. But yet how many a thousands lull themselves asleep in security, by the fancy of this thing. The heart may put forth daily wouldings, and be as dead as a carcass to all the works of grace; as our Savior Christ says, Strive to enter in at the straight Gate, for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, Luke 13:24, q.d. O

stir up yourselves, quicken up your hearts, do not only seek to enter in; many seek to enter in, O they would enter in, and they would feign enter in, alas, alas, they are dead, they cannot therefore quicken up your hearts, and do ye more then so; I acknowledge that woulding is an argument of life in the heart.

First, when a man does believe God in some measure, and then would believe more, does oppose every known sin, and would oppose it more; does follow all manner of goodness, and would follow it more, when a man's would is above the simple will, as when a man will reach as high as he can, and then strains himself to reach higher, he takes all the Stools and Ladders that he can, and stands on tip-toes and would reach higher; this is an act of the will with some life; and therefore the Apostle when he says that Christians would more than they do, Gal. 5:17, in the verse going before, he tells them they must walk in the spirit though. q.d. if ye should say, ye walk in the spirit and do not, ye deceive your own selves; so that the woulding itself, is not a living act.

Secondly, a woulding is an act of a living heart, when it is a laborious woulding; so that there is another thing in the will, that is the living act and not woulding; namely, when the heart labors, and therefore the woulding is not it; I labor says the Apostle, yea, I labored more abundantly then they all, 1 Cor. 15:10, mark though he said in another place that he would; the good which I would do; yet that was not all, that had been a dead act, if that had been all; therefore he labored together with it. Well then; let us come to show you, what the life of the will is. In a word, the life of the heart is, when the heart will do a thing, it may be it is hindered a thousand times, but in some measure it will do it, cost it never so much, though flesh and blood, and world, and devil, and all be against it, yet it will do it; now the heart is alive it will believe, it will repent, it will strive against sin, it

will set God before its eyes, it will love him above all, fear him above all, regard him above all. I say though it meet with never so many hindrances without and within, pull-backs, rebellions, yet it will do it, now it's alive; when the spirit indeed is willing, Matth. 26:41, as Paul says, To will is present with me, Rom. 7:18, when a man can say it from the bottom of his heart, that a will is present with him. I will be ruled by God, I will deny myself; though the flesh be never so violent, and it may be many times, and often bears down all before it, yet there is a will present, that will stand it out, and that can never be borne down, the act may be borne down, now affections may be borne down. I but this still is present, I will be for God, he is my best, his will is my rule, his Law is my line, and I will be at his dispose; when it is thus in general, through all the ways of God, this is a living heart; when to will is present with it, as the author to the Hebrews says, his will was to live honestly, Heb. 13:18. As soon as ever the prodigal Son was come to this pass, that he could unfeignedly speak, I will arise, I will go to my Father, Luk. 15:18, you see his father presently says he was alive; this my Son was dead, but he is alive again; you will say, what if one had bound him hand and foot? That is all one; he will go, he will wrestle, he will bite the cord a sunder, if he cannot do that, O how he will cry out. O how they bind me here. I will arise; he will strive, he will not be quiet, he must go, and he will go; his will is absolutely to go, stopped or not stopped, his will is simply to go, if he can but get away, and leave an arm behind, nay, a foot behind, nay both; he will crawl, but he will to his Father; so when a man will leave his sinful courses, and he will have God for his God, he will have Christ, and there he will hang; come death, come fears, come temptations, there he will hang. This is that which God accepts, when the hearts will is to God, if there be first a willing mind it is accepted, 2 Cor. 8:12.

Now that this is the life of the heart I prove it thus.

First, because this is the perfectest operation of the heart, when it absolutely willeth a thing. There be many operations of the heart, but none of them is perfect but this as David said to his Son; my Son know thou the God of thy Father; and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a wiling mind, 1 Chron. 28:9, q.d. this is a perfect heart; when thy will is to serve him; however things go, thou wilt serve him; then thy heart is absolutely set towards God, this is the whole heart; I cried with my whole heart, hear me O Lord, I will keep thy Statutes, Psal. 119:145, what's all the deadness of men, but because either they have no heart to God's ways or but half hearts, as it is said of Ephraim, their heart is divided, and God hath but a piece; but when a man hath an absolute will hereunto, now he is alive, now his heart is perfect towards the Lord his God; as it is in sin, when a man does knows only go on in sin, but he will do it, his will is absolute that way, this man hath a perfect heart towards Satan, so it is here.

Secondly, because this is the might and strength of the heart; while a man's heart puts forth inferior acts towards God, he is dead to every good word and work. If he have any heart at all, it is but so so, as God said of Judah, how weak is they heart? Ezek. 16:30, such a man the devil can easily take him off at any time for a need; such a one can never stand it out to the end. But he is off and on, because the might of his heart is not towards God; now when the will is absolutely towards God, this man must needs be alive; for the might of his heart is towards God; as the Lord himself says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, Deut. 6:5.

Thirdly, because this makes everything possible; naturally a man cannot believe, he cannot resist his own flesh, he cannot overcome the world, he cannot live godly in all his ways, he cannot forgo his beloved lusts. But now when the heart comes once to be willing

towards God, now everything is possible. I may say of him, as Christ saith of faith. All things are possible to him that believes, Mark. 9:23, so all things are possible to him that willeth; as we use to say, there is nothing hard to a willing mind. And therefore godly men in Christ Jesus the Apostle calls them, <H&G>, &c. 2 Tim. 3:12.

Fourthly, because this takes in the manner of good duties too. as well as the matter; it is more a thousand times, then the bare doing of them; a dead heart will serve to do them. Put when the heart is made willing, this is more than the bare naked deed; as Paul says to the Corinthians about Alms, ye have begun not only to do, but also <H&G>, to be willing a year ago, 2 Cor. 8:10, as he says of his preaching; if I do it willingly I have a reward; but if against my will, &c. 1 Cor. 9:17, that is q.d. I may preach indeed, I may have so much heart to it, as to do the deed alas that is nothing; because if I do it willingly this is it; this is it brethren, this is the right manner too.

Fifthly, this is an argument that the heart hath an inward principle; what is the life of the heart but an inward principle of acting? Look where the heart is alive, there it works from within; there needs no compulsion to a covetous heart, to have regard of his profit; no; he regards it most willingly; he hath an inward principle to regard it; and therefore he is alive to it; now when the heart puts forth its will towards God, now it hath an inward principle of agency; it needs no constraint, as Peter says to Ministers; feed the flock of God, not by constraint but willingly, 1 Pet. 5:2, that is, do it very lively; do it with an inward principle, not because ye see others feed, not because ye see the disgrace, what will people think, if I should not preach constantly; not because ye dare not do otherwise, conscience will fly in your face; alas, ye may do it, that's with a dead heart. But do it willingly; where note this is the hearts life, this is an inward principle of the heart; now the heart will do it, though nobody else do it,

though he be hated for his labor, though he have no thank for his pains among men. Thus ye see this is the life of the heart.

Now for your better understanding, we will open this more particularly this willingness of the heart you see in the life of the heart, and it containeth seven things. First, the inclinations of the heart. Secondly, the intentions of the heart. Thirdly, the Elections of the heart. Fourthly, the aversations of the heart. Fifthly, the appropriating of the heart. Sixthly, the savoring's of the heart. Seventhly, the caring's of the heart. Beloved, these are the living acts of the heart, if these be converted to God in you, now your hearts are alive towards him. These make up the whole willingness of the heart.

First then, the inclinations of the heart; it may do a thousand thousand good things; with a dead heart. But mark if your hearts be inclined towards God; then ye serve God with a live heart, if the Lord hath inclined your heart to him; I have inclined my heart to perform thy Statutes always, even to the end Psal. 119:112. Hath God made you do thus, hath he inclined your heart to his name? Once ye were without heart, but now he hath inclined your heart to do good, now ye find sweet inclinations to every good duty, ye do not go to them as a Bear to the Stake, but now ye have an inward disposition to them, he hath given you a feeling of your sins and your wants, and that carries you to Prayer; a feeling of your Ignorance, and forget fullness; and that carries you to Sermons, that ye may learn more of God, that ye may see more into your own unworthiness, that ye may be stirred up in all his ways; ye do not only shun your own iniquities, in some measure, but your heart is inclined unto it, inclined to think of God, inclined to holy talk, inclined towards them that are Godly-minded; ye had no disposition to the works of God, heretofore, but now the Lord hath not only put you upon them, but inclined your heart towards them; ye feel inward impressions, that bows you; others may

be have good talk, but you feel an unfeigned desire to be edified, and that bows you unto it. Others may be do good things, but the Lord hath bent your heart to them; when you went to good duties heretofore, ye went against the hare, as a Stone does upwards; but now in some measure, the Lord hath put in a new nature, and ye feel an internal mover. This is life now.

Secondly, the intentions of the heart; we have a saying in Divinity *voluntas sua natura vult finem*; the heart naturally wills the end; now if God were our end, if communion with him, and sanctifying of God in our hearts and lives, were our end, our heart could not be dead towards his ways, nay, we should be very eager after them all; all our deadness comes from this, that God is only a matter by the by, with us: But if he were our end, then we would be mainly for him, and how to approve ourselves to him. Would we talk as we do, if edification were our end? Would we keep such company as we do, if mutual help towards eternal life were our end? Look what the heart does intend from day today, the heart is very earnest after it; therefore those that intend to rise if they can in the world, they are very earnest in the pursuit after the same, flatter fawn, please, humor, they will do anything to the attaining of it; if it be to rid a 100 miles, it's nothing with them; if it cost them never so much, O how greedy are they! If a man intend to gather an estate if he can, or to live in pleasure if he can, all the world are eager in their intentions; the heart runs naturally on after it's ends. Now when the heart is alive towards God, these intentions are towards him, now the heart standeth thus, so I may obey God, so I may take heed of dishonoring God, so I may keep my heart close to him, this is that I do desire; now I go to work, so I may keep the world from carrying away my heart, I shall be glad; now I am going to Prayer, so I may draw down a blessing, and get some farther help to walk before God, this is the thing I aim at; now I go to be in such a company, so I may discharge

a good conscience, carry myself well, and not bring dishonor to God, and the like; you may see this in Paul, what was the matter, he was so eager to deny himself, I count all dross and dung? The intentions of his heart, were after Christ; O says he, that I might know him, Phil. 3:10.

Thirdly, the elections and choosing's of the heart; this is another part of the hearts life; no man is dead to that which he chooses rather than anything else; now if we did still choose the ways of God, we could not be dead to them; when we are dead to them at any time, it is because we could even find in our heart, to make another choice; and therefore if we would know whether our heart is alive unto goodness, whether do we choose the way of goodness every day before any other way? As David says, I have chosen the way of truth, Psal. 119:30, as the Lord says of the good eunuchs; they choose the things that please me, Isa. 56:4. Beloved whatever we do or think, or speak, still there be two ways propounded to us one that is God's way, another that is our own way, now which do we choose every day; what thoughts do we choose rather of the two to think, what words do we choose, what actions, what courses, when we are together, what conference do we choose, when alone, what do we choose, there be two kinds of eating, and drinking; which choose we? When we are provoked, there be two ways to take, either to be impatient, and suffer our passions to arise, or to quell them, and beat them down, which do we choose; do we say as that good man said; Lord let thy hand help me, for I have chosen thy precepts, Psal. 119:173.

Fourthly, the aversions of the heart, ye know the heart it chooses what it likes, so there is something that it shuns; now if thou wouldst know whether thy heart be alive towards God, do but think with thyself, what it uses to shun when thou art angry, is it disgrace or sin;

it ever shuns something or other; either what God dislikes, or what thou, every day and hour, something it puts off; does it put off things that are offensive to thy flesh, or things that are offensive to God; Here lies thy hearts life; if thy heart be alive towards God, it is of this temper, to put off those things that are displeasing to God; I hate vain thoughts says David, Psal. 119:113, mark his heart was of this temper, to put of all those things that were contrary to God; it may be many of those thoughts, his own heart would have rather kept. I but when his heart was alive towards God, he put them off though; I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep thy word, Psal. 119:101, now when good things shall be put to a man every day by the word, and by conscience, and a man hath a refusing heart to them, this is a dead heart; as God put to Judah to return, but they refused to return, Jer. 5:3. God put shame before them for their sins, but they refused to be ashamed, Jer. 3:3, now my brethren, examine your bosoms, how stand the refusals of your hearts, do you refuse good or evil every day? If thou canst refuse temporal evil and not spiritual, thou has a dead heart.

Fifthly, the savoring's of the heart; this is another piece of the hearts will; something there is that every heart savors most, and that it is which it is alive unto: now then if thy heart be alive unto God, it will savor the things of God most; it will not only do good duties but savor them too; not only hear the word of God, but it will have an admirable savor with the heart, as the Apostle says it will have the savor of life unto life, 2 Cor. 2:16, as the Church says to Christ, because of the savor of thy good ointments, therefore the Virgins love thee, Cant. 1:3. Oh how it will savor a reproof, how it will relish; but if holy things have no sweet savor in thy heart; it may be thou canst not for shame of the world not seem to stand for them, thy conscience will not let thee, but thou wilt give them a good word, and seem to approve them, but there's no more savor in them, then in the

white of an egg, nay, they are irksome, and untoothsome, they do not go merrily down with thee, like sweet conserves; assure thyself, thy heart is a dead heart.

Sixthly, the cares of the heart, this is another show of the hearts will; what the heart is alive to, it carketh and careth for it, and therefore if thy heart be alive towards God, how careful will it be that it may not offend him? Yea what care, 2 Cor. 7:11. As the Apostle says to Titus; I will have thee affirm constantly, that they which believe in God, must be careful to maintain good works, Tit. 8:8, therefore if a Minister be alive towards God, he will be full of care for his people, how he may pull them from their sins, how he may draw them to God, how he may most do them good; as Paul says of Timothy; he will naturally care for your Estate, Phil. 2:20. True, a man hath many things to do in the world, many cares how to live, how to pay rent at quarter day, what may become of his poor Children, &c. I but if the heart be alive towards God, it will labor to cast these cares upon God; cast all your care upon him, 1 Pet. 5:7. But for heavenly things, for the having and keeping of a good conscience, it will be full of cares about these things, yea it how may get to be more afraid of sin, how may I get a weaned heart from the earth? It will be caring how he may be provided for evil times, how he may stand in the woeful day.

Seventhly, the appropriating of the heart; the esteeming of the heart; what's the hearts jewel, that's the heart most alive to; now think, what does thy heart prize most of all; if it be alive towards God, he is dearest to thee; his will dearer then thine, his glory then thy credit, his word then thy life; as Paul says, I do not count my life dear, so that I may finish my course with joy, Act. 20:24, this was the Jewel of his heart, how he might do the work that God set him to do, that he might finish his course; so likewise if thy heart be alive, love will be like a precious ointment, Psal. 133:2, heavenly wisdom more

precious than Rubies, Prov. 3:15, a promise will be precious to the heart, 2 Pet. 1:4. So also faith will be a precious thing; 1 Pet. 1:7. But above all Christ will be precious to the heart, to you that believe he is precious, 1 Pet. 2:7, these are heart Jewels; these it endears most; it will rather part with anything than these; nay, it will mortgage anything to redeem these again. These things are little esteemed among men, in their consciences; indeed they say they are better than the whole world, I but their heart does not greatly esteem them, nay, it slights them and seeks them accordingly; this is a dead heart.

Eighthly, thus ye see what is the life of the heart; it is the absolute will of the heart, when the heart is inclined towards, God when it intends God, when it makes choice of his ways, and puts off whatsoever is contrary to them, when it prizes and endears every one of them all, when it savors them, and is full of care for them. I might add another, the cleaving of the heart, when the heart cleaves to the Lord, as it is said of Hezekiah, that he clave to the Lord, 2 King. 18:6, when the heart closes in with God, and will not let him go, no nor let his ways go, it sticks to a Godly course, all the world cannot pull him away, not fire, nor faggot; though it be never so much hindered, and interrupted by the flesh, yet now it hath a sticking quality in it, as David says, I have stuck to thy Testimonies, Psal. 119:31.

Now because when the heart is made willing on this fashion towards God, there is left still an adverse unwillingness, by reason of the flesh; so that the heart can never put forth these acts, without horrible clogs; therefore now in a live heart towards God, there be other acts, that are not in a heart that is alive to the world. And the reason is this. Because when the heart is alive to the world, the hearts of its own nature is willing unto that, and there is no unwillingness mixed together with it; never was it heard, that the heart should be willing, and unwilling to the same thing, till saving grace came to

divide asunder the will in two; ye know the regenerate are two men apiece, and they have two wills, one towards God, and another towards sin and the world; nay, it's the same will; that hath both these branches in it, and this does much puzzle the hearts, when they find such a deal of unwillingness in them towards God.

Therefore I say there be other acts of life in the heart towards God, and they are five.

The first, is the preparing of the heart, whereby the heart prepareth itself towards God, 2 Chron. 30:18,19, 1 Sam. 7:3.

The second, is the Combating of the heart, Gal. 5:17,23. <H&G> I beat down my body, 1 Cor. 9:27.

The third, is the endeavoring of the heart, it reaches forth itself, Phil. 3:13, it stirs up itself; it awakens itself; why art thou so sad, O my soul? Psal. 42:5.

The fourth is the binding of itself by determinations, and purposes; so Paul bound his own heart, with a determination before he came unto Corinth, 1 Cor. 2:2. Daniel knowing how unwilling his heart would be to abstain from the Kings meat, though by grace he was willing; therefore his heart, bound itself with a purpose; he purposed not to defile himself with the Kings meat, Dan. 1:8. So Act. 11:23.

The fifth, is the groaning and sighing of the heart, as David though he were willing, yet feeling the unwillingness of the flesh therewithal fetch a groan; O that my ways were so direct, that I might keep thy Statutes, Psal. 119:5. So Paul groaned earnestly to be dissolved, 2 Cor. 5:2. This is the putting of the heart more forward. These I have named you may; name more it may be. But thus if the heart be alive towards God, it will do: because it feels a great deal of unwillingness,

it gets what advantage it can of itself, to make itself willing; as the Church, ere ever was aware, my soul made me like the Chariots of Aminadab. Cant. 6:12, it sets itself right; as the soul when it's dead, it neglecteth this act quite and clean from day today, as the Psalmist says of dull Israel, he calls them a generation, that set not their heart aright, Psal. 78:8.

SERMON XVII.

And art Dead - REVEL. 3:1.

We are come to declare what it is to be a live Christian, quickened up towards God, and all his holy ways, and after sundry passages we came to inquire what is the life of the soul; and here I propounded five things. First, what is the life of the mind. Secondly, what is the life of the heart. Thirdly, what is the life of the conscience. Fourthly, what is the life of the memory. And Fifthly, what is the life of the affections.

We have spoken of the first, what is the life of the mind; ye know by nature, the mind is alive to the things of the world, and dead towards God; and therefore we inquired what the life of the mind is; it cannot be the bare knowing of things; it may be dead to what it knows; it cannot be the bare thinking of things, nor the bare approving of things, nor the bare studying of things; the mind may perform all these acts to a thing that it is dead to; no, no; the life of the mind is, First, the applying of the mind. Secondly, the meditating, and minding of the mind. Thirdly, the considering and weighing of the mind. Fourthly, the remembering of the mind. Fifthly, the devising and plotting, and projecting, and contriving of the mind. Sixthly, the

Judgment of the mind. The <H&G> of the mind; look where the mind is alive, there it puts forth these dispositions; and therefore when the mind is alive towards God, it lets out these towards him.

Then in the second place, we came to inquire what is the life of the heart; and this we spake of the last day; we showed you the heart, may be somewhat towards a thing and yet be dead towards it for all that?

First, there be shallow acts of the heart, the outside acts of the heart; there may be so much heart, as to bring a man to good duties, to constant preaching, and hearing, and praying, and the like; and civil carriage, and the like; and yet the heart dead to them all. This is not the life of the heart, The life of the heart lies at the bottom of the heart; not in the outside; no, it lies deep within; as Solomon says, my Son keep my sayings in the midst of thy heart; Prov. 4:21.

Secondly, there be flitting acts of the heart. Though they be never so deep in the heart, yet if they be such as do not stay there; the heart is dead still; for if it were alive it would keep them. Let thy heart retain my words; keep my Commandments and live; Prov. 4:4. Though the word do stir one never so much for the present; This is no life except thou retain it and hold it fast; a man may have many flashes of life in him, but as long as the heart does not keep them it remains dead; when people are moved only by sits, humbled by fits, startled by sits, their righteousness is only as a morning dew, a man may have sits of quickening, sits of awakening, sits of enlargements, and sits of humiliation, and remain in a dead state; what a fine fit had Israel? They remembered that God was their Rock, and that the holy God was their redeemer; Yet their heart was not right with him; they were not steadfast in his Covenant, Psal. 78:37, mark it was but a sit; like Esau's crying for a fit. Therefore, this is not it.

Thirdly, there be wouldings and wishing's in the heart; and these cozen the world more than any other; these they think verily are effects of true life; I told you reasons why people think verily these are arguments of life; and then I showed you reasons, why they are not; and then I showed you the difference between the wouldings of a live heart, and the wouldings of a dead heart. But I let all these pass.

Then I proceeded to show you what the life of the heart is; namely, when it puts forth an absolute will to a thing; so that when the heart puts forth an absolute will towards God and all his holy ways, then it is alive towards God, when a man is at this pass, that he will believe, come what can come of it, he will believe, and he will repent and he will hate every sin, love God above all, fear God above all, and he will set God before his eyes, though it meet with never so many hindrances without and within; pull backs, rebellions, yet it will do it for all them; now it's alive; as Paul says, to will is present with me, Rom. 7:18, when a man can say from the bottom of his heart, that to will is present with him; I will be ruled by God. I will deny myself, though the flesh be never so violent, and may be many times and often, bears down all before it, yet he hath a will present within that will stand it out, and that can never be borne down, the act may be borne down, and affections may be borne down. I but this will is still present; I will be for God; he is my chief good, his Law is my rule, his will is my will, and I will be at his dispose; as the Author to the Hebrews; says, His will was to live honestly, Heb. 13:18. As soon as ever the prodigal Son was come to this pass, that he could unfeignedly speak it; I will arise, and I will go to my Father, Luk. 15:18, you see the next new; ye hear of him was, he was alive; his Father said he was alive. This my Son was dead, but now he is a live; you will say, what if one had bound him hand and foot, that is all one now, he will go; he will bite the cord aforesaid if he can, if one should hold, he'll wrestle, he'll bite, he will scratch, he will spit in his face, if

he cannot get loose, he will cry out, O how they bind me here; O my father, my father, I will go to my Father, he cannot be quiet without his Father, he will go to his Father; if they should cut off his Legs, he will crawl to his Father; I say, when the will is absolute once towards God, then it is alive towards God.

I gave you reasons of this, why this must needs be the life of the heart.

First, Because this is the perfectest operation of the heart; when it absolutely willeth a thing. There be many operations of the heart, but none of them is perfect but this; as David said to his Son, my Son, know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, 1 Chron. 28:9, q d. this is a perfect heart; when thy will is to serve him how ever things go, thou wilt serve him; now thy heart is perfectly set towards him.

Secondly, because this is the might and the strength of the heart; ye know the heart is a very hard lusty thing, where it is absolutely set; and therefore when a man will go on in sin, whatever come of it, reprove him, threaten say what you will, he will still go on; we say he hath a hard heart; nay, the Scripture calls his heart a Rock, or a Stone; I say the resolute will is the strength of the heart; now therefore, when that is towards God, his strength and might is to God; as God says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, Deut. 6:5, a dead heart gives only a few sick and weak acts towards God; How weak is thy heart, Ezek. 16:30, therefore that is not it; an absolute will that only is it; for that's the might of the heart.

Thirdly, because this makes everything possible; naturally a man cannot believe he cannot habitually resist his own flesh, he cannot overcome the world, he cannot live godly in all his ways, but now

when the heart comes once to be willing towards God, now everything is possible, I may say of this as Christ says of faith; all things are possible to him that believeth, Mark. 9:23. So all things are possible to him that willeth. And therefore those that are godly in Christ Jesus; are called <H&G>, 2 Tim. 3:12.

Fourthly, this takes in the manner of good duties too; as well as the matter, it's more a thousand times, then the bare doing of them, a dead heart will serve for to do them. But when the heart is made absolutely willing, this is more than the naked deed; as Paul says to the Corinthians about Alms, ye have begun not only to do, but also <H&G>, to be willing a year ago, 2 Cor. 8:10, as he says of his preaching, if I did it willingly, I have a reward, but if against my will &c. 1 Cor. 9:17, q.d. I may preach, I may have so much heart, and so much will as to preach, alas, that is nothing. But if I do it willingly; that is, if my will be absolutely thereunto, this is it. Brethren: This is the right manner too.

Fifthly, this is an argument that the heart hath an inward principle; what's the life of the heart, but an inward principle of acting? Look where the heart is alive, there it works from within; There needs no compulsion to a covetous heart to have regard of his profit: no; he regards it most willingly; he hath an inward principle to regard it; as a Stone hath an inward principle to tend down-wards; and therefore he's alive to it; now when the heart puts forth its absolute will towards God, now it hath an inward principle of agility; it needs no complaint, as Peter says to Ministers, feed the flock of God not by constraint but willingly, 1 Pet. 5:2, that is, do it very truly, do it with an inward principle; not because ye see others feed, not because ye see it's a disgrace not to feed, or because your conscience will not let you do otherwise, alas ye may do it thus with a dead heart; but do it willingly, do it out of an inward principle; no obedience is good

without it be done with an inward principle; if ye be willing and obedient, Isa. 1:19, that is, if ye obedient with an inward principle of obedience; I this is it indeed. Thus you see an absolute will is the life of the heart.

Now least any should be deceived, I showed you what this absolute will of the heart is.

I showed you, first it is the inclination of the heart; ye know the heart that is alive to the world, all its inclinations are that way, and therefore the will runs mainly out that way; but its averse from God, backward to all heavenly things; now when the will is absolutely set towards God, God inclines it towards him, and makes it incline itself; as David says; I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end, Psal. 119:112, it may be the world may wonder that any man should be so strict as some are, to forgo the pleasures of the flesh as some do, be so precise and so taken up with God as some are; the reason is this, their wills are absolutely set that way, the Lord hath inclined them.

Secondly, the intention of the heart; we have a saying in Divinity *voluntas ut natura vult finem*; the heart naturally wills its own ends; look what men aim at, look what they would have, what they beat at, what they drive at, that they will naturally, that they will eagerly; now when the hearts intentions are towards God, then the will is absolutely towards him. Beloved what is it ye would have, what do ye drive at a days, what is the souls scop? If that be God, if that be to commune with him, if that be to please him, doubtless ye are alive towards God; for then the wills are absolutely to him. This is a rare work, and therefore true grace of life is a rare thing; for how few do attain this? You come to Church, if God were your aim, certainly ye would hear otherwise then ye do many: would ye set in your pews so

as ye do, if your aim were to please God, or that the word should direct you? If this were your aim, ye would hear in another way's manner; so when ye discourse, if your meaning and aim were, O now I will discourse to be edified, would ye talk so loosely as ye do? Nay ye would speak more to the purpose a great deal? You may see this in Paul what made him so eager to deny himself? I count all things dross and dung says he; O says he, the intention of my heart is to Christ; that I may know him, &c. Phil. 3:10. But I must hasten.

Thirdly, the election of the heart; ye know all our life is in Bivio. There be two ways in everything; there be two ways of thinking; two ways of speaking; two ways of doing; the one godly, the other not. There be two ways in eating and drinking, in sleeping and waking; in studying, in praying, and in all our carriages, one gracious, and the other not; now which do your hearts choose? If your hearts have such a disposition to choose the gracious way, then your wills are set absolutely that way; there ye are alive, as David says, I have chosen the way of truth, Psal. 119:30, mark he had this disposition in him to choose the true way.

Fourthly, the conversation of the heart; the heart ever shuns something, or other; every day and hour, the heart puts off something or other; now what does thy heart shun every day? Does it shun things offensive to thee or things offensive to God? If thy will be set absolutely towards God, then thy hearts shunning's will run there, in things displeasing to him; as the Prophet says; I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep thy word, Psal. 119:101.

Fifthly the appreciating's of the heart, or the estimations of the heart; what's the hearts Jewel, that the hearts will is absolutely to; now do but think, what does thy heart prize most of all; what's dearest to

thee? O says Paul, I do not count my life dear; so that I may finish my course, Act. 20:24, this was his hearts Jewel, how he might do the work that God set him to do; how he might finish his course; God's commandments were dearest to him, not his own credit but God's glory.

Sixthly, the savoring of the heart; this is another piece of the hearts will; something there is that the heart savors most. Now doth thy heart savor the things of God most; thou savorest a business, where there is profit; I but doest thou savor God's word most, canst thou find the best relish of all in holy duties, canst thou savor life in them; as Paul says, there's the savor of life in these things, 2 Cor. 2:16.

Seventhly, the cares of the heart. This is another sign of the hearts absolute will; worldly minded men are full of cares above the things of the world, but art thou full of cares about heaven; does heaven fill thy head full of cares about it, how thou mayst get it, &c. Thus ye heard what an absolute will is.

Now because when the will is made absolutely to be for God, yet there is an unwillingness in the same will in regard of the unregenerate part; therefore I showed you there be other acts of life in the heart towards God, opposing that unwillingness in the flesh. But I must of necessity break off; so much for the heart.

The next thing to be inquired about is the conscience; what is the life of the conscience; and here the world is deceived too; for the conscience may be awakened very much, and yet never quickened indeed. First, à conscience awakened, may like all good things. Secondly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may oblige a man to all manner of good things. Thirdly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may be troubled about his sins. Fourthly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may urge one exceedingly to good things. Fifthly, a

conscience somewhat awakened, may be very eager in this urging. Sixthly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may prevail very far with its eagerness. Seventhly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may make one look at God, so far as it prevails; all this may be in conscience, and yet the conscience never quickened indeed, so that you see what need there is to inquire what the life of conscience is.

First, I say the conscience somewhat awakened, may like of God, and all his ways; it may like of God's judgments, be they never so terrible; as we see there in Pharaoh, when God plagued Egypt; his conscience liked of God's dealings he thought in his conscience the Lord dealt very righteously with him. The Lord is righteous, says he, and I and my people are wicked, Exod. 9:27. So when Rehoboam was horribly beset with Enemies, his conscience justified God, O he deals very rightly with me. The Lord is righteous, 2 Chron. 12:6, so Adonibezek, when the Lord brought that lamentable judgment on his head, his conscience liked of God's doings; as I have done, so God hath done to me; so again the conscience awakened may like of God's commandments; as Moses tells Israel, that God gave them no other Commandments but such as were right, and wise and good in the sight of the Heathen, Deut 4:6,7,8, that is, they were such commandments that the Heathens thought in their conscience were good. Again the conscience somewhat awakened, may like of God's people that walk according to those Laws and Commandments; you may see this in Balaam, O that I might die the death of the righteous! Numb. 23:10, his conscience liked of their courses; so Saul's conscience did approve David's courses. Thou art more righteous than I, 1 Sam. 24:17. A conscience somewhat awakened, may like of the best preaching; and the strictest preachers; never man spake like this man; O how mightily they liked him! Herod liked John admirably, he was glad for to hear him; profane Israel did wonderfully like the Sacrament of God's presence; when the Ark of

God came into the Camp; they shouted with a great shout, that the earth rang again, 1 Sam. 4:5, now when a carnal man perceives this work to be in him, he is apt to conceive, this is true grace of life. Beloved, you see this is very false, Thou mayst like of God's dealings with thee, yea, thou mayst think in thy conscience, he deals very rightly with thee, though it be never so bitter, thou mayst think in thy conscience, his commandments are good, though they be never so strict, thy conscience may like his Ministers, and like his precepts, and like his Ordinances, and his Sacraments, and yet be a dead conscience.

Secondly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may oblige a man to all manner of good things; it may lay the commandments of God to his charge, conscience may make him say not only that the commandments are good, but that it is his duty to do them; we see this by experience in many carnal people; tell them of any commandment, what is their answer? Oh you say well, I confess it is my duty; every drunkard will say thus, I it is my duty never to be drunken, the swearer will say thus, you say right, it is very true, I confess I should not take God's name in vain; and therefore they are said to be under the Law, Rom. 3:19, that is, they are bound in conscience to the Law; their conscience tells them they ought to do it; their conscience lays it on them as a bond; as the mad Prophet said; must I not take heed to speak what God bids me speak? Num. 23:12, conscience laid a must upon his soul. And this is the reason, why a naughty heart will put off a commandment of God, if he can, when he sees it goes against his profit, or his ease, or his credit, for he knows if he yield it to be a commandment of God, his conscience will come over him and say, why then ye must do it; as we read of the Priests and the Elders, they would not yield that John's Baptism was from heaven; O if we should yield that, why then, Christ will say, why do ye not believe? Mat. 21:25, mark the conscience comes over a man

in all that he knows God hath commanded, and it lays it to his charge; and you must do this, and you must do that, this is your duty; now when men see this, they are apt to conclude that their conscience is alive; they think this is the life of their conscience to lay God's commandments to their charge. Alas brethren, the conscience may be dead for all this, you see this in people that are dead in trespasses and sins. All that the Lord speaks, that must I do, Num. 23:26, it was the speech of a very wretch; thou mayst have this principle in thy conscience, all that the Lord bids me, that must I do; and yet be a dead man. O how does this beguile people: because they feel such a principle in their conscience a days! O thinks one, all that the Lord bids me, that must I do; when people feel such a principle as this, they think they are well; now if they do offend at any time, they hold it to be but their infirmity; and there's an end. But this is very false; the conscience may have this principle in it and be dead.

Thirdly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may be troubled about his sins; he may be troubled before he commits, he may be very loath to commit them; as we see there in Herod, when he was betrayed with his rash Oath. and he was now tempted to behead John the Baptist, his conscience made him very loath to do it; the Text says, He was exceeding sorrowful, Mark. 6:26, and the contempt shows it was merely, because he thought in his conscience, he should do very ill to behead so good a man, and therefore he was very loath; he was troubled in conscience about it; so was Darius, when the Princes had wound him to cast Daniel into the Lions Den, he was moved and troubled in conscience about it, he was very loath to do it, he sought a good while how to put off the temptation by getting away how to avoid this great sin, Dan. 6:14, so was Pilot troubled in conscience about the condemning of Christ, he went to it with a heavy heart; and as a conscience somewhat awakened, may be troubled before the committing of sin, so he may be troubled in the committing of it. An

example of this we have in Saul, when he committed that sin, in sacrificing before Samuel came, he was troubled in conscience in the very act. I forced myself and offered a burnt offering, 1 Sam. 13 12. Mark, he did not commit the sin hand-smooth, as some do, but he felt a reluctancy, against it. Again, a conscience somewhat awakened, may be troubled exceedingly after the committing of sin; when Judas had betrayed our Savior, you see how his conscience was troubled after he had done. O says he, I have sinned, in betraying innocent blood, Matth. 27:4, especially at the hearing of a searching Sermon, or at a Fast also, then the conscience if it be only awakened a little, will be troubled exceedingly for his sins; when Samuel kept a Fast there at Mizpah, the Text shows how they were smitten in conscience for their sins, in so much that they cried out in the open congregation, we have sinned against the Lord, 1 Sam. 7:6, and yet many of these very men, by and by showed the rottenness of their hearts, so that this is another gall; when men feel a loathness in them to commit sin, trouble of conscience before, and at, and after, they think this is true grace doubtless; doubtless their conscience hath life.

Fourthly, conscience somewhat awakened, may urge one to good things, and no question but many of you that are yet in your sins have found this to be true, how often have your consciences urged you to give over your sins? To look after the getting of Christ, to lead a godly life? How many heaves have your consciences given at you? To hoist you up out of the state ye wallow in, to make you more earnest for heaven, more strict in your walking, to provide for your latter end, when ye are at Prayer? How often does it urge you to dwell longer at it? As it is said of Doeg, he was detained before the Lord, 1 Sam. 21:7, he was held there, he would have gone away afore, but he was held, now what should that be but his conscience? His conscience urged him to stay long; so your consciences urge you to

be more attentive in hearing, more mindful of preaching, more humble in your minds, less worldly, more heavenly; you may think this is a lively conscience; no, no; it is not, the truth is, the more your consciences do urge you a days, the greater is your sin if ye yield not. But this is so far from life, that it argues you to be the more dead, if ye do not obey; and urging conscience is a great blessing, I, if men have eyes to see what the Lord does for them, to deliver their souls from the pit. This is the taking of men by the shoulders; now if thou pull away thy shoulder. They refused to hearken, and pulled away their shoulder, Zach. 7:11, that is, the Lord set conscience upon them, and urged them to obey, as if a man should take another by the shoulder, so drag him and hale him, and yet they would not. So when Paul spake to Agrippa, he felt an urging in his conscience, O let me be a Christian, and he confessed as much two, Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian; it was almost done; he had a great heave; he was urged. But it would not do, so that this is no argument of life neither.

Fifthly, conscience somewhat awakened may be very eager in urging, it may be very importunate, every day digging in his sides, every day whispering in his bosom; O think of God, O consider thy soul, O remember death; conscience may be earnest and wonderful eager with a man, O do not live as thou doest, O be not so careless of God; what wilt thou die and be damned? Wilt thou to hell? Wilt thou never have done? Away with thy sinful courses; away with thy dreaming's; O be stir thyself; or thou wilt perish; such a conscience had Pilate about Christ, it was eager with him not to condemn him. This conscience is an admirable blessing; and woe be to those that stand out against it; it is like Jacob with the Angel, He would not let the Angel go till he blest him, Gen. 32:26, like the man that was importunate with his friend, and knocked, and knocked, and would have no nay, Luk. 11:8. I am in bed; never tell me of your being in

bed; I pray let me have three loaves; my children are in bed, I pray trouble me not; that is all one, still he knocks, he will have him up; so when conscience is thus awakened, and is importunate and will not be answered &c. many a wretch hath such an impudent conscience as this. But this is so far from an argument of life; as that it is a sign of a greater death.

Sixthly, conscience somewhat awakened, may prevail very far by its eagerness, it made the King of Jury do many things; it made the Heathens do the things contained in the Law, Rom. 2:14,15, when the Pharisees came to tempt Christ, with the woman taken in adultery, conscience made them cease and go out one by one, Joh. 8:9, it made Paul live so unblameably as he did; ye know concerning the righteousness that is in the Law, he was blameless, Phil. 3:6, now if ye look into the 23rd of the Acts and the first, you shall see it was his conscience, that made him do so; men and Brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God to this day; as since his conversion, his sanctified conscience made him live godlily in Christ, so before his conversion his natural conscience holpen by good education made him live unblameably; so that, what with one, and with the other, he could say he had lived in a good conscience to that day; that is either morally good, or spiritually good. And therefore it was conscience, that made him do all that he did; people think, I indeed, if they did good duties for outward by respects, then they should think they were unsound, but conscience sets them a work, and therefore they gather, they are sound and alive towards God; no beloved, conscience may make a carnal man go against all outward by-respects, and do very good duty; this we see in Balaam, he went against all outward self-respects, and followed conscience; for a house full of Silver and Gold, he would not go beyond the word of the Lord to do less or more, Num. 22:18, so Judas went against his credit, and his profit, and all; ye know, when his conscience told him

the money was unjustly taken, he went and threw it down: so did Michah, the man was an Idolater, and had stolen 1100 Pieces of Silver from his Master, yet when he heard his mother curse, he restored all again, O thought he, what shall I hear my mother curse, his conscience rose up against that and made him make restitution; why do carnal men pray in secret, no question but it is conscience that makes them; may be when they are tempted to a sin in secret, they will not do it, and it is the conscience that with holds them; in this sense they do good duties out of conscience; now is this Conscience alive? No, it does not follow, ye see this may be in natural men and women.

Seventhly, conscience somewhat awakened, may make one look at God so far as it prevails; you may see this in Laban. the man was a wicked man; yet he looked at God in not hurting of Jacob; though it were in the choice of his hand, yet he would not hurt Jacob; and he looked at God in the thing. O says his conscience, the God of your Father spake to me yesternight, Gen. 31:29, he abstained from hurting of Jacob, and he looked at God in the abstaining from it. Because God had forbidden him, therefore he will not hurt him; so it was with King Cyrus, he was a natural man too; yet when he took order for the building of the Temple at Jerusalem his conscience made him look at God in the thing. O says he, the Lord God of Heaven and earth, hath charged me to build him a house, Ezek. 1:2, so when Jehu destroyed Ahab's house, and Baals Priests, he himself says, how he looked at God in the thing; come see how zealous I am for the Lord of Hosts; so when the Philistines sent home the Ark of the Lord, they would send it home honorably, with a very rich present, and the Text says, how they looked at God's glory in the thing. O say they, let us give glory to the Lord God of Israel, 1 Sam. 6:5. Thus you see how the world are deceived about the life of the

conscience; when people have these operations of conscience within them, they think their conscience is alive and good towards God.

Now that these cannot be the life of conscience, I prove it.

First, because all may be in natural men, as ye have heard in Laban, in Pharaoh, in Balaam, in Micah, in Saul, in Darius, in Judas, which were dead in trespasses and sins; what life can be in a dead man? It is very true, the conscience is least dead of all the powers of the soul; the Pelagians say the will is a pure virgin; that's as false, as the devil is false; if any faculty be a pure virgin it's the conscience; all the religion that is left in a natural man, God hath planted there; there's the effect of the Law there, Rom. 2:15. The whole nature of man is like a Country taken by the Enemy, except one little Fort; may be that's battered too, but it is not quite taken; so is the conscience, after the whole man is quite vanquished by sin, except only that and that's battered too in a woeful manner. But it is not quite taken, the Lord will ever keep a part in that, to have the man at control when he pleases, and as far as he pleases. But yet it is so far taken too, that there is no spiritual life left at all in it; man is dead in trespasses and sins, and so is the conscience too.

Secondly, the conscience notwithstanding all these may be deader than ever it was. I confess these are flashes of life, that God sparkles into men's consciences, but they use to go out again, and leave the conscience as dead, and deader than ever before they came; we see it in Pharaoh, that hardened his heart worse afterwards, Exod. 9:34, so did Balaam, though his conscience were so quick for a spurt, yet within a while, he could go and lay a stumbling block before the Children of Israel to make them sin, Rev. 2:14, and we see it to this very day, many smitten in conscience for a time, afterwards their

smiting's cease, and they grow more stiff then ever they were; like water that hath been heated, it freezes afterwards the more.

Thirdly, the conscience notwithstanding all these is soon pleased; though it seem to be eager, and earnest, and zealous for God, yet any little thing will content it; if it were alive nothing would content it, but merely indeed, the favor of God, the Image of God, sincere conforming to God. But this conscience is soon pleased again; it is but angry a while, if but half the Lord's due be brought in, this conscience is satisfied. Like the unjust Steward, that set down 50 for a 100, Luk. 16:6. When the man goes on praying, and doing good duties, may be, the conscience is whist, though it be but a form; when he hath reformed a little, conscience thinks it hath enough; we may see this in Balaam; when he had found that work of conscience, that he could deny Balac's house full of Silver and Gold, to stand for God, presently he concluded that God was his God; if Balac would give me his house full of Silver and Gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, Num. 22:18. Like the wretched Jews, they brought God the blind and the lame, and the torn and the sick, and then they thought much that they should be called despisers of God, Mal. 1:6,7,8. Saul was commanded to destroy all the Amalekites, now though he spared some, his conscience was content. I have done the will of the Lord says he; such a conscience as this is soon pleased, like little Children, it cries, it takes on, it sets up its Pipes, but a little thing stills it; may be a Rattle, or an Apple, or a Brass Counter; so my brethren though a man's conscience be thus as ye have heard, yet it is a very child, it will be soon stilled; let him but bestir himself a little towards God, and go on in a pretty handsome way, this conscience will quickly say it's well.

Fourthly, the conscience that hath but these stirrings, is so far from being alive, that many times it will be a help unto ones lusts; which if

it were alive it could not be. But thus it is though, when these works are real, it will serve to help a man's lusts; when a man's lusts would fain have something or other don, then steps in thy conscience, and will help the lame dog over the stile; as we say Herod had a lust to make away John the Baptist. O but he's a good man says his conscience, and thou must not cut off his head, Mark. 6:20. O but he was urged now to do it, by Herodius her daughter; and he had sworn to grant her hearts request; now see how his conscience helped him to do it. Thou hast sworn an Oath, and thou must make conscience of that; therefore cut off his head. So it was with the Jews, when they have a lust to crucify Christ, their conscience found out a trick for it; we have a Law say they, and by our Law, he should die, because he made himself the Son of God, John 19:7, mark, they made it a matter of conscience; what they murder Christ? They put him to death unjustly? No, God forbid; we have a Law, and are bound in conscience to keep it; so when a man hath a lust, as to wear long hair; by and by he makes it a matter of conscience to wear it; forsooth his head will ache; and he is bound in conscience to have a care of that; so if a man have a lust of covetousness, and not to give where is need; forsooth his conscience finds a place in the Apostle to help it. He is worse than an Infidel, that provides not for his own; and so he will make conscience of that; so when a man hath wronged him, he hath a lust of revenge, anon he finds out a trick, O it may tend to the dishonor of the Gospel, if he put it up, the matter is not so. But he is willing to think so; and he will make conscience of that; is he revengeful now? No God forbid. It was a disgrace to religion, and he did it out of conscience of that. Thus men will have what lust they please, they can find some Text or other, which they wrest to make conscience of that, O how common is this.

Fifthly, this conscience is not all, it calls out only some particular sins to be violent against, and lets alone others may be as bad; like Ahab's

for the Vineyard; and let his Baalism alone; or if the conscience be against all manner of sins, it is but in a fume, cito redibit in gratiam. They are but like new Wine, in old Bottles; at last the Bottles break and the Wine is all spilled; so all these works in an awakened conscience, are only then while the conscience cannot sleep. But when it can fall asleep again, then the man can be quiet again; the conscience is an old conscience and not renewed, and therefore it is not able to hold them; well then ye see these are not consciences life.

What then is the consciences life? For this ye must know. First, the conscience hath a Testimonial life; a life whereof it lives as the soul lives; for it is the reflection of the soul, the souls privity to itself, between God and it self. And therefore if the soul be alive towards God, then the conscience is alive too; as the Apostle says; How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself, without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, is to serves the living God, Heb. 9:14, mark, when a man's dead works are purged away, the conscience is alive; when a man's self is alive, and his works are alive, the conscience is alive; as we say of the goodness of conscience, though the conscience be never so good in itself, yet as long as the man is not good, his conscience can never be good; conscience is said to be good, as a Messenger is said to be good; namely when he bringeth good tidings; though he be never so good a man, yet if he do not bring good tidings, we say he is an ill Messenger; he sent evil Angels among them, Psal. 78:49. Calvin thinks it may be meant of good Angels; yet said to be ill Angels, because they brought evil Plagues upon Egypt; so stands a good conscience, that can bring good tidings of a man, that he is a good man; true, a wicked man's conscience may report well of him, as Absalom did of the people, O your matters are good says he, when they were stark naught; so thy conscience may flatter thee, and say thy matters are good. But when conscience can say truly, thy matters

are good. The conscience is like a Register or a Bill; now then it is a Bill of good Items, when all thy sins are blotted out; ye know we call it a fowl bill, that hath fowl crimes written in it. Item this man stole a horse. Item he brake into such a man's house. Item he murdered such a man; when such a Bill as this comes in at the Assizes against a poor Prisoner, this is a black Bill; this is a fowl Bill; so as long as thy conscience is a fowl Bill; Item I was born in sin; Item I have lived very loosely; Item I have heard so many Sermons, and gotten little good; Item I was at such a Sacrament and was never the better, thy conscience is a fowl Bill, this is a fowl conscience; as the Apostle says, a defiled conscience, Tit. 1:15. This is a bad conscience; now when the conscience is clean, then it is a good conscience; so I may say of a lively conscience, the conscience is alive, when the man is alive towards God, then it bears witness, but that is not all, the conscience hath other acts. Secondly, the conscience hath another life of its own, namely the conscience is said to be quickened up to its duty, when it quickens up the whole man to do his. As the conscience of the good people that offered to the Tabernacle, was a quick conscience; their conscience was quick to do its duty, because it quickened them up to do theirs; their heart made them willing, Exod. 35:29, that is, their conscience made them willing; though the conscience be never so eager, that is not it; it never does its duty with life, till it make thee do thy duty with life. The conscience of the godly, may be is not so eager, neither does it keep such a do, as many a wicked man's conscience. The eagerer conscience is fain to be, it's a sign the man is the more dead; when a man is alive, the conscience stirs him up with more ease; like a man that is willing to pay his debts, the creditor need no more then ask; whereas when the debtor is a sly fellow, there needs the more Bawling; so that if thou wouldest know whether thy conscience be quick, the question is not whether it be eager or no; But whether does it quicken thee up to do thy duty or no.

This then is the life of conscience, when it makes a man do his duty towards God and man; when it makes a man believe with all his heart, when it makes him love God with all his soul, and mind, to serve him in truth, to do his holy will, to humble himself soundly before God for all his sins, to make his peace with God daily to please him, and to walk before him in newness of life. This is a living conscience, this conscience hath the grace of life in it, whether it do it by eagerness or not, that is not it; whether with much ado, or little, that is all one.

First, When the conscience does not only check, but it checks to some purpose, as when David had numbered the people, his heart smote him, 2 Sam. 24:10, such checks there may be in a wicked heart, when a man is made to do the Lord's will for conscience sake.

Secondly, When it does not only accuse for sin, so a natural conscience may do, but it pulls a man down before God; and cites himself effectually before God. The just man first accuseth himself; as the Greek, and the Latin read it Prov. 18:17.

Thirdly, when it does not only condemn one for sin, for so the wicked have condemning consciences; as the Apostle says, if our heart condemneth, 1 Joh. 3:20, that is, if we be wicked; as Paul says; knowing that he that is such, is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself, Tit. 3:11, that is, he is a wicked wretch, so that a wicked man's conscience may and will, and shall condemn himself. But I mean, when the conscience does not only condemn one for sin; but it tramples upon oneself as a damned wretch in himself; to save God a labor; as the Apostle speaks, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be Judged, 1 Cor. 11:31.

Fourthly, when it does not only pull a man a days; so it may do the wicked and the ungodly; they feel many pulls every day, and may be

their conscience makes them leave many particular sins. But when the conscience pulls a man out of every known sin, withal the detestation and loathing; out of unbelief, out of impenitency and hardness of heart, out of formality and all; this is a lively conscience; as Job says, my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live, Job. 27:6. These are the lively acts of conscience about sin.

The lively effects whereof are three.

The first, is penitent shame that ever he hath done it; conscience makes him fly from it as a horrible shame and confusion of face before God; as the Apostle says, what fruit have ye of those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? Rom. 6:21.

Secondly, another is penitent grief, and compunction of heart; so ye may see this effect in the new converts. They were pricked in their hearts, Act. 2:37.

Thirdly, another effect is penitential fear, whereby he is afraid to sin against God again, 2 Cor. 7:11.

Fourthly, another is humbling despair in himself, that he sees nothing in him, but death and damnation and so he lies at God's Gate, as a man utterly undone in himself; having no hope but only in Christ; for as God dealt with Paul in regard of his recovery out of his sickness, he brought him to despair of life in himself, 2 Cor. 1:8, so does a lively conscience in regard of misery.

Thus ye see for sin.

Secondly, now for the lively acts of conscience, in regard of good; when the conscience hath life, it does not only excuse in part, for so it may do in a wicked heart, nay a wicked man hath such an excusing

conscience when he does good for the matter of it; as we read in the Heathens; Rom. 2:15. But it does sweetly excuse him, and tells him he hath done it unfeignedly in the truth of his heart, that he does believe, that he does truly repent, that he does in some measure, walk in new obedience from day today; and that he stands guiltless before God through Jesus Christ.

When the conscience does not urge a man only to that which is good. As it urged Agrippa, almost thou persuadest me &c. 26:28.

Thirdly, approbation, when the conscience either may or does pronounce a man to please God.

The lively effects of these acts are 1. Joy. 2 Cor. 1:12.

The second, is boldness, and freedom from slavish fear. The righteous is bold as a Lyon, Prov. 28:1.

Again, a lively conscience is a sudden conscience. Secondly a tender conscience.

SERMON XVIII.

And art Dead - REVEL. 3:1.

The point we are in, is, when is the conscience alive, when is that quickened up in a man ye have heard? First, what is the quickening of the mind? Secondly, what is the quickening of the heart? Now I say it follows what is the quickening of the conscience? I showed you how thousands are deceived here; for the conscience may be awakened very much, and yet never quickened indeed. First, the

conscience somewhat awakened may like of good things. Secondly, the conscience somewhat awakened, may oblige a man to all manner of good things. Thirdly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may be much troubled about sins. Fourthly, a conscience somewhat awakened, may urge one to good things. Fifthly, it may be very eager in this urging. Sixthly, it may prevail very far with its eagerness. Seventhly, it may make one look at God in some sense, so far as it prevails. All this may be in conscience, and yet the conscience never quickened indeed; and we have showed you all these, and cleared them unto you; so that you see what need there is to inquire what the life of conscience is.

After the handling of these seven particulars; we gave you five reasons to prove that these are not arguments, that the conscience is truly alive; that the conscience may do all this, and yet not have the grace of life in it. First, because all these works of conscience may be in a natural man. 2. Because the conscience notwithstanding all these may be deader than ever it was. Thirdly, because such a conscience as this may be foolish, and childish and soon pleased; if the conscience were alive indeed, nothing would content it but the favor of God, and the Image of God, and true faith', and true peace, &c. But this conscience may be soon pleased; if it have but any color of grace and goodness, that's able to still it and quiet it. Fourthly, because the conscience though it be thus stirring as ye heard, it is so far from being alive, that it uses to be a help and furtherance unto ones lusts. Fifthly, because this conscience is not universal, it culls out only some particular sins to be violent against, and lets alone others; it picks out some particular duties and good courses to be very eager for, and is careless of others.

You will say then, what is consciences life? When is the conscience said truly to be quickened? For the opening of this, ye must know

there be two lives of conscience in a godly man.

The first is a relative life; whereby it's alive, when the man is alive.

The second is a simple life. The first I say, is a relative life, whereby it is said to be alive, when the man whose it is, is alive; for conscience is the reflection of the soul, the souls privity to itself, between God and it self. And therefore if the soul be alive towards God, then the conscience is alive too; as the Apostle says; How much more shall the blood of Jesus Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God, Heb. 9:14. Mark when a man's dead works are purged away, the conscience is alive, when a man's self is alive, and his works are alive, the conscience is alive also; as we say of the goodness of conscience, so it is the life of conscience; though the conscience be never so good in itself, yet as long as the man is not good, his conscience can never be good; conscience is said to be good as a Messenger is said to be good; namely, when he bringeth good tidings; as David said of Ahimaaz, he is a good man, and he bringeth good tidings, 1 Sam. 18:27. Though a Messenger be never so good a man, yet if he do not bring good tidings, we say he's an ill Messenger. He sent evil Angels among them, Psal. 78:49. Calvin thinks it may be meant of good Angels, yet said to be evil Angels, because they brought evil upon Egypt; so that's a good conscience that bringeth good tidings to a man; that he does believe; that he is in Christ, that he is a good man. True, a wicked man's conscience may report well of him, as Absalom did of the people, O your matters are good says he, when they were stark naught; so thy conscience may flatter thee, and say thy matters are good; but when conscience can say truly, thy matters are good. The conscience is like a Register or a Bill; now when it is a Bill of good Items; when all thy sins are blotted out, and good things are written in; now it's a good conscience; ye know we

call it a foul Bill, that hath foul crimes written in it; though the Bill be never so fair written, yet if it have foul crimes written in it, it's a foul Bill. Item, this man stole a Horse. Item, he broke into such a man's house. Item he murdered such a man; when such a Bill as this comes in at the Assizes against a poor prisoner, this is a black Bill; this is a foul Bill; so as long as thy conscience is a foul Bill, Item I was borne in sin. Item I have lived very loosely. Item I have heard so many Sermons, and yet I have been never the better. Item I have been at so many Sacraments, and yet I have gone on in my vile courses, thy conscience is a fowl Bill; this is a fowl conscience; as the Apostle says, a defiled conscience, Tit. 1:15, now when the conscience is clean, then it's a good conscience; so I may say of a lively conscience; the conscience is alive, when the man is alive; when his mind is quickened up towards God, and his heart which before was dead in trespasses and sins, now it's alive towards God; this man's conscience is alive. The reason is because now his conscience may say, I am alive; for conscience is the reflection of the soul on itself, and therefore if thou beest alive thyself, thy conscience is alive too. This is the first life; the relative life of conscience.

Now that this is one life of conscience, is plain, because if a man's self be dead, conscience will say, I am dead; as Paul says, speaking of himself and the Ephesians before their conversion. O says he, ye were dead in sins, Eph. 2:5, look what a man is, if the conscience be enlightened, it takes it on itself, when David had sinned. I have sinned says his conscience; so let a man be holy the conscience presently takes it upon itself; as we see there in David, when he was holy; I am holy says his conscience, Lord preserve my soul, for I am holy, Psal. 86:2. So that if thou beest dead, thy conscience is dead; if thou beest alive, thy conscience is alive. But I let this pass.

I come now to the second life of conscience, and that is, it's simple life, conscience hath another life of its own; for as when the man is alive, the conscience is alive so the conscience is quickened up to do its duty, when it quickens up the whole man to do his, as the conscience of the good people that offered to the Tabernacle was a quick conscience; their conscience was quick to do its duty, because it quickened them up to do theirs; their heart made them willing, Exod. 35:29, that is, their conscience made them willing. Though the conscience be never so eager, that is not it; it never does its duty with life, till it make thee to do thy duty with life. The conscience of the godly may be is not so eager, neither does it keep such a do, as many a wicked man's conscience. The eager conscience is feign to be, it's a sign the man is the more dead, when the man is alive, his conscience stirs him with more ease; like a man that is willing to pay his debts, the creditor need no more then ask; whereas if the debtor be a very sly fellow, there needs the more bawling; so that if thou wouldest know whether thy conscience be quick, the question is not whether it be eager or no, but whether does it quicken thee up to thy duty or no?

This then is the life of conscience, when it makes a man do his duty sincerely both towards God and man; when it makes a man believe with all his heart, when it makes him love God with all his soul; and mind to serve him in truth, to do his holy will, to humble himself soundly before God for all his sins, to make his peace with God, daily to please him and to walk before him in newness of life. This is a living conscience. This conscience hath the grace of life in it; whether it do it by eagerness or not; whether with a horrible stir or a great putter or no; that is not it if it make a man do his duty aright, then conscience does its duty; this is Consciences life.

First, when the Conscience does not only check, but it checks to some purpose, when it smites so that all the soul feels it, and lies down under it, when the Conscience does not only do duty in this thing, but it makes a man to do his, it makes him smite himself as the Publican did, he smote upon his breast, Luke 18:13, as Ephraim did, I smote upon my thigh, Jer. 31:10, when a man is made to Check himself, what have I done? Jer. 8:6, when David numbered the people, the Text shows how his conscience was quick, his heart smote him, 2 Sam. 24:10. Dull checks there may be in a wicked heart, yea, mighty checks, and mighty smiting's, yea, greater for quantity than in any Child of God, but all to little or no purpose, David's Conscience smote him to purpose you see there, it made him do his duty indeed, it was a Divine Check, it was a Check that put him into a right way again, so except thy Conscience thus Check thee a days, may be thou forgettest thyself now and then, and then thy Conscience gives thee a Check, O what a beast am I, and so sets thee to rights again, sometimes thou art over taken in passion, but then comes Conscience, and tells thee what God says, O why do I give place to the Devil; and then thy passions go down again. This is God's Bit, that he guides his people by, as the Rider does his beast with a Bridle. The wicked are like your sturdy horses, that get their Bridle in their Teeth, God may pull hard at them, give them fiercer twitches, then he does his own Children, but they get the Bridle in their Teeth, and so they are unrulier: But when it is God's Bridle to lead a man by, now his Conscience is alive, when it Checks to purpose.

Secondly, when it does not only accuse for sin, so a natural Conscience may do, but it pulls a man down before God; and Cites himself effectually before his Tribunal. I make this a different work, for the accusation of Conscience differs from its Checking; the Check is a spiritual lash the Conscience gives the soul, now the accusation gives the reason of its lashing. O thou hast sinned against God; ye

know this is a duty of Conscience too in regard of sin, to accuse. And then Conscience is alive, when it does this duty to purpose, to make a man to do his; namely to go and Confess his sin in a penitent manner. True a wicked man's Conscience does accuse, but that drives a man from God; as it's said of the Scribes and the Pharisees, when their Consciences accused them, they went cut, Joh. 8:9. But when Conscience is alive, it accuses before God, it Cites a man soundly before God; and what a vile wretch am I! It so does its duty in accusing, that it makes a man to do his; freely to accuse himself. The just man first accuseth himself, Prov. 18:17. So it is in the Greek and the Latin. Hast thou such a Conscience as this? This is a lively Conscience; when thy Conscience does not only do its duty to accuse thee for every sin that thou dost, but it makes thee to do thine, freely to accuse thyself before God; a wicked Conscience may accuse, I but it does not make the man to do his duty; he does not freely accuse himself; it is only forced in him; it is with Coaction and Compulsion. But its free in God's Children; when Daniel went to confess his sins before God, the Text says, he set himself to do it; I set my face unto the Lord God, Dan. 9:3, that is, his Conscience did not only do its duty, in this thing, but it made him to do his.

Thirdly, when it does not only Condemn one for sin; for so the wicked have condemning Consciences, as the Apostles says; if our heart condemn us, 1 John 3 20, that is, if we be wicked; as Paul says; Knowing that he that is such, is subverted and sinneth being condemned of himself, Tit. 3:11, that is, he is a very wicked Creature; so that a wicked man's Conscience does Condemn. But I mean when the Conscience does not only condemn one for sin, it does not only do its own duty in this thing, but it makes the man to do his; it makes him trample upon himself; as a damned wretch in himself, to save God a labor, as the Apostles speaks; if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, 1 Cor. 11:31, when Conscience makes a man

freely to accept of damnation; thou shalt accept of thy punishment, then I will remember my Covenant, Levite. 26:41,42, when it makes thee lay thy Neck on the block; Lord the worst place in hell is too good for me. I have often told you a story in the acts and monuments of the Church; when Edward the first, one of the Kings of England was a hunting, and one of the standers by had displeased him, the King rid after him with a drawn sword for to stab him, the man run away for his life; the King rid over hedge and ditch to overtake him, and when the man saw he had no way to escape, he fell down, and held up his throat to the King, if it please your Majesty here is my throat. The King melting towards him, showed him mercy. So when Conscience makes thee say Lord here is my throat, here is my soul, if it please thee thou mayest send Satan to take it, and carry it to hell with him. Thou hast no way to escape, therefore offer thyself unto God; may be thy Conscience does Condemn thee; alas that is not it, thy Conscience does not its duty with any life, till it make thee do thine; doest thou freely Condemn thyself; accept of thy punishment, lay thy head on the block, does thy soul lie groveling before God? This is a live Conscience.

Fourthly, when it does not only pull a man a days from sin and Iniquity; so it may do with the wicked and the ungodly; they feel many pulls every day, and may be their Conscience makes them leave many particular sins, though that's very rare as the times now be, but when the Conscience pulls a man forth of every known sin, when it so does its duty in this kind, that it makes thee to do thine; when thou pullest thyself withal detestation and loathing out of pride, out of security, out of unbelief, out of hardness of heart, out of formality and all; this is a lively Conscience; as Job says, my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live, Job. 27:6, that is; as my heart does its duty towards me, so it shall make me do mine, I will yield to mine own Conscience in everything; whatsoever sin it tells me off, I will be

sure to set myself against it; it shall not lie heaving at me, and I never stir; then it would reproach me, but it shall never reproach me so long as I live. These are the lively acts of Conscience about sin.

The lively effects whereof are four.

The first, is a penitent shame, that ever a man should sin against God; when Conscience does thus as ye have heard, then it produces this effect, that the man is ashamed before God; as the Apostle says, what fruit have you of those things whereof ye are now ashamed? Rom. 6:21, people are apt to be ashamed before men, Diodorus Cronus, when Stilpo asked him a ridiculous question, and he could not answer him; he was so ashamed, that he fell down stark dead; he thought it was such a disgrace to be nonplus. But if Conscience were alive, and did do its duty indeed, it would make us ashamed for our sins before God; Ezra was ashamed before God for the sins of the people, I blush says he to lift up mine eyes unto thee; when a man is Ignorant of God in Jesus Christ, this should be a shame. I speak this to your shame, 1 Cor. 15:34, that is, if there be any grace in your hearts, certainly ye will be ashamed that ye should have no more knowledge of God. I say when the Conscience is alive against sin, it makes a man ashamed before God; It shows him his nakedness before heaven, it propounds God before his eyes, seeing all his uncleanness, and so it makes him ashamed before him; doest thou Count it a disgrace to do evil, a disgrace to offend God, a confusion of face to do iniquity, though it be never so secret? Canst thou not look upon thy unworthy dealings with God, but it makes thee ashamed in his sight? This is the effect of a living Conscience.

Secondly, another effect is penitent grief and compunction of heart; ye may see this effect in the new converts; they were pricked in their hearts, Act. 2:37, when their Conscience began to be alive to smite

them for their sins, to accuse them and Condemn them, it grieved them exceedingly; it went to the quick; it was like a Dagger in their heart; it pricked them; it made them mourn for all that they had done. True, a natural Conscience produces grief; there's never a wretch but if his Conscience be awakened to Check him, and accuse him, and condemn him, it will make him to grieve for his sins. But this is only legal and surly. Now when the Conscience is alive to do its duty, as to make the man to do his, now it makes him grieve out of love to God, out of love to grace and goodness; now he grieves because he hath broken those Commandments that he loves; he loves to obey God O it is the unfeigned desire of his soul to obey him and, therefore he grieves, that he hath done the Contrary.

Thirdly, another effect is, penitent fear. It makes a man afraid to sin against God again; as the Apostle says; Yea, what sear? 2 Cor 7:1, a natural conscience may cause a kind of fear too, nay, a horrible fear. The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness saith surprised the Hypocrites, &c. Isa. 33:14, for a guilty Conscience cannot but work fears when its awakened, but this fear is merely out of self-love, and of Bondage. But when the Conscience hath done so its own duty upon a man, that it hath made him to do his, now it makes him filially afraid to sin against God; as a true Child fears to offend his Father, when a man hath this fear in him, this is a sign of a living Conscience.

Fourthly, another effect is trembling despair in oneself, it makes him see nothing but hell and damnation in himself; and it flings him down at God's Gate, as a man utterly undone in himself, having no hope in himself, for as God dealt with Paul. in regard of his recovery out of sickness he brought him to despair of life in himself, 2 Cor. 1:8, so does a living Conscience in regard of mercy; a natural Conscience the effect of that, is to despair too. But that is to despair

in God. because when there is nothing but nature in the Conscience, how can it be otherwise? But when there is grace in the Conscience, grace in the heart, now though Conscience represent to him his damned estate, it represents withal the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, to all such as are heavy laden, and so it is only despair in himself; now hast thou such an effect in thee, to despair in thyself; to fling of all thine own hopes, and thy own dependences, hangings, holdings; ye know the soul hath a thousand thousand such, wishes, wouldings, purposes duties, performances, these the soul hangs on. But now hast thou this effect in thee, that thou doest absolutely despair in thyself? I mean self-confidence with whatsoever good is in thee, be it grace, or whatever; doest thou despair in thyself? This is a sign of a living Conscience; now thou hangest upon nothing, but the mere mercy and good will of God. And this is the best hold in the world, though the world cannot abide it. Thus ye see for sin. The livingness of Conscience in regard of sin.

Secondly, now for the livingness of Conscience in regard of good. Then is the Conscience alive to that which is good.

First, when it goes and it does not only urge a man to that which is good; so it did Agrippa. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian, Act. 28:28, when Paul spake unto him, it seems his Conscience took hold of Paul's words, and it did mightily urge; it had almost done the deed; alas this is not it; a dead Conscience may do this yea, with admirable importunity; as it is in many. But when the Conscience doth not only urge, when that does not only do its duty in this point, but it makes a man do his duty too; the man freely urges himself; and freely sets himself to it and about it; as it was with David; when thou sayest, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face Lord will I seek, Psal. 27:8, that is, when thou sayest thus in my Conscience, seek my face, my heart echoed back, I will do so indeed; mark his

Conscience did not only do its duty, but it made him to do his; as his Conscience did urge him, so he took these urgings, and urged himself.

Secondly, when the Conscience hath life towards good, it excuses, and it does not only excuse in part, for so it may do in a wicked heart; many a wicked man hath such an excusing Conscience, when he does good for the matter of it, as we read in the Heathen, Rom. 2:15, their Consciences accusing or else excusing; their Conscience did excuse in part. But it excuses full out; it tells him, he hath done it unfeignedly in the truth of his heart, that he does believe in God, that he does truly repent from dead works, that he does in some poor measure, walk in new obedience from day today; and that he stands guiltless before God, by faith in Christ Jesus; or if it do not excuse thus, it is merely out of Ignorance of the things given him of God; a living Conscience is an excusing conscience; it does not only say the thing that he does is good but that he does it unfeignedly withal his heart; true a natural Conscience not awakened may do thus, but that's a misprision; for when it comes to see its own condition indeed, then it will be in another tale; ah I am rotten; I have beguiled mine own soul to this very day; but a living Conscience can never be confuted, as it excuses, so its excuses shall stand before God, because it is quickened by the grace that is in Jesus Christ, his blood is sprinkled on it.

Thirdly, when the Conscience hath life towards good, it approves a man and his ways; it either may or does pronounce a man to please God. As it was with Enoch, he had a conscience that told him he was approved of God; before his translation, he had this Testimony that he pleased God, Heb, 11:5, this is the nature of conscience, if it be alive, to do its duty, and so as to make a man to do his, to tell a man that he is allowed of God; which is an admirable mercy, that a child

of God should have such an intelligencer in his own bosom, that can tell him he is approved of God, no creature is able to express what comfort this is; none but good people can have this, others may be approved of men, others may hear that such and such do approve them, but they can never hear that God does approve them. These are the consciences only towards good, which it can never do except it be alive.

Now the effects of these be. First Joy, when the conscience does its duty towards God, and makes a man do his duty too, this worketh Joy in his heart; as Paul says. This is our rejoicing, even the Testimony of our conscience, that with sincerity and godly pureness we have had our conversation in the world, 2 Cor. 1:12. There is no joy like this joy; wicked men may laugh, and seem as merry as crickets, but in the of their laughter, their conscience gives them but cold comfort; now when a man hath such a conscience as this, that sets him about that which is good, this makes him have truer joy then all the world besides; for howbeit the world are besotted, that they do not look after God: Yet the conscience knows it is goodness only that will please God; and therefore when the conscience is privy to this, no tongue can speak what a joy this is unto one.

Secondly, another effect is boldness and freedom from slavish fear: There's a deal of fear in a man's heart, as long as he does not serve God, and do the things that are pleasing in his eyes though it may be people do not feel this same fear as long as they are well and lusty; but let but conscience be awakened, or let death seize upon them, then a fear will appear, O how afraid are they to go before God. But let a man have such a living conscience as this, this gives a man boldness. The righteous are as bold as a Lyon Prov. 18:1, thy conscience is an admirable thing; without this all a man's boldness is nothing. Thou mayest hold up thy head very high, and out face all the

world for a time, as bold as can be; tush thou art well thought of among all thy neighbors, but what says thy conscience? If that cannot say thou art a gracious man, I tell thee thou canst have no boldness. But now if thou hast this same living conscience, now thou mayest be as bold as a Lyon; though the world do accuse thee, yet what says thy conscience? If that excuse thee, thou mayest show thy face, where thousands shall be confounded; when Austin was accused by Secundinus to have come from the Manichees for fear of loss, and for hope of preferment, he comforted himself with his conscience, I esteem not says he what Secundinus thinks of me, so long as my conscience approves me before God; so also Paul, when the false Apostles accused him, O says he, it is a very small thing with me, that I should be judged of you, 1 Cor. 4:3. Thus ye see for good; what is the livingness of conscience towards good. This is the second thing.

Thirdly, now about Poth; both sin and goodness, when is the conscience alive about both? Namely when it does instruct a man, and not only so, but it guides a man to shun the one, and to embrace the other. This is a living conscience indeed, when it is a man's privy counsel from day today. This is a Divine Counsel; its like a little privy Counselor in a Child of God's bosom, that the Lord in mercy hath placed there to direct him; as David says, I will bless the Lord for giving me Counsel, my reins instruct me in the night seasons, Psal. 16:7. By his reins he meaneth his conscience, now that did instruct him not only in the day time, but also in the night; if he were tempted to sin, his conscience instructed him, nay, I must not yield to that, if he found himself backward to any good duty, nay, still his conscience advised him, nay, I must be forward to that. I confess a dead conscience may give admirable counsel, and Instruction to the wicked; If their conscience proves it unto them. But it does not do its

duty, for it does not make them to do theirs. Thus ye see what a living conscience is, when it so does its duty, that it makes us to do ours.

But it may be humbled conscience is *paedagogus animae*, it is the souls School-Master, as Origen calls it; now a School-Master may do his duty, though he do not make his Scholar do his; for if he be diligent in teaching and doing of his office, the Scholar may be a dunce for all him; the best School-Master, may have a block head and a dunce in his School. I answer, the reason is not alike.

First, a School-master teacheth another. But conscience is a School-Master not to another but to a man's self; and therefore if the conscience do its duty indeed, it must needs make the man to do his, because his conscience is a School-Master to himself.

Secondly, again a School-Master is not always by his Scholar, sometimes his back is turned; but conscience is ever by a man, and therefore if it did always do its duty it might make the man to do his.

Again, Thirdly a School-Master, it may be his Scholar is duller then himself; and then though himself be never so learned, yet he cannot put his learning into his Scholar. But it is not so here, here the Scholar and the School-Master is all one; one is no more dull then another, for look how dull the one, so dull the other; look how active the one is, so active is the other, because conscience and the man is all one; it is very true, the conscience by accusation is eagerer then the man; for God may take a dead conscience, and sur it exceedingly, and he does so ordinarily in men; but these stirrings of conscience, are none of consciences stirring but God's, my spirit shall not always strive with man, Gen. 6:3, they are his strivings with men. But the consciences own quickening's, and the man's are all one; you will say how shall I know whether the quickening that is in my conscience, be

my consciences, or only the Lord's stirring in my conscience. I answer.

First, when thou art glad that thy conscience is so busy with thee, it is very welcome unto thee, then the Lord hath made thy conscience alive; then God does not only strive in thy conscience, but thy conscience itself is alive; as we see there in David. I will bless the Lord for giving me counsel, my reins do instruct me, Psal. 16:7, when his conscience did instruct him, he was glad of it, he blest the Lord for it; his conscience was alive. But now in a wicked heart, the more his conscience accuses, and condemns, and checks, the more busy it is with him, the more unwelcome it is, and therefore he labors to still it; maybe he will stop it with something; may be some little reformation for the time, may be with Prayer, or some yielding's thereunto; nay, there be some labor to drown it out right, they will go to the Ale-house, or to Cards, or among their boon companions, and so shake of those dumps; therefore my Brethren, if ye would have a sign, that your conscience is alive, be glad at its dictates, give them all their dear entertainment ye can. Bless the Lord for them, and make very much of such, they are the sweet motions of God's holy spirit, quench them not; do not stop the mouth of them by half payments, let them have their full sway.

Secondly, when thou callest upon thy conscience to be busy; when thou usest to stir up conscience every day, wind it up as a man does his Clock, that it may be in continual motion. So the Prophet did; Why art thou so heavy O my soul? Why art thou so disquieted within me, hope thou in God, Psal. 42:11, mark he took his conscience and stirred up himself with it, a wicked man does not thus; his conscience comes before it is sent for, it is like an unbidden guest. And therefore if thou wouldst know whether thy conscience be alive, do but consider whether this be thy course, if thou doest daily awaken thy

conscience, if thou doest set it a work, this is a sign of life in it; as Paul did, here in do I exercise myself, that I may have a good conscience, void of offense, Act. 24:16. He labored for his conscience, he called it up every day, he was active about it, so that the stirrings that are in wicked men, they are none of theirs; but God's merely to pull them out of the bottomless pit, if it might be; in the meantime, his conscience is as dead as himself. Thus ye see what the life of the conscience is. First, there is a relative life of conscience; the conscience is alive, when the man is alive. Secondly, the conscience is alive, when it makes duty so, that it makes the man do his duty too; when it does not only check for evil, and accuse for evil, and condemn for evil, and prompt a man that he should take heed of evil, but it make a man do his duty in all these; so also when it does not only urge a man to that which is good, and excuse him and approve him, but in all these, it makes him do his duty too; so likewise when it counsels, it does not only counsel and dictate what is to be done, and what not; but it so does all these particulars, that it makes the man to do his duty, in sincerity from day today. This is alive conscience.

Now that this is the live conscience, I prove it unto you by five Arguments.

1. Because conscience was made not only to do all these acts, but to make a man to do his; so that when conscience does its own acts never so much, that's nothing to the life of conscience, does thy conscience check thee, and smite thee, does it whisper never so much in thee? This is no Argument it's alive, except it make thee to be obedient unto God Conscience was given man for this purpose; and therefore then only is it alive, when it is for this purpose in thy Bosom: when David would get up out of his temptations, you may see how he got up by conscience; I communed with my own heart,

and my spirit says he made diligent search, Psal. 77:6, that is, he communed with his conscience, what he knew about God, and so got himself up; this is thy consciences office to tell thee what thou hast heard out of the word, and that is not all, but to lead thee, guide thee as the helm does the Ship. It is given thee to be thy keeper, as he says, J was upright before him, and I kept myself from my iniquity. Psal. 18:23, that is, this is my iniquity, this is the sin that I am most inclined to, I must keep myself from that. Thus his conscience was his keeper under God.

Secondly, another argument is, because this is the way whereby godly people do their duties, their conscience makes them do their duty, it makes them believe, it makes them fear God, it makes them eschew evil and do good from day today. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, Psal. 103:2, when the Prophet would do this duty, he made his conscience press it soundly upon him to do it; so when he would wait upon God, he set his own soul and conscience upon him, to make him to do it; wait on the Lord, be of good courage, he will strengthen thy heart, wait I say upon the Lord, Psal. 27:14.

Thirdly, another argument is, this is the description of those that have a live conscience, they are such as make themselves do their duties continually; as the Apostle says. He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure, 1 Joh. 3:3, that is, he is a man that makes himself do his duty, his own soul and conscience says thus unto him, Christ is a pure Christ, and I must be like him, as ever I hope that he will bring me into his kingdom; and this makes him do his duty; he purifieth himself, even as he is pure; I could quote abundance of places to prove this.

Fourthly, another argument is; when God speaks to any that are alive from the dead, to do their duties towards him, he bids them make themselves to do their duties on this manner; so Saint Paul says, Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the sight of God, 2 Cor. 7:1, that is, go and ask your own soul, and conscience, what have I not these and these promises? Why then I must labor to be cleansed from all manner of sin, I must perfect holiness in the fear of God; now says he, let us make ourselves do our duties thus.

Nay fifthly, when God speaks to them which are yet dead, and would turn them home unto him, he bids them do thus in regard of the means; turn yourselves and live you, Ezek. 18:32, that is, Let your own souls and consciences consider this is the way to live, ye cannot be saved without turning; as ever I would live forever, I must be turned from all my sinful courses; make yourselves do your duties in this manner; that is, use all the means, that the Lord hath given you to use, make yourselves go about it, not as though any man hath free will to turn himself; But he speaks of the use of all means, that he puts into your hands; make yourselves to use them; nay no soul can ever look to be saved, except he do not only let his conscience check him, and tell him thus and thus his duty is, but also let his conscience make him do his duty too; so that this must needs be the life of the conscience; when it does not only do its own duty, to check and to whisper but also it makes a man to do his.

The use of this is; first, then we see here how few have live consciences, for people have consciences that do only tell them they should be more careful; they should give over such and such sins, they should believe, and they should be zealous, and they should be more settled, but O how few have consciences that make them do

their duties? Numb. 15:40, that ye may remember and do all my commandments and be holy unto your God.

SERMON XIX.

And art Dead - REVEL. 3:1.

We are come to speak of this necessary point when is a man quickened up towards God and all his holy ways? We have showed you three things concerning this already. First, what the life of the mind is, Secondly, what the life of the heart is. Thirdly, what the life of the conscience is. Now there remains two more, the one is the life of the memory; the other is the life of the affections.

Fourthly then, what is the life of the memory? For the memory too may be dead, and the memory may be alive.

First, the memory may be dead; when a man may be remembers, if ye ask him a thing, he can tell it; ask him of a Sermon, he can tell the Text and the points, and the particulars that were delivered in the Sermon, but here's all, it's a dead memory, he never remembers it to any purpose; this is to remember, even as if a man did not remember; as Moses says, remember and forget not that thou provokedest the Lord to anger in the wilderness, Deut. 9:7, that is, remember it, and do not remember it with a dead memory. As Balaam remembered that God was angry with him in the way, no question but if a man had asked him about it a week or two after, he would have showed that he did remember it, he could tell the place, the time, and the manner, and how it was in his journey, and how the Lord stood before him with a drawn sword. But alas this was a dead

memory; for this practice showed plainly that he had forgotten it in effect. I say there is a dead memory, a man may have an excellent memory to go from point to point, nay, a better memory in this sense than many of God's dearest Children, and yet this memory be a dead memory.

Secondly, there is a living memory; a memory that hath life in it; as God says of penitent Ephraim; I do earnestly remember him still, Jer. 31:20, mark, God did not only remember him, so he does remember all men, he remembers reprobates and all, but he did very earnestly remember him; so when a man does earnestly remember God; the remembrance he hath of him is earnest, he remembers his word earnestly, he is earnest in the remembering of his will, though there be never so many things, to put God out of his thoughts, he is daily tempted to forget himself in something or other about God, but he is earnest to remember, when a man's memory is eager after a thing, now it is a live memory.

Now the question is, when the memory is alive, for the handling of this. First, I will show you what the memory is. Secondly; what a great blessing of God it is that we have a memory. Thirdly, when the memory may be said to be alive. Fourthly, we will prove it, and then we will make some uses of the point.

First, what memory is. It is the conservation of what we apprehend, as a man hath many things in common with a beast, so memory is in his fancy and imagination, for look what a man hath seen, or heard, or tasted, or smelt, or felt, memory is the conservation of the same; some can remember the shape of men, of town; and creatures, we can remember what color things are of, what a taste such and such meats have, such a memory beasts have, as we see in the milch Kine, they remembered their Calves, 1 Sam. 6:12, they went lowing as they

went; thus the children of Israel remembered the flesh that they had in Egypt, we remembered the flesh, which we did eat in Egypt, Numb. 11:5, and this we call a sensitive memory.

Secondly, memory, most properly, is a faculty of the mind, whereby it preserves the species of what it once knew and therefore when a man is said to remember he is said to be mindful, as David says, be ye mindful always of his Covenant, 1 Chro. 16:15, that is look you always remember his Covenant, for when the mind once knows a thing, memory is a certain Paper of the mind, to retain it and to keep it, and therefore it is called the souls storehouse; it is the souls treasury, as our Savior Christ speaks; a good man out of the good treasury of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of the heart, bringeth forth evil things, Matth. 12:35, memory is the souls chest, where it keeps all its Jewels; that look what a man knows, specially if he like it, presently he lays it up to keep by him, as it is said of Mary, still when she knew anything of our Savior, when she knew of any saying of his, she kept it in her heart; Mary kept all these sayings, Luk. 2:19, properly I say memory is a faculty of the mind, whereby when it knows a thing once, it is able to keep it. This we call intellectual memory.

Thirdly, by consequent, memory is in the conscience; for the soul of man being privy to itself, what it knows, what its told of God, what notions it hath, what it does, what it hath done, or what it hath not done, it hath a Paper to record this; and therefore in this sense, we call memory the souls Register; for thus it is in the conscience; so when the Son, of Jacob were privy to themselves, that they had sold their brother Joseph ye know how their conscience remembered what they had done, above twenty years after. O we are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear. Gen. 42:21, their conscience

had registered their fact up, and did remember it against them, so many years after. So Adonibezek being privy to himself, when he cut off the thumbs and the great toes of threescore and ten Kings, and made them to gather scraps under his Table, you see how his conscience had registered this, and could remember it against him another day, Judge. 1:7, so that memory is by consequent in the conscience too. And this memory we call the Book of a man's conscience. These three are all the proper memories that we have, because memory can properly be nowhere but where apprehension is; either sensitive apprehension as in fancy; or intellectual apprehension, as in the mind; or reflective apprehension as in the conscience; they understood not thy wonders, neither did they remember them, Psal. 106:7.

Fourthly, memory in an improper sense, is in the will and heart of a man, because there is some retention too of what is past and gone; as let a man love or hate his brother, though that act be past and gone, yet there is some retention of that act against another time, for when a man hath hated one heretofore, he is the more ready to hate him afterwards; which is a sign that the heart does retain what it did before; nay, says Aristotle, there is memoria in pedibus; there is memory in the feet; there is memory in the hand; as the Psalmist speaks; if I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, Psal. 137:5, this is called remembering too in the Scripture; but this is improperly so called; this we call a habit or faculty, or a dexterity in acting, by reason of precedent actings. Thus ye see what memory is. Now this memory is of things that are past; for if things be present, we are said to see them, or behold them, or so. But when they are past, now if we can see them still, this is by way of remembering; indeed we may be said to remember things both present and to come, in regard that our knowledge of them is past; as the Apostle says, Remember them that are in Bonds; as being bound

with them; Heb. 13:3, that is, though the thing be now present, yet I would have you remember it; because your warning is past; this is a duty, ye have been told in times past, therefore look ye remember it. So Solomon says, Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth, Psal. 12:1. That is, though thy creator be not past, yet thy creation is past, and thou art not so young but thou hast been told of thy duty in this thing in times past; O therefore remember that; nay, thus a man may remember that which is yet to come, as for example the day of his death, that he must die and come to Judgment; for though the thing be yet to come, yet he hath had warnings of it in times past; as Jeremiah says of Jerusalem, her filthiness is in her skirts, she remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully, Lam. 1:2, the Lord finds fault with her that she did not remember her time to come. The reason is, because she was told of it aforehand in times past.

Now for the second thing; that this is a great blessing, beloved it is a great blessing of God, that we have such a faculty in us as to remember; it was a naughty speech of Charoone that an excellent memory is needful for three sorts of men. First, for great Tradesmen, for they having many businesses to do many reckonings, many Irons in the fire, had need of a good memory. Secondly, great talkers; for they being full of words, had need to have a good Store-house in their heads to feed their tongues. Thirdly, for Liars; oportet mendacem esse memorem, for they telling many untruths, had need of a good memory, to be able to remember what untruths they have told, lest afterward they be taken in their lying, contradicting themselves. I say this a profane speech, as though a good memory were of no other use, then for engrossers of affairs, and talkative fellows, and forging companions; whereas memory is a great blessing of God, and the more we have of it, the more advantage we have unto our own eternal good, if we have a heart.

First, it is a great blessing that what we once knew, we may always know; now this may be by memory; were it not for this, we should be Ignorant again as fast as we learn; whence is it that ye still know how to read but because ye remember your letters and spelling; whence is it that ye still know your Trades and your callings, which ye were taught so long ago, but ye remember how ye were taught. Ye once knew the grounds of religion, may be ye were taught heretofore; if ye know them still, it is because ye remember them; were it not for memory, we should be as much to seek, as if we had never learnt ought; as Jude says, I will put them in remembrance, though ye once knew this, Jude. 5, that is, as ye once knew it, so I desire that ye may know it still; that it may stick by you, that you may make it your own; what a mercy is this? We cannot undertake to have always the means of knowledge, we may want preaching; God knows how soon; now if we have memory to lay up some knowledge, we may have the benefit of it, however things go; may be God gave us a warning, to take heed of such and such sins, now if we have a good memory, this warning may be still present with us; we have had such motions, such convictions, such sights of sin, such stirrings, such manifestations of God to us, what a mercy is it that God hath given us such a thing as memory is? As we had them once, so we may have them still if we remember them.

Secondly, memory is a great blessing, to bring our knowledge to act upon all occasions. How many thousand truths do we know, that we do not, neither can we actually think of; now when we have use of those truths, it is a great mercy, that the Lord hath framed a memory in us, where we may have them upon all such occasions; e. g. we know we should be patient, maybe we do not think of this duty for a day together, but now when we have use of it, then we may remember it; So for meekness we know it, and for forgiving of wrongs, to resist temptations, to deny ourselves, to shun the

occasions of evil, we know all these things, but our knowledge cannot always be in act; now when we have use of these truths, what a mercy is it that we have such a thing as memory is to remember them afresh? Did David actually think of God's gracious judgments always? No, but when he had use of them, when he was at a dead lift, then memory brought him to mind. I remembered thy judgments O Lord and comforted myself, Psal. 119:52, may be Peter had no occasion actually to think of those words of Christ, that John indeed Baptized with water, but ye shall be Baptized with the holy Ghost: but having a memory, that gave him the use of those words in due time; then I remembered the word of the Lord says he, Act. 11:16, may be this truth is not thought of a 12th month together, that ones enemies may be they of our own household; now perhaps all on a sudden; we have use of this truth, then we remember it: now is not this a great mercy, that God hath given us such a thing; that we may put up his truths, as a man does his memory in his purse, to take it out when occasion is.

Thirdly, it is a great blessing to have God always with one; this memory is such a faculty, that if a man have a heart, he may have God always with him, and heaven with him; ye know that most men are without God in the world, what is the reason of it? But because they will not remember him? How many do know God very much? As the Heathens did, they knew him to be eternal, to be Almighty, to be everywhere, to be holy and just, they knew him, but they did not like to retain him in their knowledge, Rom. 1:28, that is, they let him go away from them, they would not keep him in remembrance, as Nebuchadnezzar says of his dream, when he had forgotten his dream, it is gone away from me, says he, Dan. 2:5, so people forget God, they let God go away from them; now beloved this makes us without excuse, when God hath given us a memory, we might have God always with us, if we had a heart; we need not let him go away.

The memory is a deep vault in the soul, where it may hide what it hath a mind too, that, nor men nor devils can take it away from us; as the Israelites hid their corn from the Midianites, so we may hide whatever our heart hath a liking unto in our memories, that we may have it always with us, if we will; as it is said of the good Merchant, when he had found the rich Treasure he hid it, Matth. 13:44, that is, he laid it up in his souls storehouse; as Solomon says, my Son if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my Commandments with thee, Prov. 2:1. I say the memory is a deep vault in the soul, where a man hides what he hath a mind to, that it may never be taken away from him; so that memory is an excellent thing; a man may have God always with him, and heaven and all heavenly things, if so he have a mind to them.

Fourthly, it is a great blessing, that if a man chance to go out of his way, he may put himself in again, seeing he hath a memory; I speak of a Christian, that hath once heard the ways of God he cannot go out, but by memory he may put himself in again; memory is the souls Map; as David says, all the ends of the earth shall remember themselves and turn unto the Lord, Psal. 22:27, he speaks of all God's Elect; mark how they get into the way again, they shall remember themselves so when a man steps aside by pride, thus he may come in again by remembering himself; O, God resisteth the proud, the Lord says he will give grace to none but the humble; thus he may come in again; so if he step aside by too much yielding to the world, thus he may set himself to rights, O woe is me, what have I done? Now I remember the love of the world is enmity with God; if he chance to have by thoughts at the hearing of the word, let him remember himself, O what a beast am I? I forgot I was in God's presence with him, I remember myself, that I am before him; and thus he may correct himself; so the prodigal Son did, when he had fetched his wild vagary, at last he remembered himself; O how many

hired Servants of my Fathers have bread enough? Luke 15:17, he remembered what a good Father he had run away from, this fetched him home again.

Fifthly, it's a great blessing to help a man to believe; though a man do not believe for the present; he hears the word of God, he hears that which might do him good, but for the present he does not believe; yet who knows but this very word may do him good another day, memory may bring it to mind, through the goodness of God, and then he may believe it; as the Disciples of Christ, ye may read how that Christ spake some words, that did them little good for the present. But the Text says, that when he was risen again, then they remembered the words that he had said unto them, and believed, John. 2:22, many times we are untoward for the present, and then the word does us little good, I but it's a blessing that we can remember; the same word may be represented by our memories to us, and may do the deed; as we see in the second son in the Gospel; his Father said to him, go work today in my Vineyard; ye know how distempered he was for the present, he answered and said, I will not, Matth. 21:29. I but afterwards he repented himself and went, that is, he remembered afresh what his Father said to him, and that made him do it.

Sixthly, it's a great help to better knowledge; it may be at the first, when we are taught, the word does not sink into our hearts, we do not understand it. But yet remembering what it was we were told, afterwards through the mercy of God something or other comes in, that now we can say, blessed be God, now I understand such a truth, such a promise, such a commandment; and yet no new teaching, but remembering only what we read or heard; as sometime one of the Jewish Doctors not understanding that place in the Prophet, where it is said, that God would sweep them away with the besom of

destruction, Isa. 14:23, afterwards seeing a maid come with her besom to sweep the house, now he saw the meaning of the place; so when Christ said to Peter, that before the Cock crowed twice he would deny him thrice; that Peter had a poor weak heart, and that he had a horrible deal of faint-heartedness in him, and that he would deny his own Master, Peter understood not his words, he saw no such thing in his heart, as to think those words to be true. But when he had been in the High Priests Hall and there had abjured his Master, and had heard too the Cock crow twice, and his Master look at him, now he remembered his words, and went out and wept bitterly, Matth. 26:75, that is, now he saw the truth of Christ's words, now he saw what a wretched heart he had, and lamented it. I say memory is a great help unto knowledge; as God says; O my people, remember now what Balak King of Moab consulted; and what Balaam the Son of Beor answered him from Shictim to Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord, Mieh. 6:5. How many things have we heard and seen, when we were children, that then we never knew the meaning of? Yet afterwards when we come to have more wit, then remembering what they were, we understand them; as Christ said to Peter, when he went to wash his feet; what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter, John. 13:7, that is, when thou rememberest it hereafter, then thou shalt know my meaning in it.

Seventhly, memory is as excellent help for a man to preach to himself; Beloved we can but preach to you an hour or so, but seeing God hath given you memories, ye may preach to yourselves all the day long; memory may help you to repeat the word every day in your hearts; as the Apostle says, speaking unto yourselves, Ep. 5:19, so by reason of this blessing of God, ye may speak to yourselves from day today.

Nay eighthly, it's an excellent thing, for it may let you have the benefit of things before they be; your death is not yet, your last sickness is not yet, your salvation is not yet; the day of judgment, the Kingdom of glory, these are things that are not yet. I but, you having a memory, ye may have much Benefit by them in the meantime; ye may represent them to yourselves as things present, and have a world of good by them; and so all the things that are past, no act of the soul can make them still present but memory; your child-hood is past, all the Sermons that ye heard heretofore are all past. O how many sins have ye committed in times past! And how many dealings have ye had of God in the days that are past? Now having a memory, except ye have graceless hearts, ye may do yourselves good by all these, even as if they were now before you; if a child of God be at a loss for the present, he may help himself by memory; as David says, I remembered the days of old; I call to remembrance my Song that I have had, Psal. 77:5. 6, so if any of you be secure, ye may remember something or other that is past, which may awaken you again; hath God never showed you your damned estate heretofore? Were ye never sick heretofore, and did you not see that if ye had died in that case, ye had perished; ye may remember that now, and awaken yourselves; and how if God should take you away in such a case as that? It cannot be related what a blessing it is that we have a memory.

But let us come to the third thing; and that is this, when may the memory be said to be alive? I answer, there be two parts of the memories deadness towards God. The first is an aptness to forget God and all his commands. Secondly, an aptness to remember those things that are not so good for us; now when those two faults are rectified in some measure then the memory is alive towards God.

First, There's aptness in your memories to forget God and all his commands; ye know God commands us to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, Exod. 20:8, how apt are we to forget it? How commonly is it out of our minds? So in the 78th Psalm, and the 7th verse, God says there, he would not have us forget his works, but that we should keep his commandments; now O how apt are we to let them leak out of our hearts? We have a hellish art of forgetfulness; how often do we forget ourselves herein, and suffer the remembrance of God to be taken away from us? Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaks to you as to Children, Heb. 12:5, how often do we forget to keep ourselves unspotted? Though we be told of the will of God, yet any little thing is enough to put it out of our minds, stay them not least my people forget it; though we be told of our misery, and the infinite danger we are in, may be at the first it moves us a little, but how soon do we forget it, and other things take us up? Now when this aptness is rectified in some measure; when God hath a sound impress on our minds that we must needs remember him, and all the things that concern our peace; when there's a Law in our minds, that we will not forget God; as ye may see there in David, Bless thou the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, Psal. 103:2, when our memory is sanctified, and is made the good Treasury of our heart; when the Lord hath lifted up our memory unto him, then it is alive.

Secondly, as by nature there's an aptness in our memory to forget God, so there's an aptness to remember other things that either are not good for us, or not so good; we are apt to remember injuries; nay, one injury will be thought one more than many good turns; so likewise idle tales, we are apt to remember them; whereas good things go out in our hearts like sparks in wet tinder. We may see this in the hearing of the word; the Apostle terms us forgetful hearers, James 1:25, if a tale be told us in a Sermon, that we can remember; how many are apt to carry that way; whereas that which is

wholesome, and might do us more good, how apt we are we to forget that? As a Divine says, our memories are like strainers, all the pure milk runneth through, but if there be any dross, that stays behind; or like a grate that lets the pure water run away, and if there be any straws and sticks and filth and mud, and dregs, that it holds, so it is with our memories by nature trifles, and toys, and worldly things, them we are apt to remember, like the Shepherd in York-shire, that could remember all his flock, he kept a thousand sheep, and if one should but change one Sheep and put in another, he could tell which it was. But for gracious things our memories does soon forget them; like Israel, they soon forgot all the works of God, Psal. 106:13, now what is this but the corruption and deadness of our memories towards God? Maybe we are apt to excuse it, alas we have weak memories true, if we were as weak memoried in other things, it were something; but when we can remember our pleasures, and profits and tales, and anything; when we go to buy, we'll be sure to remember ourselves there, when to sell, we'll be sure to remember ourselves there, that we will have to the worth if we can. But in matters of God there we forget ourselves; this cannot be excused. Now when this is rectified in some measure, then our memory is alive; when we will rather forget anything else then God; rather forget ourselves in all the world, then forget our duty towards God, when this study is once set up soundly in the soul in some measure, now the memory is alive. Thus ye see the third thing.

Now for the fourth, that this must needs be the life of the memory, I prove it by arguments.

First, because the memory hath hardly any other quickening, then the quickening of the man whose memory it is, so that when the man's mind is quickened together with his conscience and heart, the memory is quickened too; as the Prophet says, I will never forget thy

precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me, Psal. 119:93, that is, my memory is quickened up to thy precepts, because with them thou hast quickened me; for we see commonly, that the faculty of memory is much at one after conversion that it was before conversion; if it were a weak memory before; so it is after; only this; as the strength of it was let out towards the world and sin, and self before, so now the strength of it is in some measure let out towards the best things. And therefore what can the life of the memory be, but the aptness of a man to remember God?

Secondly, because this is the only practical memory; ye know a man may have an admirable memory, to remember Sermons, whole Chapters in the Bible, and yet have a dead memory to God; a Sanctified memory, is a practical memory; as the Lord says, remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; q.d. ye may remember still when the Sabbath is come, I this is the Sabbath day; that is not it; that's only a contemplative memory. But I would have you have a practical memory; not only to remember the duty, but remember for to do it; for as the contemplative understanding hath a faculty of conserving its species; so the practical understanding, hath a faculty of conserving its species too; as long as a man hath not this practical memory, it is nothing. Because he remembered not to show mercy, Psal. 109:16, mark, the Lord does not find fault with a man for not remembering of that duty, for maybe he did remember that, I but he did not remember to do his duty; this is a live memory, when a man's practical memory is towards God and his ways. Now when a man is made again to remember God and all his holy ways, now his memory must needs be made practical.

Thirdly, because this is the only memory that represents things lively to the soul. I say when a man is made in some measure apt and inclined to remember God, then and only then does his memory

represent God and his ways lively to him; ye know reason says the life of the memory must needs be in this, that it represents things lively and powerfully unto us; when it does not only show us what we do remember, but it shows it to the life; when it shows it dully and bluntly and obscurely, that's with a kind of forgetfulness; then a man remembers it to the full, when a man remembers to the utmost of what he once knew; so that if a man's memory be alive, it must remember to the full in a perfect manner; as David says, I have remembered thy name O Lord in the night, and have kept thy Law; Psal. 119:55, that is, I remembered it, and remembered it to the full, I represented it powerfully to myself, so that I made myself to keep thy Law by it. I affected my own heart by what I did remember; as the Church says, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me, Lam. 3:20, well then ye see, that a lively memory is it that represents things lively to a man; now when a man is made again to remember God and his ways, then and never till then does he represent God lively to himself. Those that have not this aptness wrought in them, maybe they remember God now and then, and the duties now and then, but they never remember them in a lively perfect manner.

The use of this is, first, if this be the only lively memory to be apt to remember God, then let us labor to get this same aptness into our minds to remember God in all our ways. Let us consider. First because without this memory, all men's other cries are nothing. Israel had a memory to remember God; they remembered that God was their Rock, and at the high God was their redeemer, Psal. 78:35, but that remembrance was nothing. So that if we be not thus mindful of God, we are yet in our sins; as God tells Judah. Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore be are thou thy lewdness, Ezek. 23:35, if a man were once pulled out of his sins, if he once had that true conviction, and godly sorrow, and reformation,

and faith and amendment of life that is in being converted, the soul would have the lively remembrance of it still, to make him go on as he hath begun, and therefore if we have not this blessed remembrance yet in us, it is most plain we are yet in our sins.

Thirdly, thy heart can never retain God's commandments without this same memory; as Solomon says; My Son forget not my Law, but let thy heart keep my Commandments, Prov. 3:1.

Fourthly, The want of this remembering of God is the cause of all sin; Moses speaking of all the sins of Israel, says he, they have forgotten the God that formed them, Deut. 32:18, so again in another place; they have perverted their way, they have forgotten the Lord, Jer. 3:21, so again it is said in the Book of the Judges, the Children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot him, Judge. 3:7.

Fourthly, the want of this memory, is the high way to destruction, the Lord will destroy them, that forget him; that do not remember to fear him, that do not press it upon their minds still to regard him; the Lord will in the end, destroy all such people; as he says, Israel hath forgotten his maker, therefore I will kindle a fire, that shall devour them, Hos. 8:14. Beloved how do we look that God should remembers us, if we will forget him. I will utterly forget you. Jer. 23:39.

Secondly, another use is to show you, how ye may get alive memory. There be seven causes of it.

The first, is a true knowledge of God. I told you remembrance is most properly in the understanding; now look how a man understands God, so he does remember; if a man know God only literally, he remembers him no otherwise; but if a man know God aright, then he remembers him aright. The understanding can keep no other species

then it hath; if it have a saving knowledge of God, then it hath saving species of God; no man can have other money in his purse, then he puts into his purse. If he would have Gold in his purse, he must put Gold into his purse; so if we would remember God aright, let us labor to get a right knowledge of him. I will establish my Covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, that thou mayst remember, &c. Ezek. 16:62:63.

Secondly, a new and a true heart; men's memories ever follow the nature of their hearts; they ever will remember that their memory is set to; let a man be proud, he will ever remember his respect; let him do anything that seems to deserve praise, he will ever remember to jet himself; let him be at any time disparaged, he will ever remember to be very much stirred; so let a man be covetous, he will ever remember his profit, he will remember never to go against his profit, if he can otherwise choose; whatever he forgets, he will not forget that; so let a man be Bookish, let a man's lusts be to have learning, he will be sure to remember that; now if a man's heart be set truly towards God, this will draw his mind towards God, now he will remember to please God, to have his heart in a sweet frame; if he find any distemper in his heart, he will remember to remove that if he can possibly; when the heart is upright, it runs thus; we will remember thy love more than wine, the upright love thee, Cant. 1:4, so that if we would remember God with this alive memory, we must get an upright heart.

Thirdly, a clear and a distinct estate before God; as long as a man is confused in his conscience, he knows not what to make of himself; this breaks the neck of true memory; *methodus est mater memory*, distinctness is the mother of memory as we say. Let a man be confused in his notions, this spoileth all memory; so it is here, as long as we are confused in our consciences, we know not where we

are; we cannot remember God; we know not what to call to mind; his justice or his mercy, his promises or his threatening's; as David when he was to seek at one time, he could not remember God to any purpose, I remembered God and was troubled says he, Psal. 77:3. He was troubled horribly in remembering of him; like a man in his wooing, he is troubled to remember ought; now when a man hath cleared up his Estate, it's strange to see how clear he is in his Prayers, how clear in his conscience, clear in his apprehensions, where as another man knows not where he is; so that if we would remember God in all our ways, let us labor to clear up our estates; this will help us to remember him a thousand times better than ever we did before; then we shall see his promises distinctly, and everything distinctly.

Fourthly, a delight in good ways; this is a very admirable help of memory; what's the reason, we are apt to forget anything, but because we do not regard it; the more the mind regards anything, the more it remembers it; as the Prophet says, I will delight myself in thy Statutes, I will not forget thy word, Psal. 119:16. And so for hope too. Ps. 78:7.

Fifthly, meditation is another cause of this remembering of God; meditationes salvant memoriam says Aristotle. the more a man thinks of a thing, it is the deeper in his mind; when the good man had said, he would remember God's works, Psal. 77:11. O says he, I will meditate of them, verse 12.

Sixthly, the rubbing up of our memories. The memory is a very lazy faculty, if it be not every foot rubbed up, it will be forgetful; therefore we should rub up our minds, if we see them ready to let his word slip, we must call it back again; as the Lord says, remember this and show yourselves men, bring it to mind O ye transgressors, Isa. 46:8, our memories are naturally exceeding slippery, they are apt to leak out

that which is good; and therefore we should take pains with our minds, as the Apostle speaks; therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, least at any time we let them slip, Heb. 2:1.

Seventhly, and lastly, which is the main of all, and that is the holy Ghost. But the comforter which is the holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you, John. 14:26.

FINIS.

PART II.

THE SECOND PART OF CHRIST'S ALARM TO DROWSY SAINTS.

SERMON XX.

Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead - REVEL. 3:1.

I have spoken of the life of the affections, and now I should come to the next thing, namely, to show how far a child of God may be said to be dead; but before I handle this, there is another point that would be spoken to in a word or two; and that is this, Why a child of God may think himself to be dead when he is not, and think he is grown deader than ever he was, and there is no such matter; and others may think he is grown cold and negligent, and yet the truth is, he is more affected, and more alive towards God then formerly; this is a very needful point, and there be several causes of false liveliness which a child of God may have, and when they go away he may seem to be deader then he was, whereas indeed he is not so.

The first is novelty of Religion and grace, when grace is yet new, and the word comes fresh to a man, and the promises of eternal life look freshly into a man's heart, they will affect him much, and not only raise his sanctified affections, but his unsanctified too; for the unsanctified affections will stir at a novelty; a man that hath no grace at all, nor any life, will be stirred at a new thing; as when the Apostle preached new doctrine to the Athenians, Acts 17:32, we will hear thee again of this matter, say they; they cared not how often they heard

this, because it was news to them; so when Christ preached up and down, O what new doctrine is this! Say they, never man spake as this man, Joh. 7:46, it was a new kind of preaching, new gifts, this stirred them mightily; so it may be with a true Christian, when the word of God comes first to him, and grace comes first to him, the novelty of grace may affect him; when God first opens his eyes, how strangely will he be moved in prayer? How strangely will he carry himself at a Sermon? His very bowels yearn at a Sermon, and he will cry out, Oh the infinite mercy of God to my soul! What a beast was I before? I was a hell-hound, a child of the Devil; and now the Lord hath made me a child of God; I went on in the high way to perdition, and now God hath brought me into the right way; this is admirable; but do you think these are all good affections? There is a great deal of corruption in these; as new Beer, when it is first tunned, it hath a great deal of working then, but when it is staler, it doth not work so much, yet then is the Beer more powerful, and hath more life; as it is with a man's first entrance into an hot bath, it doth so stir him, as if it did scald him, but after he hath been in a while, he is sensible of little or no heat; the heat is as much as it was at the first, and works upon him as much, but he feels it not so much; so a good Christian doth not seem to be so much affected afterwards as formerly; are his true affections therefore down? No, but his unsanctified ones are down; may be a man hath not lost a jot of his true, and sound, and sanctified affections, but only his unsanctified ones; for when grace comes first into the soul of a new convert, there is a greater Army raised up for God then is likely to continue; there are a company of mercenary Soldiers stepping, and seem to go out and to fight for God, as well as the rest; you shall have more fears in that man, then are true; and more desires after grace then are true; carnal desires, and joys, and delights, these will be all up at the first, and will go out, though they never go to the journeys end; it is with a new convert, at his setting out towards heaven, as it was with the children of Israel,

when they came out of Egypt, there was a mixed multitude went up with them, Exod. 12:38, why? The plagues of God had wrought upon many of the Egyptians, and they would go up with them, but they would not go into the land of Canaan, but returned back again; the true Israelites, that were affected truly, they only went into the Land of Canaan; but a mixed company went up with them; so when a man sets forth towards heaven, there is a mixed company in that man's bosom, goeth along with him, mixed joy, and fear, and hope, and even corrupt nature is raised up at first; for you must think the fears of God lying upon the soul, and the newness of Religion, (he was in hell before, now he is in heaven) that will raise up even corrupt nature, for a time a man will seem to be so affected and so lively; now after a while these mercenary Soldiers, this mixed company go back again, and leave nothing but the bare sanctified affections; and now the man seems to be deader than he was; as if he had lost all; and may be he complains he is not the man he was he was thus, and thus moved before, and enlarged to good duties, now he is down the wind; I say this doth not follow, it is even as if a man that hath bought a bushel of peas at the Market, when they are shelled, and the pods are off, and none but the bare peas left, should complain he hath less than he had at first; so it is here, there is nothing gone but the mere trash and husks; when a man is first converted, there is a great deal of trash with it, a great deal of corrupt nature that will leave a man in the lurch afterwards: yet it follows not, but the man hath the same sanctified affections he had formerly.

Secondly, Violent commotions may stir a man, and make him seem to be more affected then he is; there are many seem to be full of life, whereas, if they were searched to the bottom, there is nothing but violent commotions, that will come to nothing; a child of God at first setting out, may be marvelously quickened and stirred, and seem to be mighty zealous and fervent, when in truth the greatest part of this

is nothing but violent commotions; a little grace will seem a great deal when there are these violent stirrings; this man will make a greater show, then the same godly man afterwards, when he hath more grace a great deal; as James and John seemed to be very zealous, Luke 9:54, as zealous as Elias; you will say were they not affected? When they saw the Samaritans would not receive Christ, oh thought they, they deserve to be burnt down to the ground; Wilt thou that we command fire, to come down from heaven to consume them, as Elias did? They could have been content to have fired whole Towns that would not receive Christ; you will say this is admirable; but these were nothing but violent commotions; now when Christ had stilled these violent commotions, will you say they were grown cold and dead, and not so lively as formerly? You know the torrent, though it run not so violently as in a great flood, yet still it runs; so it is here, may be a godly Minister at his first entrance puts forth himself more, and preaches as if he would fly in the face of the ungodly; afterwards he preacheth more gently and evenly; shall we say he is grown more dull and dead, and not so well affected as before? No, he may be more affected; so for a private Christian, it may be so soon as ever God turned his heart and inclined him towards his heavenly Kingdom, and made him look out for the good of his soul we shall have him pray with such violence and such extended passages, he will reach forth himself in the confession of sin, as if he would trample upon himself, and in his petitioning for grace, as if he would wrestle with God, and in his acknowledging of God's goodness as if he were affected more than thousand Christians besides, but afterwards when he comes to have his eyes better enlightened, to see what a deal of froth was in these things, and how dead he is in regard of true saving life, now he begins to be ashamed of himself, he doth not lay them down, but he would have them in more truth: Now shall we say this man is more dead and less affected then he was before? No, but this man hath less violent commotions.

Thirdly, Indiscretion will make a man seem to be more affected then indeed he is: as a godly man that is rash and indiscreet, let this man reprove a sin, he will be so zealous and earnest, nay, he will be so choleric, that if you do not yield presently, he is in a combustion; afterwards, when God gives him more knowledge of his ways, and more discretion to reprove sin, he will not be so choleric, and in such a passion; hath this man lost his affections now? No, this doth not follow; he may keep his affections still, and it may be hates sin a thousand times more than he did before, but he goes another way to work, and deals more composedly, and gravely, and zealously, for the good of the man's soul; as when Paul saw the Philippians so loving in the midst of all his afflictions and sufferings for the Gospels sake, sending him so many hundred miles a great present to relieve him in his necessity, what doth he do? Doth he bid them abate their love? No, increase in it more and more saith he, but let it be with knowledge and judgment, Phil. 1:9, a man that is of a loving nature, when he hath pared off all foolish charity, and all vain and proud charity, whereby he doth things out of pride, ostentation, and vanity, as he will do when he comes to have more understanding; if he do not discern and compare himself with the word of God, he may seem to abate in his love, but he is not less loving but more judicious. So Samuel at first, he was so zealous against Saul, when he had sinned against God's commandment, that he would not stay with him by any means: no, saith he, you have rejected the word of the Lord, when Saul confessed his sins, and entreated him to stay, and was very earnest; no, by no means; what, stay with a wretch that hath rejected the word of the Lord? 1 Sam. 15:26, yet afterwards he did stay; will you say now Samuel was grown cold, and less affected against sin? No, but he was more judicious; he begun to consider, certainly if I do not stay, it will be a disparagement to the Lord's anointed; I may disparage the Lord's ordinance, and disparage the Kings Authority, and cause the people to scorn him; he began to see that Saul spake

with sense, honor me before the people; and he did stay then; now he was not less affected, but more judicious.

Fourthly, Presumption may make a man seem to be more affected and quickened a great deal then indeed he is; as Peter, he seemed to be so mightily transported and enlarged towards Christ, and so full of zeal for him; though all men forsake thee, yet will not I: he thought he was so affected, that he could compare with all the Apostles and Disciples of Jesus Christ, and go beyond them all; but afterwards when Christ asked him, Peter, lovest thou me? See his answer, Joh. 21:15, his answer was nakedly, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; he would make no more comparisons; though Christ put him upon it there, yet he would not be brought to compare anymore. Now was he less affected towards Christ? No, but he was less presumptuous.

Fifthly, Activeness of natural disposition may make a man seem to be more affected then indeed he is; for a man the more active his nature is, and the more spirits he hath, the more stirring he hath; a man that hath such a disposition, will go further then another of a slower spirit; there is a great deal more grace required to make a heavy dull natured man to speak a word for God, then to make a choleric man strike a blow for God; men's natures differ, some men are more active naturally; may be one man is full of activity and stirring, another man is of a dull disposition; will you say this man is deader than he? No, this man may have more life of grace then he; it is as if one man should swim with the stream, and another against the stream, he that swims with the stream, will more easily swim a mile, then he that swims against the stream, will swim half a mile; will you say that this man cannot swim so well as the other? No, he may be a better swimmer of the twain; for this is the thing, we are not to judge of the life of our grace, by what we do, but by what labor we take in doing, as the Apostle saith, remembering without ceasing, your work

of faith, and labor of love, 1 Thes. 1:3, may be another man is of a more loving nature then this man, but the man that is more unkind naturally, and harsh-natured, he labors a thousand times more abundantly then the other; who hath most grace of love now? The other hath most natural love, but this man hath more grace of love, as Paul proves he had the life of grace in him, because he labored more abundantly then they all; it is not what thou doest, but what thou laborest to do, he that swims down the stream, doth not labor, if he should do nothing but stir his hands and feet without any labor, the stream will carry him, so when a man hath nature to help him, he need not labor much, but when a man must fetch all out of the hard flint, how is he fain to labor? There thou mayst try the life of thy affections, not by what thou prayest, but by what thou laborest in prayer, not by what thou rememberest at a Sermon, but though thou hast a blockish memory, how dost thou labor to remember? So it is not the not doing of sin, but the laboring against sin, hereby thou mayst know whither they zeal and affection be abated in thee: So again for a man's self, may be he was more active heretofore, had a more nimble spirit and temper of body, now he is grown more sad and melancholy, his head is distempered and grown more weak, his memory fails, and his understanding decays, that quick disposition of his body is taken down, and he cannot do as he did before, is the man therefore not so quickened as he was before? Is he grown more dead? May be the man complains, certainly he hath cause to suspect himself, and he doth not think he is right; formerly he could remember a Sermon, be fixed in meditation, be attentive at the word, be fervent in prayer, and put forth himself in this fashion: now he cannot, he was so lively before, now he hath not the same activity, and therefore begins to call all into question, certainly all is not right. I answer, this doth not follow; it is true, in many a man it is the deadness of his heart, and the decayedness of his spiritual estate that causeth this, but it doth not follow that it is so with thee, but the

cause is this, may be thou hast worn out thy tools, therefore no marvel thou canst not work so well as formerly; take a skillful Musician, whose instrument is cracked and marred, he cannot make so good music upon this instrument, as he could when it was sound; doth it follow, he hath lost his skill? No, give this man a sound instrument, as he had before, and he will play as well as ever; all our operations, not only external, but also internal, do much depend upon the disposition of the body; as for meditation, may be when the body was lively and active, a man could fix his meditations upon a thing, now it is weakened he cannot; may be he hath the same desire and delight as he had before, but he cannot do it; so maybe he hath as great a desire as ever to remember the word, but his memory is gone; so maybe he hath as great a desire to put forth himself in any ordinance of God as ever in all his life, but his body will not bear it; I say, the spirits depend much upon the body; you may see this in natural operations; let a man's eyes fail, will any man say, that the soul of that man is less able to see then it was? No, the soul is as able to see in a blind man, as in a seeing man; in an old man whose eyes fail him, as in a young man that hath the quickest sight; if this man had an excellent eye given him, he would see as well as anybody else; the soul is able to do it, but it wants a tool; so many Saints of God, cannot do many duties as they were wont, not for want of love and zeal, and affections, but for want of tools; it is said 2 Sam. 21:16, that when David waxed old, they would not let him go out into the field; did they look upon David now as less worthy then before? No, they looked upon him as more worthy than before; the text saith, they looked upon him as the very light of Israel, though he could not fight for Israel so well as he did before; so you shall see many a godly man, and reverend father upon his death bed, shows no great matter in his dying; what, because he is dead, and is not the man he was? No, but because he hath worn out his tools; he is not the man in regard of operation, though he hath the same affections he had formerly.

Sixthly, Extraordinary assistance may make a man seem to be more lively and quickened then indeed he is; for God doth assist his people extraordinarily in their beginning; 'tis true some of his people he doth extraordinarily assist all their life long, but he doth not usually do it, he doth choose rather extraordinarily to strive and help his people at the first, and afterwards he helps them only ordinarily, leaving them to fight with their own corruptions; why? Because it is an extraordinary case; when a child is young, his parents will extraordinarily help him to go, and will not let the weight of his body lie upon any one step, but help him in every step; afterwards they help the child, but more ordinarily they look the child should go alone, and may be now he gets more knocks then he did before, and falls oftener; will you say the child is now grown weaker? No, he is stronger than he was, but there is a difference, he had extraordinary assistance before, now he is left to himself and to his own legs; so it is with God towards his children; at first, when they are new beginners, when they are newly born again, he takes compassion upon them extraordinarily, helps them in prayer, and against their corrupt lusts; and if the Lord should not do thus, it is impossible they should stand, as the Lord saith of Ephraim, when he was a child I loved him, and taught him to go, Hos. 11:1,3, he carried him in his arms as a child, when he was young; afterwards he looks he should go alone; not as if any of God's children could go alone, they have need of his help every day; but they must go alone in respect of extraordinary help; for God hath given them access to the throne of grace, and hath given them understanding, and some strength; and he looks they should use these things not as though they could use them without his assistance, but without extraordinary assistance; now when God leaves his child to walk by himself, he will fall oftener then before; you shall have many grown Christians fall oftener then young beginners; why? Because they are weaker and less quickened? No, but because they have no such extraordinary assistance; they can go

alone. I speak not as though it were without the assistance of God, but without extraordinary assistance; and though for want of care and watchfulness they get a fall, yet they are not weaker; few new beginners ever fell as David and Peter fell afterwards; no, the Lord bears them in his arms, but afterwards he lets them go alone; now when the Saints of God feel duties to come on so heavily, extraordinary assistance being gone, they think they are grown dead and lumpish; why? The load lies heavier upon their own backs then ever it did before; yet it doth not follow they are more dead; a child whom his father bears in his arms, may be carried along from one end of the house to the other, sooner then another child that goes alone, can go it in thrice as much time; will you say this child is weaker than the other? No, this child goes alone, and the other is extraordinarily helped; so the people of God, when they are first converted, they must know they are extraordinarily assisted, and they must take heed lest they be proud and conceited; oh they may think they have gotten such a deal of grace and life already; no, no, alas you shall see what you have when you go alone.

Seventhly, Freedom from temptations may make a man seem to be more quickened then he is; as a heavy dull tempered man, may go faster a great deal having no clog, then the nimblest man in the Country with a clog at his heels; a man at his first conversion, God will not let him be tempted, he is but in his nonage, in his entrance into the Kingdom of God, and if God should let temptations presently fly upon him, before he hath more grace and judgment, and more experience of the vileness of his own heart, and the goodness of God, he would break his neck; now God will never suffer a man to be tempted above what he is able; therefore when his people are first converted, he frees them from temptations a while, and then they go roundly on; afterwards when they have been ten or twenty or thirty years in grace, may be they are foully overtaken, and

go heavily on; shall they therefore complain they are deader than they were? As a horse, when he carries single may go roundly; afterwards, the same horse being put to carry double, he goes more heavily; will a man say the metal of the horse is grown worse? No, but he carries double; so it is with the Saints of God; may be formerly they carried single, now they carry double; the Lord lets more temptations fall upon them then he did before; will you say that Joseph was grown cold, because he had gotten that vile custom of swearing in Pharaohs Court? He never sware at home, alas he had no temptations at home; if he had had those temptations at home, and had had no more grace then he had then, it would have been the bane of his soul; no wonder he goeth on more heavily, because he hath more temptations; you may see how heavily David drew on, 1 Sam. 27:1. I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul; formerly he could believe admirably, and trust in God's promises wonderfully; he fought against the Lyon and the Bear, and was mightily affected with God, but now he goeth heavily on; what hath he lost his faith? No, but he is more tempted than he was before; may be the man had more grace of life in him then before, but he was more tempted, and carried double.

We come now to the next thing, to show you how far forth a child of God may be dead and lose his quickening, not only seem deader, but be deader indeed then he was; and this point we will show you in these particulars.

1. That every man by nature is dead to all goodness.
- 2ly. That the liveliest of God's servants have some of this deadness still remaining in them.
- 3ly. The meanest of God's servants that have least grace, have some life, and cannot be quite dead.
- 4ly. We will show you this is a very ticklish point, and very dangerous; a world of mischief may come of it by reason of the corruption of men's hearts.
- Yet 5ly. It is a

very necessary point. 6ly. Those particulars wherein he may be dead.
7ly. The uses of the point.

First, We are all by nature dead, we have no heart to seek reconciliation with God, no heart to get his image in our hearts, and to have communion with him, and approve ourselves unto him; we see naturally, how the world slights these things; they seek how they may live, and do as others do, but to look after righteousness, and holiness, and pleasing of God, they have no heart to these things; and though God afford them good motions; and checks of conscience, and all helps, yet people have no life at all to these things, Eph. 4:18, they are as Paul speaks there, alienated from the life of God; and as the father speaks of his prodigal son, this my son was dead, quite dead; by nature we have not the son of God, and therefore have no life; as Christ saith, the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and live; he speaks of the elect people that naturally are dead to all good; for though a man be alive to many of the acts which the Saints of God do naturally, yet to those works that a Saint doth as he is a Saint, he is altogether dead; as a beast, though it hath a life of its own, yet it is dead to the life of a man; indeed it can do many things a man doth, a beast can see and hear, and go up and down as well as a man doth, but for those acts a man doth as he is a man, he is altogether dead to those acts; a beast cannot discourse; how many things are in a man which a beast looks not after? It is altogether dead to them; so a natural man is alive to do what the Saints of God do as they are men, because he is a man himself; but as they are Saints of God, and have the life of God in them, he is altogether dead to that; he cannot carry himself as the Saints do, he cannot curb himself of all his lusts as the Saints of God do; you cannot if you would never so fain bring a natural man to these things, you may as well bring a dead man to walk up and down among men, as to make a natural man to be so strict and precise as a Saint.

Secondly, the liveliest of all God's Saints have some of this deadness remaining in them, the child of God, though in one part, se. the spirit, he be alive, yet in the flesh he is dead, Paul himself tells us, I am not perfect, neither have I yet attained, Phil. 3:13. David was as lively a man as any in the Old Testament, yet he cries out Psal. 143:11, quicken me O Lord for thy names sake; the Saints are like to a man sick of the numb palsy, he is dead on one side; so the Saints are dead on one side; like the Moon, that side the Sun shines upon is light, but the other side is dark; so when God shines upon his Saints by his Spirit, there is light: but they are dark on one side, for though justification be perfect in this life, yet sanctification is still but imperfect; the guilt of sin may be fully forgiven here, but the power of sin is never here fully destroyed; none of the Saints of God but find some clog, they go not so quick as they should or would do: Paul himself groans under this burden, Rom. 7:24, and Christ doth not quicken his servants all at once, Job. 10:10. Christ doth put life into his people, yet so as that it goeth gradually on, he gives them more and more, he makes them more and more agile and quick in good duties; the best of God's Saints are like to a goodly tree, that may be hath a hundred dead boughs upon it, though the root and body be alive; may be a young tree hath fewer dead boughs, yet it is weak, and there is less strength a great deal in it then in the other, and less fruit; so I say for a Saint of God, though he be consolidated and settled, and grown substantial, yet there may be abundance of dead boughs.

Thirdly, The meanest of God's Saints, the deadest of them all have some life, they cannot lose all their life, they have an eternal life, Joh. 1:36, he that believes on the son hath everlasting life, a child of God, though he may lose all his liveliness yet he cannot lose his life, there is a difference between liveliness and being alive, as Exod. 1:19, the Hebrew women there are said to be lively; any woman is alive, but

not lively: so all the children of God are alive, they may lose their liveliness but not their life; as the wise Virgins all slumbered and slept, but yet their oil was not gone out; though old Eli was grown marvelous dull, and heavy, and lumpish, and had no zeal for God and liveliness in him, yet he was not altogether dead, as appears by his answer to Samuel, and his care of the Ark of the Covenant; for the life of a Saint of God, is like a vessel of Canary that cannot be quite frozen up; a child of God, though he be never so cold and frozen, yet he shall not be altogether frozen up, he shall have some life still, the seed of God remaineth in him, 1 Joh. 3:9.

Fourthly, This is a ticklish point, and marvelous dangerous, unless great heed be taken; those that hear it, that hear how far a child of God may grow dead, may receive much mischief by it; and I was once of the mind not to have spoken of it, in regard of the evil consequents that may grow upon it.

For first, This may greatly embolden the adversaries of the Church of God. In some sense it were well that the adversaries of the Church did think the Church were more lively then they are; it might be a great means to curb them of doing that they do; as it is noted of the Scribes and Pharisees, that conceiving that the people were more lively then they were, it did withhold them from what they otherwise would have done; as when Christ spake of Johns baptism, they would have vilified it, but that they thought the people were so affected to his ministry, that they would stone them; I do not think they were so affected and wrought upon; I do not think there would have been such a stir in the Country, but this was well they thought so, for it saved a great deal of mischief, Mat. 13:25, when the good man's servants were asleep, then the enemies sowed tares; so when the enemies of the Church shall see thee grown dull and careless, and sleepy, the Sabbaths are little sanctified, and the holy ordinances of

God, and powerful preaching little looked after, nay even such as were strict people are grown cold; this doth embolden them to bring in errors, and broach what they list, when they durst not do it if the Church were lively; so that it is something dangerous to tell this in Gath, and publish it in the streets of Ashkalon.

Secondly, This may hearten abundance that are standers by, that are dead in sins and trespasses, to be hardened under their deadness, and to be secure; for when a Minister shall show how that the children of God may be marvelously dead, and may be quite off the hooks, and their zeal be quite gone, the life and liveliness that hath been formerly is not seen; when they hear this, this may help them to hope, 'tis true I am dead, and my heart is like a stone in prayer, and like a block at the hearing of the word of God; I have no spirit, nor heat, nor affections in the ordinance of God; yet God's blessing on the Ministers heart; I heard him say a child of God might be dead like a dead tree, and I hope I may be a child of God for all this; no question when a carnal heart shall read how Christ upbraided his own Disciples with unbelief and hardness of heart, no question when they read such passages, but they have a great deal of succor to their own consciences; for when their consciences fly in their faces for their untowardness and heartlessness in anything that is good, they think the Saints of God have a great deal of heartlessness, and so reckon themselves to be Saints of God; and so the Church of God when it was grown to be marvelous remiss, and profane, and loose (Jer. 7.) though God had told the ten Tribes that he would out them off, yet they comforted themselves; how did they comfort themselves? They comforted themselves in this, they thought verily they were a Church; so people, if they can get any word that falls out of the Ministers mouth that may make for themselves, they catch at it; if any word drop out from a Ministers mouth, or if any miscarriage

or distemper be seen in a godly man's life, they lie at catch for these things; therefore it is dangerous.

Thirdly, It is dangerous because it may teach people how to be dead; nay, people that were stirred at their deadness, and saw an infinite need of laying it aside, and took pains to do it, yet when they hear this Doctrine, through the corruption of their own hearts, they may grow careless, and think, what need I keep such a putter? I am a child of God still, though I am so dead and heartless, and have no more feeling under God's word, yet I may be a child of God; I heard a Minister make an excellent Sermon upon that point, that a child of God may be very dead; but let me tell you, if any of you came to Church this day with a kind of joy and delight, oh, this day we shall hear how a child of God may be dead; if it be thus, you may justly fear that you have a rotten heart; for what is this a sign of? But that your hearts lie at catch, and if you have but any argument to make you think you are a child of God, this is enough; I know this may be a comfort to the children of God, but they are such as are absolutely dejected and cast down, and wrought upon; and whatsoever they hear out of the word of God, they use it for their help, that they may be recovered out of their deadness; but if any of you hear this to the end you may be secure, this will be your bane.

Fifthly, Though it be dangerous, yet it is a necessary point to be insisted upon, the people of God may have need of it; but you will say, it is pity such a Sermon should be preached to show how far a child of God may be dead, there be so many stumbling blocks, and such a deal of mischief; I answer, whatsoever truth may tend to the establishing of the people of God, and the building of faith, is not to be omitted, though thousands of reprobates break their necks at it; as Christ, when the Pharisees stumbled at his doctrine, Mat. 15:12, see how he answers, ver. 13. Every plant which my heavenly father

hath not planted, shall be rooted up; so I say we must hazard that; we must tell people what danger they may catch if they take not heed; and we must deliver the truth, for it is helpful to the people of God; we know that the credit of his servants is precious in his sight; and yet he hath disgraced his servants in the Scriptures as it were, and hath left their dullness and untowardness upon record, that the world may know it; as who should say, it is of such use to all generations to know this, that it may not be concealed from the world; you may see those horrible sins of David, and fowl offenses, that one would think the spirit of God would cast a veil over; yet he is so far from hiding of that his murder and adultery, and making Uriah drunk, that he doth not only record his murder and adultery once, 1 Sam. 11, but again, Psal. 51, and committed the Psalm to the Musician, to be sung in the Church to the end of the world; so Peters denial of his Master, one would have thought the Scripture would have said nothing of that; what a Disciple of Christ to deny his master, and curse and ban himself? Yet the spirit of God is so earnest to have this known, that he will have all the Evangelists set it down; you have things of great importance, that our eternal life depends upon, yet there is but one Evangelist toucheth them; but everyone tells us of Peters fault; how shamefully he did forget himself, and how he was carried away with his lusts, so that it is very needful to be known: now then to come to the sixth thing, how far a child of God may be dead; for this we will show you these particulars.

First, he may lose all his zeal; you know zeal is a thing that God baptizeth his people with, not only with the holy Ghost, but with fire; yet a child of God if he stand not upon his guard, and looks to himself, if he grow secure and drowsy and give way to sin, he may come to this, to lose his zeal, it was the case of many of God's people in Laodicea, though the chiefest bulk in the Town were lukewarm; yet it is plain that many of those that were neither hot nor cold, were

God's own children; for he saith, Rev. 3:19, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: so in the days of Saul, when Religion went down the wind, and the Ordinances of God were slacked, everything went to wrack during his government, you shall see how the Church of God had lost their zeal, 1 Sam. 17:16, it is said there, that when Goliath of Gath came into the host, and all Israel were there, and the main bulk of the Church of God were looking on, and hearing what this fowl-mouth said, there he stood defying and blaspheming the Army of God, and he showed himself so forty days together, and all Israel heard him, and they were all dull and blockish, and not a man stepped out to hazard his life to appear in God's cause, until it pleased God to make a little child take up a weapon, and fight against him; so our Savior Christ shows us in the last times (which is strange) for in the last times knowledge shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold, Mat. 24:12, you know what zeal is; it is when a man doth not only walk in God's commandments and do them, but useth God's arguments, and useth them with all his heart, and stirreth up himself to take hold on God; he presseth hard after the mark; he is a man that stands upon his guard; a man that will be precise and strict in everything; he will eschew every evil; if he find any lust rising, he is never at quiet till he get it down again; if this man be in company, he will not stand upon courtesy to see who will begin to speak, but if others will not, he will; and he will not stand upon terms and difficulties, but come what can come, he will stand for God; now 'tis strange how this zeal may be taken off, in a man that is otherwise a good man.

Secondly, He may lose all his affections, which is a strange thing; you know what the affections are, they are the wings of the soul; if the wings be off, the bird cannot fly; now a child of God may lose all his affections; as it was with Sardis, they had not only lost all their zeal, but their affections, Rev. 3:2, strengthen the things which remain,

that are ready to die; they had lost all, and but a little remained, and that little was ready to die; what a poor heartless, lifeless creature was Asa? He was grown to that pass, that though God sent his Prophets to him, yet his affections were not stirred; nay, they were stirred the clean contrary way; he was angry with him; and when God laid afflictions upon him, he was so little affected with his sins, that he sought not to the Lord, but to the Physicians; a child of God may lose his sorrow and grief for sin; though he be privy to a world of corruption and distempers, and dullness, and blockishness, yet he is not able to relent and grieve for them, there is no sorrow in his heart; as David, when he had committed those horrible sins, there were no affections in him; when Joab sent him word that Uriah was dead, which he had a hand in, one would have thought it should have made him cry and roar, and made his heart to burst; but he was so far from being affected with remorse, as that he made nothing of it; oh saith he, tell Joab, the sword kills one as well as another, 2 Sam. 11:25, so a child of God may lose all the affection of shame. It is one of the duties we owe to God, that all the corruptions, and untowardness that is in us, we should be ashamed of them; now a child of God may lose this shame; David when he had committed adultery, he was not ashamed of it, he did not blush, nay he was impudent, he durst let his servants know it, and be privy to his villainy; he could say to them go and fetch me the woman, 2 Sam. 11. Again, he may lose all his delights in good duties, and the ordinances of God; he may go to them, but with poor delight; what poor delight do you think David had in good duties for the space of ten months, till Nathan came unto him? We may well think what a blockish and feared heart he had; again, he may lose all his desires and yearnings; he may pray, and have no heart to lift up his soul to God, and be earnest for the having of those graces he stands in need of, but pray so coldly, as if indeed he would teach God to deny him; again, he may lose all his fear, he may grow to be so marvelous, venturous, and bold, he may grow to

be familiar with sins, he may grow to come near the occasions of sin, and thrust himself upon temptation; again, he may lose his affections of love, and have hardly any love at all to God, as Christ complains of Simon, who otherwise was a good man; he forgave his sins, and yet he complains he loved him but a little, Luke 7:44, sc. in one word, a child of God may lose all his affections.

Thirdly, He may grow to be even senseless of sin, and of the grace of God; I may show this in divers examples; to instance in the Patriarchs, they conspired the death of Joseph, afterwards flung him into a ditch, which was a most horrible and unnatural thing; one would think this should have been as an arrow unto their hearts, and they should have been ashamed of themselves; but were they sensible of this, or moved at it? No, but they sat down to eat and drink when they had done, Gen. 37, so for the children of Israel in the wilderness, when they had committed that horrible sin, of making a golden calf, and the Text shows that many of the children of God were guilty of it; when they had done, did their hearts smite them? Were they affected with their sin? Did it work any impression upon their hearts? No, they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play, Exod. 32:6, so David, when he had committed those horrible heinous sins of murder and adultery, sins which deserved death by the Law, his fault was aggravated by many circumstances; he had wives of his own, he was not a young man, but well grown in years, he was no novice, he was not ignorant of God, but an old disciple, and one that had had a great deal of experience of God's goodness, one that was the most noted man in all Israel for forwardness for God, one that as himself confesseth, had more understanding than anyone in the world, more than his teachers; these do aggravate his sin, but when he had done, was he sensible of this? No, he was so far from it, that he labored to father his bastard upon Uriah; Uriah had been a great while from his Wife, and must have known it to have

been a bastard, if he had not sent him down to his house; now thought he, if I can but get him to go down to his house, and lie with his Wife, the child may be thought to be his child, and not mine; nay, when Uriah spake words that might have burst his bowels, when he bade him go to his house, you may see what a gracious answer he gave him, 2 Sam. 11:11. The Ark and Israel, &c. as who should say, I had more need to be at prayer, and keep a fast; all Israel is in the field against their enemies, therefore I had more need to seek God, then look after my pleasures, and pampering my body; now one would think this should have been as a dagger to David's heart, and made him ashamed; yet he was so senseless that he labored to do it more and more, and was never at quiet till he had made him drunk, thinking he would go home; thus we see that a child of God may be senseless of his sins.

Fourthly, A child of God may grow to be notoriously vain, and notoriously worldly, and to be notoriously guilty of sin. I do not say to live in sin, but to sin notoriously, that a man that hath but half an eye may say, Yonder man is notoriously proud and conceited of himself, he is marvelous froward and given to his passions; yonder man is marvelous remiss in his place and calling, marvelous dull and idle, and sluggish; and even those that are without may see this, much more the children of God; thus it was with many of Paul's brethren and companions he had at Rome, though he did conceive these were the children of God, yet they were grown notoriously and grossly worldly; when Paul had occasion to send some Minister or other to fight against the false Apostles, he spake it seems to all his brethren and acquaintance, to entreat them to go to Philippi, but he could not get one of them to go; what excuse they made we know not, whither they were loath to be at that charge, or whither they loved their own ease, but Phil. 2:21, he breaks out into this speech, they all seek their own, and none the things that are Christ's: Not as Calvin

notes upon the place, as though they had no grace or life in them, but they were grown marvelous worldly and earthly, and carried away with their lusts, marvelously tender of their profits, seeking their own, and not the things of Christ; though Paul told them, it was the cause of Christ required it, yet it was against their profits and ease, he could get none of them to go; so David, that sin of numbering the people, it lay upon his heart nine months, and he came not to repentance; yet Joab saw this thing, and he used gracious arguments to divert him; he saw plainly that he was transported with some lust or other.

Fifthly, The child of God may grow to that pass, that the service of God may be a burden; 'tis true, it cannot be absolutely a burden to any child of God; so the wicked only are absolutely without zeal and affection, they are absolutely wicked and worldly; therefore this cannot be absolutely in a child of God; yet it may be horribly and grossly, even to be tired and jaded under God's service, even to count it a burden, to cry out with those Mal. 1, what a weariness is it Lord! Even to be loath to go to prayer, to go to it dully, as a truant goes to his book; and when they are at it, to be blockish and without any spirit in it, and have no life, not so much as to heave up their hearts to the Throne of grace; nay, they may think it too long, and wish it were done; and they may think the opportunities to do and receive good come too often; this is an horrible thing, yet thus it may be; what was the reason that the Galatians were so open-eared to the false Apostles that came with another Gospel, that separated from the Gospel of Christ? What is the reason that they opened the ear to them, and were even poisoned by it? O saith the Apostle, be not weary of well doing, Gal. 6:9, as who should say, you are weary of well doing; you were once affected with the word, and would have plucked out your eyes to do me good; you were wonderfully wrought upon, and went on in a right manner in some measure; Oh be not

wearied of well doing; as who should say, the cause of your yielding is because you were wearied of well doing; you seek out for new opinions, and errors, and are ready to receive false doctrines, contrary to the doctrine of Christ; therefore, take heed that you be not wearied of well doing.

Lastly, A child of God may be so dead that nothing can quicken him; nay, the whole Church of God may be so dead, that the Gospel may be going away, and God may be ready to depart, and show signs of his going away from them, and yet they may have no heart to humble themselves, and seek the Lord, to be moved and stirred to get more life, and entreat God to turn away the plague, as God saith, Isa. 59:16. I wondered there was no Intercessor; he sent Prophet after Prophet to tell them that he would take away his Kingdom from them, and scatter them among the Nations; but though he had told them of these things, over and over again, yet there was none to stand in the gap; he speaks in the general, there was not a man (though otherwise good) that could cry to God in this distress; so that I say, a man may grow to this pass, that nothing can quicken him; all the ordinances of God cannot, nay, though he have many judgments of God upon him, and his conscience lies digging in his side from day today, yet nothing may work upon him, unless the Lord be more strangely merciful to his soul; till a whale was provided to swallow up Jonah, there was no bringing of his heart to relent.

Qu. But you will say, Where is the sign of God's grace all this while? May a child of God be thus dead? Certainly the life of the children of God is eternal; and when God gives his children grace, it continues forever, it is springing up to eternal life; now if a Saint may be thus dead, where is grace? Is he unchilded again?

Ans. I answer, the grace of a child of God can never be taken away, not for any goodness in himself, but through the goodness of God.

For first, there is the seed of God remaining still in him, 1 John 3:9, a godly man cannot commit sin, saith the Apostle, for the seed of God remaineth in him; that is, he cannot commit sin as the wicked commit it, he can never grow to be a wicked man again, to do as the wicked do; why? The seed of God remaineth in him; you know seed is a little thing, there is a little thing left still in that man, that shall still difference him from ungodly men, that he cannot commit sin with that fullness of sway as the wicked do; now by this seed the Scripture means regeneration; regeneration is immortal, it is that seed which remaineth forever, 1 Pet. 1, the last.

Secondly, As there is a seed of God remaining in him, so there be supernatural habits; and the difference between this seed, and these supernatural habits is this; this seed is immediately in the soul, though it runs through all the powers of it; but these supernatural habits are immediately in the powers and faculties of the soul; now these habits are such, whereby they have heavenly inclinations to good, and inclinations against evil; and these shall never be quite extinguished, though they be not like to moral and natural habits; for they do actually incline but supernatural habits do never actually incline that way, but upon concurrence of special grace; though they be in the soul yet they do not actually incline but upon concurrence of grace; now these habits can never be taken from a child of God, as David saith, Psal. 37:24, though the righteous fall, yet he shall not utterly be cast down; he may fall upon his hands and knees, but he shall not quite fall; he shall have something or other to moderate and break the fall.

Thirdly, A child of God ever hath an anointing, 1 John 2:27, that is, a gift and grace of God, whereby he doth enlighten his eyes by the spirit of revelation, whereby he looks upon God, and all sin and iniquity, and the ordinances of God, with an heavenly eye; now I say, this eye can never be taken away; let a child of God be at the lowest ebb, he looks upon sin, and God's ways after another fashion than other men; he looks upon corruption after another manner than any other man; so he looks upon God's holiness, and righteousness, and graciousness, he looks upon these so as no natural man doth; if a man do but talk with him, he will see that he hath anointing at the lowest ebb; he will not talk of the ways of God as a natural man; he will discover that he hath something of God, something of this ointment left in him still.

Fourthly, There is a little strength in his heart, as the Lord saith, Rev. 3:8. A child of God, take him at the lowest ebb, yet he hath a little strength; I speak not here of actual grace, for a child of God may have no actual grace stirring, it may be quite in a swoond; as David; I hardly think there was any grace stirring in his heart when he lay with Bathsheba; but I speak of the frame of a child of God; when he is grown dead in his general bent, frame, and inclination, he hath yet a little strength; he doth a little fear God, though it be much born down; he hath some good desires, though but weak and in a great measure ineffectual; he hath a little endeavor to please God, though the pleasing of his flesh and corruptions be so much, that his grace doth scarcely appear.

The first use is this, Is it so, that a child of God may thus far grow dead? Let us know, this is not to encourage any man in sin, that any man should conclude, well then it is no great matter though I sin now and then, and lie and swear now and then; in many things we offend all, and we are all sinners; the Minister told us today how

dead a man may be, and yet be a child of God for all this; this is a damned use of this doctrine; there is no doctrine, no example recorded in all the whole Bible, to encourage men to sin; therefore when we look into the lives of Noah, of Abraham, of Lot, &c. and read of their great falls, this is not to encourage any man to sin, but rather to stir up a man so much the more to labor against sin; for if the children of God that have his favor, and have got into his covenant, and have got power in grace, and have traded in Religion, and have waded far in mortification and newness of life, and have gone many degrees towards God's Kingdom; if these men give way never so little, may be dead, if sin may get dominion over these; how should others quake and tremble, and reason thus, Did David and Peter fall? How then shall I stand? How careful should I be? David had a thousand times more grace than I, and was more mortified than I, and had a better heart than I; if he were so weak to overcome sin, when he had given way to it; if he could not preserve his affections from being deadened; and if he could not preserve his soul from being a block in God's service; if he had so many advantages beyond me, and yet giving way to idleness and drowsiness, were born down in that fashion; oh how should I take heed then?

Secondly, If a child of God may be thus dead, then let the best of God's Saints and children that are now most zealous and lively, take heed; let them follow hard after the mark, let them stand upon their guard, let them fight against idleness and drowsiness of spirit, let them not be carnally confident to trust in their own hearts; take heed, thou knowest not how thy heavenly father may deal with thee; for this is certain, no child of God can get up again (though he had the most grace that ever man had, besides the Lord Jesus Christ, if he give way to sin) except the Lord help him; we are like to a little babe; if it falls, there it lies till the parent help it up; so when a child of God falls, there he lieth in woeful distress all this while, and

cannot get up for his life; and if he had a thousand souls, and they were all to be damned, he could not save one of them, unless God assist him, Lam. 5:21, turn us O Lord, and we shall be turned; therefore art thou never so full of life? Take heed, despise not prophesying, despise not preaching, despise not prayer, despise not any ordinance of God, despise none of these things, never grow secure; if thou dost, woe unto thee; may be God will help thee up again, but who can tell? The covenant of grace is certain for nothing but for eternal life; if a man take heed, and stand upon his watch, he may the better build upon God, that he shall not fall, Pro. 28:4, therefore take heed that you pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, 1 Pet. 1:17, and having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, &c. 2 Cor. 7:1, as who should say, let us labor to have this holy fear in our heart, ever to consider how weak and impotent we are; if we grow drowsy and careless at any time, we give advantage to the Devil; we let him in, and God knows when we shall get him out again; therefore let this work fear and trembling.

Thirdly, This may be for comfort to those people of God, that have been foolish, and have deceived their own souls, and have given way to Satan, and let in this cruel and damned enemy that hath done a world of mischief, that they are now come to despair almost; they are afraid they shall never get up again; never were any of God's servants so dead and dull as I am; God's children can never be thus; I say, is there such a one among you? Let this doctrine be a thread let down from heaven to help him up again; as the Apostle saith, all things are written for our learning, Rom. 15:4, so these Scriptures that speak of the falls of God's Saints, are written for such people's learning, that they may take comfort in the Scriptures, that they may not be altogether out of heart, but have something to lay hold on; as Paul speaks of his sins of being a persecutor, and a blasphemmer, he saith,

it is recorded, that I afterwards may be an help to them that shall believe; and as the sins of God's elect before conversion are recorded, that this may be a means to persuade God's elected (not yet converted) that they may find grace, though they be never so vile sinners; for God hath left a pattern and pledge, he hath been merciful to heinous sinners; so the fall of God's Saints and children after conversion, are recorded to this end; and I can tell you in time of temptation, when conscience shall be awakened, and the wrath of God shall stick in a man's soul, a man cannot spare any one sweet proposition in Scripture, nor any one example in Scripture, nor any tittle of comfort; it will be little enough to bear up the soul from despair and from being overwhelmed; all will be little enough to assure the soul of God's favor, and that he can and will pardon such transgressors; therefore I say look upon this doctrine, it is for those that are dejected with their dead hearts, that they may yet receive some comfort to their souls.

The last day I showed you how far forth a child of God might be dead; but some may say, I cannot believe a child of God may come to this; and thou art confident thou shall not come to this; therefore I will speak a little further of it.

And first, Let me tell you, there is not the foulest, heinouesest, abominablest, the most notorious, scandalous sin in the world, but the most devout, godly mortified man upon the face of the earth may fall into it, if he take not heed, (except the sin against the holy Ghost) I will instance in some particulars.

First, For Idolatry, gross Idolatry; will you think that ever a child of God, that believes in his name, and is acquainted with his word, and his goodness and mercy, and his jealousy against this sin and iniquity, should fall into it, should fall down and worship a stock, a

stone, a creature? You will never believe it; yet you shall see the wisest man that ever was, and one that was beloved of God, did fall into this sin in a great degree, 1 Kings 11:4. Solomon's wives drew his heart away from God; they drew away his heart from God in a high degree; and they did not nakedly draw away his heart from God, but they drew his heart after other gods. If a man should say, I hope I shall never fall into this sin; I say let us hope so still, and go on in using the means; if we be so confident, let us take heed that none of us come to bow to the creature; let our own hating and abominating of it, be a watch-word to us to take heed.

Secondly, What say you to apostasy? Nay, almost total apostasy, that a child of God should grow to be an apostate, which of you would think it; that he should come to curse and ban himself, if ever he knew Jesus Christ, or loved him, or ever did countenance him? Yet you may see a child of God, and a notable one too, fell in this fashion; Peter, he did curse and ban himself, that he never knew the man, Mark 14:71, this is very far.

Thirdly, What say you to persecution? To persecute a man that is godly; dost think that a man that hath the image of God in him, that hath the knowledge of the Scripture, that hath the fear of God before his eyes, and a sympathy with all the Saints of God in the world, that this man should ever persecute one that is godly, and for his godliness too? Would you think this? Yet directly thus it is; Asa, a godly man, for a fit, as long as the time lasted, when the Prophet reproved him for his sins, and dealt roundly with him, what was this but gracious dealing? Yet the man did not only not submit to the Prophets reproof, but his very heart rose up against him, and he cast him into prison, he was a persecutor of him 2 Chro. 16:10, in one word, what enormous flagitious sin in the world is there, but a child of God (if he look not to himself) may actually fall into (but the sin

unto death?) Noah a Preacher of righteousness, the holiest man upon the earth, the world had not his fellow, yet he fell to be once drunk; David a man after God's own heart, a man of admirable experience, a man that traded as far in mortification, in holiness and righteousness, and walking with God, and acquaintance with him and his Laws and promises as ever any Saint in the Old Testament; yet he fell into the sin of murder and adultery, yea, to make a man drunk, and that otherwise a good man too, one of the worthiest of all the Kingdom; you see this is clear, there is no sin so desperate (the sin against the holy Ghost excepted) but a child of God may fall into it; therefore he had not need to be carnally confident.

Secondly, When a child of God hath fallen thus into some fowl sin, he may be much hardened, woefully deadened and benumbed, and grow blockish and untoward to call upon God, and go on in any of his ways, become marvelously unfitted and indisposed to the use of God's ordinances; nay, he may be grown to that pass that he should never rise up more, but that for the infinite goodness of God that doth bring him again home, and lift him up again by renewing his faith, and his repentance; you may see when Jehoshaphat had struck with Ahab, and helped the ungodly, and loved him that hated the Lord, though he were smitten in the field, and were like to have lost his life, and saw what danger he was in for joining with Ahab, yet all this did not humble him; the Lord sent after him by hue and cry, rousing up his conscience by his Prophets; if he had not done thus, God knows how long he might have lain thus; so David he found a deadness in all goodness, when he had committed those foul sins, he found no working of God's blessed spirit, his own spirit grew dull, his own heart grew dead, he was as if he had never known what grace meant; create in me O Lord a new heart, Psal. 51:10, his sin was like to a sweeping rain that leaves nothing; like to a consumption that wastes all; it was even like a Thief, that breaks into a man's ware-

house in the night, and a man knows not what he hath lost, till he casts up his accounts, and then he seeth he hath lost almost all his estate; so it is with the best of God's servants; if they give way to sin, contrary to evangelical obedience, God knows what a Thief they let into their soul; they know not what they have lost, till God give them an heart to cast up their accounts, and then they may see that they have lost almost all that they have; who knows what God may do? It is a fearful thing; you see a child of God may not only fall into foul and fearful sins, but he may lie in them.

Then Thirdly, To go further, when a child of God is come hither, then you will say, certainly this man must rise up again quickly, grace will not let him lie dead; 'tis true, God will not forever let him lie dead; but for how long he shall lie dead, no man nor Angel can tell; as the Church speaks concerning her misery, there is never a Prophet, never an ordinance of God, all is gone to wrack, and there is none among us can tell us how long, Psal. 74:9, so when a man hath fallen into sin, and hath pulled distempers into his soul, there is none among us can tell us how long; 'tis true, Peter got up again within a few hours; but David got not up again till after ten months; and may be another not till after ten years, may be twenty, forty, nay, who can tell how long? Grace is free; therefore no man can prescribe any time, the wind blows where it listeth, and how long it listeth, and how long it will be ere it blow again who knoweth?

The Reasons of this, first in regard of Satan, he fights most of all against the children of God, his fingers itch to be at them, and at them most; his greatest spite is against them, the very bowels of the enmity is between him and them; the children of God come to take his place that he once had in heaven; the children of God are set up against Satan, as David was put in the room of Saul; therefore I say, all the strength of hell is still a working against the Church of God,

and the Saints of God, and every one of them, from that very moment that the woman was delivered of a man child, he sought to destroy it: Simon, Simon, (saith Christ) Satan desires to winnow thee, &c. Luke 22:31, he is the god of this world, and his temptations are welcome enough with anybody but the children of God; none resist his dominion but they; he is the Gaoler, and hath all the world in close prison, but only them; they are the only ones that have broken loose, that have gotten away out of the power of Satan; therefore all his malice, and all the gates of hell, they are up to send hue and cry after them, to hook them in again if they can; he is just like a Pirate; a Pirate will rather set upon one rich ship, then upon a thousand beggarly barks, because there he may have a rich prize; so the Devil knows he can advantage his Kingdom, if but one fall that is a Saint, more then by the falls and the notorioussest falls of millions of others; therefore no wonder that a child of God should grow remiss and careless at any time, that he may have a mischief; for it is all the Devils business, he hath nothing else to do but do mischief, to be busy to get a child of God down, and if he have him down, to hold him down if he can.

Secondly, Another reason is, in regard of the children of God themselves; they carry flesh about them as well as other men, they have a Traitor in their own bosoms, that lies in scout every moment to work them woe; as Paul saith, I find another law in my members, &c. Rom. 7:23, though a child of God hath wounded all his lusts, nay, though he hath given them their deaths wound, yet there is never a one but may revive and make head again, if he take not heed, and that in a woeful degree; as the Lord saith of the Chaldeans, Jer. 37. (I quote it only for a similitude) ver. 10, though you had smitten all the whole army of the Chaldeans, yet they shall come and fire the City; when Judah had provoked God, though they had wounded all the Chaldeans, yet those wounded men should come and fire the City; so

let a man take heed he doth not give way to sin; for though his lusts be mortified, and he hath given them their deaths wound, yet these wounded Chaldeans may come and fire all his soul, if he take not heed.

Thirdly, In regard of God himself; God is pleased to try his people, to withdraw himself now and then from them, to leave them to themselves, and the grace they have received; to let them alone with that; and when he doth thus, no wonder though they fall; for every man hath some vileness and rottenness in his heart; the whoolest simplest heart in the world hath a deal of rottenness in it; I say, the Lord doth sometimes leave his children to themselves, as he did Hezekiah in the business of the Ambassadors, 2 Chro. 32:31, as the Church saith, Cant. 5:6, my beloved had withdrawn himself; the lovingest mothers may sometimes let their little child go alone, though they know he will fall; they provide may be a rouler about his head, that whither they fall backward or forward, or any way, they may not break their skull, and do themselves a mischief, to undo themselves; but when they have done thus, they will sometimes leave them to themselves to go, though they know they will fall; so the Lord doth put a rouler upon his people, that when they fall, they may not fall totally and finally, as the wicked men do; they shall never strike into a wicked course, as the ungodly of the earth do; that he takes order for; but he doth many times leave them, not out of any ill will to them, but he leaves them to themselves, though he knows they will fall; and that for divers reasons.

First, That they might be patterns to others of God's people, that if they should fall (as they may do) when they are down, they may have wherewithal to get up again; I say, the Lord leaves the eminentest of his people to themselves, to fall into lamentable miscarriages, that they may help inferior people, and they may have something to

encourage them that God will recover them, and relieve them again, and that God will not cast them off forever; as Paul shows 1 Tim. 1:16, saith he, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them who shall hereafter believe; as who should say, there may be a persecutor, a blasphemer smitten, a vile wretch, a fighter against God and Jesus Christ, such a one may be smitten, and come to see his damned estate; a thousand to one, but this man will be overwhelmed and drowned in despair; but saith he, The Lord, though I was one of his elect, yet he let me fall to this pass, that I might be a pattern to them which shall afterwards believe; so we may say of God's children after conversion; David may say, For this cause among the rest the Lord left me to myself; the Lord let me fall so foully, and lifted me up again, that I might be a pattern to many poor people to the end of the world, that they may see the loving kindness of the Lord, and the infinite compassions, and bowels of mercy that is in the father of mercy towards them that trust in his name; we should never believe the mercy of God, the freeness of his grace, the goodness of his nature towards his beloved, towards those whom he hath effectually called, were it not for such examples.

Secondly, The Lord doth this for to punish the carelessness of his people, and their security many times; what sin is there that is more apt to grow upon them than security? It is a stealing sin, it is a secret and cunning sin, that comes closely and slightly upon a man, before he is aware, if he look not to himself; now when a man grows to be secure, the Lord takes this course many times to eat it out, to punish the security of his people; Peter when he had gotten faith in Christ, and affection to Christ, when he felt that his bowels did yearn after Christ, and his heart was enlarged towards him, he grew secure upon it; though all forsake thee, yet will not I; he was confident, but it was carnal confidence; for though the thing a man trusts in be the grace

of God, yet as long as it is grace received, it is trusting in a man's self; he therefore was carnally confident; now he would venture himself into the high Priests hall; thought he thus, affections will never be drowned; he might go any whither; well, he comes into the high Priests hall, and there comes into the very mouth of temptations and dangers; he doth not dream how easily his heart may be caused to deny Christ, he did not dream what a ticklish heart he carried in his bosom, he grew to be bold and venturous; now the Lord to heal this security, let him fall in a desperate manner; he let him get a knock almost to beat out his brains, even to curse and ban himself; not only to deny Christ, but with abjuration; the Lord seeth it is needful to do thus when people grow secure; we ought always to carry a covenant about our eyes, to take heed where we look; and when we are in company, to have a bridle in our mouth, to take heed what we speak; now if we grow careless and negligent, and this bridle is gone, and this covenant is gone, and our watch is taken away, no marvel though the Lord be provoked against us, to punish us, and that soundly, and let many of his people get a knock; and who knows how great a one? And how hard to heal again?

Thirdly, the Lord sometimes leaves his people to themselves, that so they may see they stand merely by grace; I do not mean by grace received, though they had all faith, though they had never so much knowledge, never so much experience and interest in God, never so much sense and feeling of him, never so much life, and zeal, and quickening, whatsoever it be, all the enlargements that ever any man had, I, do not mean this, for a man never stands by this, but by the free favor of God, that is the grace a man stands by, the free good will and love that God doth bear unto him. Now when a child of God shall have received a great deal of grace, a great deal of knowledge and faith, &c, he is apt to be remiss in seeking of God to direct him in that thing he knows; he thinks he can direct himself: we see, let a man

have very good parts and knowledge, and be able to preach, how apt is he to be the less in prayer to God to help him to Preach, and guide him to deliver the Word? So let another man have a great deal of knowledge, may be the man will be the less sensible of his own wretchedness and ignorance, and aptness to mistake and err, and go aside, and so to be less eager and earnest with God for his continual aid, and teaching, and assisting of him every moment: So let a man have a great deal of zeal, and life, and quickening, he is apt to discern the less proneness to cool again: And suppose a man hath mortified a lust, nay, all his lusts, he can hardly feel he hath any desire after such a sin; hardly any motions or stirrings in his heart: I tell you this man, if he takes not heed, will be a venturing; oh he thinks he is cock-sure! He is so taken off from the lusts of the flesh, that he can never catch hurt, and he may be sometimes will admit of occasions, and admit of drawing something near the pit's brink; he is so mortified, he fears nothing. Now the Lord in his infinite goodness to his people, leaves them to themselves; are you so mortified? Come, let us see how mortified you are, and so leave him to himself, to see what the man can do with all his knowledge, and zeal, and mortification; and now this man falls: Look how far God leaves a man, so far he falls; he will have his people see that they stand not by grace received, but by the free grace and favor of God: It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that showeth mercy. No, though a man have never so many gracious endowments, and heavenly virtues, it is not in him that willeth, but in God that showeth mercy; it is in the fountain of mercy and loving kindness in God. Let a man keep close to God, let a man still observe the pleasing of God, that there may be a continual fountain open, running down upon him from day today; for if he grow secure, and look not to himself, he exposeth himself to woeful dangers.

Fourthly, The Lord leaves his people sometimes thus fearfully to themselves, that he might teach us to be sensible towards our brethren; to be mild, and meek, and piteous, and full of bowels and compassion towards the weakest and meanest of all the Saints of God; if we see but anything of God, nay, but any likelihood that a man is of God, to be tender, for fear we should wrong a child of God; the Lord doth this of purpose to breed bowels, and meekness, and gentleness towards his people: As God lets men fall horribly before conversion, that they may carry themselves meekly towards those that are unconverted, for fear any of them should be of the Elect of God; so he lets them fall after conversion, that they may carry themselves so towards them that are converted; I say the Lord lets his people fall horribly into woeful evils, that though they see a man fall never so much, yet they may not omit anything to do him good, that they may not be taken off from their bowels and compassion; who knows but this man may be of God? For I was as wretched as he once, as Paul would have the Cretans take notice of this, they were horrible sinners before conversion, liars, slow-bellies; now saith he, Tit. 3:2. Speak to them that they show all meekness to all men. Mark his reason, ver. 3. We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, &c. We ourselves were thus, therefore let us show meekness to all whatsoever, and let us be kind, and full of bowels and compassion towards them, studying how to do them good, and prevent all manner of evil, and labor to win them, if it be possible, with all meekness and condescending; who knows but they may be of God? For we ourselves have been malicious and spiteful, ignorant, haters, and have served divers lusts and pleasures, so it is with people after conversion; the Lord lets them fall into horrible sins, and distempers, that so they may be gentle, and that they may have the spirit of meekness towards all men; a man is apt to be severe, and rude, and rigid towards others, if he hath gotten anything himself; if he hath gotten a little knowledge, a little zeal, a little faith, a little

humility, a little ability to please God, he is apt to think it such a deal, and he is apt to cry down everyone that is not as he is, You are so proud, and so thus and thus: and to take off his heart from doing those duties which he owes towards him; a man is apt to be very insolent in the Church of God; many are thus, till God doth take them down; therefore the Lord by this means doth teach his people gentleness and meekness; indeed God teacheth people many ways besides this; if they will take warning by his Word, or some other course, they save him a labor; but if that will not do, God takes this course with a man, to make him see his pride, and conceitedness, and his want of mercy, and unlikeness to Christ, in bowels, and pity, and compassion towards his brethren.

Fifthly, The Lord leaves his own children to themselves sometimes to fall so foully, that he may humble them, and bring them down low, that he may make them see yet further into the corruptions of their own hearts, that so he may make them capable of more grace; for he gives grace to the humble. Now when he would give more grace to a man, maybe he lets him fall into some horrible sin, that he may be the more humbled, and see the naughtiness of his own heart, that he may be driven to God, and may be deeper in mortification; maybe he thought he could go no further; he did please himself in his prayers; as I have heard of one that said, when he had prayed, he could hardly see any sin in his prayer. Now when the Lord is pleased to bestow upon them more grace, he doth show them the corruptions. You know how often God let his people fall in the Wilderness, and that horribly, by murmuring, and repining, and infidelity; though they were his own chosen, yet he let them fall at the waters of strife, and at the Red Sea he let them fall; he let them fall concerning Manna: why was this? The text saith, The Lord thy God he proved thee, he led thee up and down in all this barren wilderness, where were Scorpions and fiery Serpents, that he might humble thee, and do thee

good in thy latter end, Deut. 8:15,16. Meaning, the Lord let them fall into those horrible evils, that he might humble them, that they might see the wickedness of their own hearts, and the infinite need they had of grace, and the fear of God, and standing upon their guard; this did he to humble them, and do them good in the latter end.

The first Use may seem to condemn those speeches that commonly go up and down in Christians mouths, let me tell you they are wicked speeches; O, say they, grace will not let a man have such pride and vanity in him; grace will not let a man do thus and thus; I say these speeches are not good; they favor of a world of ignorance of the grace of God: Indeed in three cases these are admirable speeches.

First, Certainly grace will bring a man home to God that belongs to him; it will put him into Jesus Christ; it will certainly make him a new creature, and bring him out of the estate of sin; he shall not live in the estate of sin; grace will do that, and God in the covenant of grace doth set down that it is a fundamental promise, he will do this for everyone; as the Apostle saith, Eph. 4:7, this grace will surely undertake that a man shall be a believer (if he belong to God) and he shall be justified and sanctified in some measure, he shall hate sin, and love goodness in some measure, and delight in God's ordinances in some measure; he shall be in the estate of grace, and not in the estate of sin; grace will do this; this we may boldly say, if a man have grace he, must do this, for God will teach him to do it.

Secondly, Grace will undertake that a man shall not fall finally away; that is certain, that we may boldly say, if a man be of God, grace will teach him that he shall not fall away finally, grace will uphold a man and maintain him; when we see a man fall away finally, we may conclude he had no true grace; God's children shall never fall finally away, God will preserve and keep them; whom he loves he loves, to

the end; of all those that my Father hath given me I have lost none, saith Christ, Joh. 17, neither life, nor death, things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, saith Paul, Rom. 8, ult. that is most certain, blessed and happy is he that hath his part in the first resurrection, for over such the second death hath no power, Rev. 2:26, that is, such a man can never come to be damned, he can never fall finally away, or perish everlastingly; there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, that walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, Rom. 8:1, and v. 30, whom God hath predestinated, them he hath also called, &c. there is an individual connector of all the links of the chain of predestination; in all the several buckles of it, there is an indivisible connection; if a man be called, he shall be justified, and if he be justified, he shall be sanctified; and if he be sanctified, he shall be glorified; so that grace will undertake this, that a man shall not fall finally away.

Thirdly, We may say that grace will not suffer any man that is of God to fall totally away; as not finally forever, so not totally; he shall not be altogether without grace, from that moment he began to have it forever and ever; he that drinketh of this water shall never thirst, &c. Joh. 4:14, that is, he shall never thirst with total indigency again, he shall never thirst with total want; he shall ever have some grace, and some of the image of God, and some of the fear of God, and some of the love of his truth, and some desire to his name, and some hatred of sin, though in a poor degree, yet he shall have something of God in him; there shall be the seed of God remaining in him at all times, 1 Joh. 3:9, my feet were almost gone (saith David) Psal. 73:2, they were but almost gone, they were not quite gone; as it is said of the Church of Philadelphia, she had a little strength; so let a child of God be at the lowest ebb, yet there shall be a little water of life, it shall not be quite exhaust; though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for

the Lord will uphold him, Psal. 37:24, so that all this you may boldly say, for in these things it is not conditionally God's covenant, but absolutely for God will give thee strength and power, and faith, and direction, and assistance; he will not only give thee the thing, but the condition also here, that a man shall be a believer, and a new creature; and if a man be once a new creature, he shall never be an old creature again altogether; the covenant of grace is so, which is an everlasting covenant; God will forgive their sins, and remember them no more: but now for particular passages; for a man to say that a man cannot be proud and distempered, but grace will heal him; a man cannot have an hard heart, but grace will soften it; these are ill speeches, men know not what they say when they say thus; for in particular passages the children of God have no promise, but only upon condition that they stand upon their guard; but to be defended from particular evils, and to be saved from particular distempers, and horrible distempers, without standing upon their guard, and taking heed, and cleaving unto God, without carefulness and watchfulness, and having a diligent eye to their ways they have no promise for this; as the Prophet told Asa; you know Asa was a good man, it seems he was of this mind, grace will teach a man and so forth; but see what the Prophet told him, 2 Chron. 15:2, the Lord is with you, while you are with him, &c. he doth not mean that the Lord would forsake Asa and all his people in regard of eternal life, that they should not have eternal life that forsake him, that they should be altogether without grace, but he speaks here of particular passages of this or that sin, or this or that danger, this or that mischief either in soul or body; saith he, the Lord is with you, as long as you are with him; and if you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you: this is most certain: 'tis true, God doth not do thus always but when he doth not do thus, it is more than we can expect; for if we be careless and negligent, we can look for nothing at God's hand; we may look up to him that he would not

undo us, and cast us off forever, but we cannot look that he should free us from this sin, or this distemper, from this dullness and untowardness in going on; we cannot look that God should free us from these sins, unless we draw near to him, and cleave to him, and keep by him; if we forsake him, he will forsake us; as for instance, suppose the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper were to be administered; now a true believer may comfortably look to have peace and comfort, to have the promise sealed to his soul, and to have his faith strengthened, and his spirit revived, and his graces enlarged by the Sacrament, for there be promises made to him for this purpose; but how are they made? Not simply and absolutely, that howsoever he comes it shall be so, but let him prepare himself for the Sacrament, let him examine himself, let him whet his heart, and be sensible of his wants and necessities, let him be earnest with God to be with him in his ordinance; but if a man do neglect this, when he hath been at the Sacrament, he shall not have peace and comfort, nor the promise of God sealed to him, but he shall be more doubting then he was before, and more with the wrath of God in his soul, and shall have more distempers and overwhelming's then he had formerly; saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11:31, speaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we must judge our-selves, and then we shall not be judged of the Lord; the Lord will bless us, we shall eat and drink salvation to ourselves, we shall eat and drink to our own peace and comfort, and glory, and to our increase in grace; but if we do not judge ourselves, we shall be judged of the Lord; here is a condition; so for the preaching of the word, we have the ministry of the word among us up and down; we hear it day after day, line upon line, precept upon precept; this is very good, there is a promise for the children of God to grow up in knowledge, and that they shall thrive under these blessed ordinances, and be strengthened by them, for temptations, miseries, and woeful times, they shall be well stored with a great deal of knowledge and experience; 'tis true, if you be

careful while you have the word, and receive it with thankfulness and good affections, and stir up yourselves to prize the word of God, and stir up in yourselves an eager and earnest hunger and thirsting after it, and will not suffer in your souls awkwardness, and untowardness, and formality to creep upon you; but if you hear God's word, and do not apply it aright, God knows what woeful miseries you may fall into, if you look not to these things; in all these things the Lord looks his people should stand upon their guard.

The first reason is, because grace looks for this; 'tis true, God's covenant is everlasting; but for particulars, grace must be stirred up; if thou hast any faith, thou must provoke thy faith; if thou hast any promise belonging to thee, thou must make use of that promise; if thou hast any fear of God, thou must look to cherish it, and nourish it, and look that it doth not die and decay; for grace is of that nature, it must be stirred up, 2 Tim. 1:6, as it is with a bowl, though the bowl be made never so right, and fit to run this way, and that way, yet if a man do bowl it on the ground overgrown with grass, it will have an hundred rubs, and will not go; so if thou let thy heart be overgrown with lusts and corruptions, grace will move dully; unless you make way for it, and stir it up, it will gather rust, and a rusty key will not readily open the door; a rusty grace, a neglected grace will never work kindly: Take faith, or knowledge, or experience, or any other grace, if you neglect it, if you stir it not up, it works but poorly, not as though a man's stirring did the thing; no, it is grace that doth all.

Secondly, Another reason is, because there is no promise in all the Bible for the keeping of the children of God from this or that sin absolutely, but only upon condition; there is no hold that a soul can have upon God to bear him up, if he be careless; 'tis certain that God in his infinite wisdom hath not left the conversion of people, and their standing in grace in this fashion, that in case, they will be

converted, so; if not, let them die and perish; no, but he will convert them, and he will give them a will to yield; he will make them of unwilling to be willing, and will turn them home unto him; and when they are converted, he doth not say, this man I will bring to my Kingdom and Glory, if he stand upon his guard, and be careful, if not, he shall perish; no, God is absolutely minded he shall be saved; and though he hath played the undutiful beast, He will chasten him with rods, but his loving kindness he will not take away forever; nay, he will give him an heart to cleave to him forever, that he shall not go quite away from him; and this is the infinite goodness of God, that he doth not hang their eternal life upon their own wills; if he did, no flesh would he saved; here is the goodness of God: but now for particular passages, they have no such hold of God, but they are turned to the use of the means; a man is turned to the use of the means in the other too; a man cannot think to stand in grace to hold out at all, but he must look to the use of the means; but in case men have neglected, God will not take his people upon the lurch; but here he may take them, and for ought we know, he will take them upon the lurch, if they grow careless; when we meet with a temptation, we venture upon it, suppose it be to be earthly, and vain, and omit good duties, take heed; who knows what God may do? How he may break our hearts, and rend us, and tear in pieces; who knows what may fall for dullness, and deadness, and untowardness, and want of peace of conscience, for irksomeness and awkness, that a man hath an hellish life from day today; we may fall into this; the best of all God's people, if they stand not upon their guard, nay, watchfulness is the thing that is commended to us. God hath showed us when we may have all grace, and be kept from all deadness; and when we may have life, and comfort, and quickening, and when he will be found of us, namely, when we seek him with all our hearts; but let a man be careless of seeking of God, he will be careless of him; and if a man do not stir up the grace of God, let him know he falls into the hands of a

consuming fire; he is not only so to the Reprobate, but even to his Saints and children, if they grow careless; therefore when Paul was about to leave the world, he gives Timothy this charge, O Timothy, preach in season and out of season, &c. what follows? Watch thou in all things; as who should say, may be you shall meet with many temptations and discouragements, and therefore watch in all things, 2 Tim. 4:5, as Christ saith, What I say to you, I say to all, Watch, Mark 13:37.

Because we see this by experience in the Saints of God in all ages, that sometimes God leaves his people; and when he doth leave them, they fall into grievous sins; this cannot be denied; for experience proves it in every generation: You see Jacob himself, how grievously he sinned, he yielded to his Mother to tell a lie, thinking to get a blessing by an untruth, by saying he was Esau, when he was not; and you see what misery he brought upon himself by it; even twenty years bondage that one sin did cost that poor man; he thought to get the blessing; for it was God's promise; but by his unlawful going about it, God kept him from it in a terrible manner, and brought him a wide way about; and so we might instance in many other Saints of God; for this is most certain, let a man be the dearest of God's servants, yet if sin be yielded unto, it will diffuse a man of God's Ordinances, and make a man untoward to good duties; it will make a breach between God and the soul; it will drive him, and carry him into thickets and bushes, as Adam; the Spirit of God will turn away the gale of his breath, and then how uncomfortable a man shall be in good duties, we may think with ourselves, and reason the case in our own souls; it will be so, for God is an holy God; for though he love his people that rejoice in his name, yet he hath said, that all their ways should be with trembling, Psal. 2:11.

But you will say, Is grace indifferent in regard of particular passages? Grace will work, a man shall be converted, and shall not fall totally and finally away; but in particular passages is grace indifferent, to let a man do what he list? God forbid; that man hath no grace that hath such thoughts.

For first grace when it comes into the soul, it sets up an universal principle to serve God, not only in the main course of his life, but in every particular, to hate all sin, and in every particular, to love all good duties; and every particular, to be careful at home and abroad, and in his calling; in company and alone; in health and sickness; in all estates; whether he be rich or poor; whether he be persecuted or not persecuted; in all conditions of life to hate all sin, and follow all goodness; grace sets up this principle wheresoever it is; but yet a man may fall into a thousand sins, if he be not watchful; but if there be not such a principle in thy heart, thou art not a child of God, and a believer, Psal. 119:3. The people of God are described by this, They do no iniquity, they walk in his ways. He speaks of this principle, not that they may not fall, but if they do, it is merely against the principle; if a man hath true grace, he hath a principle to love and fear God; not only for the main, but in every particular passage.

Secondly, It is plain that cannot be the meaning of it, that grace is indifferent, because that if grace be truly in any man, it doth set up a watch in the soul to preserve it, that the man shall be eager not to sin in any particular, and desirous in some measure, and careful in some degree, to do all manner of good; if a man give way to the lusts of the flesh, his care may be brought to a low ebb; but grace sets up a watch in the soul, and breeds care, and desire, and purposes, and resolutions, and revenge upon his own lusts, and abundance of things, as you may see 2 Cor. 7:11. So that grace will not let a man be indifferent; therefore when we say for particulars, God doth not

undertake this or that; the meaning is not as if grace would only convert a man, and keep him from falling totally and finally away; but for particulars it is indifferent; this is to blaspheme the grace of God; but the meaning is, though a man be the child of God and never so much mortified, if this man should grow careless, and remiss, and secure, and give way to sin, grace doth not undertake to keep a man from the fearfulest falls that can be, nor from the fearfulest distempers. Indeed when a man hath played the beast, God may preserve him, but a man cannot look for this at the hands of God; who knows how God will deal with him, if he be unthankful to God for his grace and goodness, and mercy vouchsafed unto him?

The second Use: Is is so that a child of God may be left to himself to fall foully, then let everyone that hopes he hath any grace, learn the words of Saint Paul, Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. 2 12. Hath any man gotten quickening? Go on with fear and trembling; hath any got softness of heart? In the fear of God go on with a trembling heart, and consider how brittle your hearts are; they are like glass, you had need go charily and tenderly up and down; grace is a fine delicate thing; if it be cherished and preserved, and stirred up, what a deal of good may a man attain unto? If God hath been good to any of us, to give us any saving grace, we are very fools if we look not to it; it is a dainty and delicate thing; it cannot enter indeed into a man's heart to conceive what a great mercy God hath vouchsafed unto him, if he hath bestowed any grace upon him; therefore be chary of it, and remember Lots Wife; remember those fearful examples, remember how David brake his bones; remember the miserable, distressed, uncomfortable condition thou mayst bring thy soul into, if thou dost not take heed to thyself? And if thou beest in such a condition, consider what gracious promises there are to help thee up again, and what gracious examples, to make thee think

with thyself, there is yet grace, and mercy, and quickening for me; and if I seek God, he will assuredly be found of me.

The third Use. Is it so, that a child of God may fall so foully? Then let not any man stumble at this Doctrine; let not any think a child of God cannot fall to be so dead; I say, do not stumble at it, but rather see if it be not thy case, if thou art not fallen down into this depth of misery; for what have I said? Did not I say that a child of God might lose his zeal? Look abroad what zeal is up and down, what yearnings when the Church is in misery; nay, what need we look abroad? Who hath zeal against his own sins and corruptions? Again, did I not say that a child of God may lose his affections? What affections are now a days? We hear Sermons, but what affections are stirred up, either in hearing, or speaking the Word of God? So for prayer, what affections are there in prayer? So for sin, what grief is there for our sins? There is no affection or sorrow at all in us. Where is that same anguish of heart that should be in us for our corruptions? They are even lost; I speak not of wicked men only, but even of good people, though they be sensible of their deadness, and hardness of heart, though they see it, yet they are not able to relent at it; Then for desires, where are they? Did I say a child of God may have hardly any desire almost, not be able to wrestle with God for grace, and tug for it; and is not this our case? What frozen prayers? What cold devotions are sent up from day today? So, did I say a child of God may be senseless of sin? How far hath this distemper grown upon us now a days? Our hearts might even ache to be privy to that backwardness, and untowardness, and unfruitfulness; I say, it might make us to be at our wits end, until we were delivered, and yet no man complains; there is complaining in a dull manner, but no man's heart bursts almost. Again, did I say a child of God may grow palpably vain, and proud, and worldly, that a man that hath but half an eye may see it, and take notice of it? Is not it thus among us? How do we discover

our shame wheresoever we come? Those that have but half an eye see how worldly we are, and how we have no mind to God, and the things of eternal life; is not this our conversation from day today? Nay, the very world sees it, they see how heartless good people are grown.

The last use may be to rap all men's fingers off, that think to comfort themselves with this that hath been said; there are these things will answer these conceits; first, all this is nothing to thee, unless thou wert once a godly, holy, zealous man; for all these, examples are of men that were once zealous and forward for God and goodness; they were once changed from the estate of nature to the estate of grace: And again, when they were fallen, they got up again, and were the more wary and watchful afterwards, but it is not so with thee.

Now we come in the next place to show what are the causes of this deadness of men's hearts, in these times wherein God hath revealed himself more fully and clearly; the general reason of this is the giving way to sin, and not looking to themselves to abstain from sin, and have a care of the commandments of God, and walking before him as they ought to do, which thing is an horrible deader of the heart; as Solomon speaks concerning the adulterer, he knows not that the dead are there; when a man gives way to sin, to worldliness, or passion, or any other corruption, he doth even go where the dead are, and there where the guests of hell are; if a man gives way to pleasure, to be carried away with sinful delights, this will dead a man's heart; as the Apostle showeth of the Widows that lived in pleasure, 1 Tim. 5:6, they were dead while they were alive; as soon as ever David gave way to his sinful corruptions, his heart was deadened presently upon it, as may appear by the prayer he had afterwards, when he came to himself, and to look out for quickening, uphold me with thy free spirit, Psal. 51:12, as who should say, I feel a base dull slavish spirit

come upon me, that former liveliness that was in me it is woefully decayed; sin had made a mighty breach in his soul, it had knocked off his wheels and made him dull, and therefore he is fain to pray that God would give him a free spirit again; so it was with Peter, as soon as ever he had given way to his curiosity, and security, and presumption, he would needs go and see sights, he would go into the high Priests hall, and see how the business went; he did not see the proneness of his heart to be carried into sin; now you may see how woefully it deadened his heart in a moment, as soon as the damsel spake, thou also wert with Jesus of Galilee; a man would wonder how no life at all almost appeared in that man's heart; if he had had any life, would he have carried himself in that fashion? His life was so gone, that he cursed and sware that he never knew the man; if he had any life in him, he would rather have said, what if I were with Jesus of Galilee? I was with him, and I am with him, and I will be with him, I am ready to die with him, I profess myself to be his Disciple; he had no heart in the world to stand for Jesus Christ; he had no heart to appear in pleading for him, and expose himself to danger for him; he was now called to it, but he had no heart at all; sin it is even like ashes cast upon the fire, the fire cannot then send forth its heat; so sin doth even cast ashes upon the soul, that it cannot express such life as otherwise it would.

The first reason is, because sin is a soul killing thing; it is like Mare Mortuum, the fishes die as soon as ever they come there; so when the Devil hooks a man into sin, he hooks him into the dead sea; as the Apostle saith of the Ephesians, you were dead in sins; if the Devil can but hook a man into sin, he is presently in the dead sea; Hos. 13:12, it is said of Ephraim, when he offended in Baal he died, &c. before, when their affections were up, and they trembled before God, they were lively; but when they gave way to sin and iniquity, the Church presently died, they withered away more and more till they came to

nothing; therefore the Apostle calls the Law of sin, the Law of death; the Law of the spirit of Christ hath freed us from the Law of sin, and of death, Rom. 8:2, sin doth even bring a man to death's door; it doth weaken all the powers and faculties of the soul, that a man cannot stir to any duty; it makes a man like a snake that is frozen with the cold, it cannot stir; so it is with a man when he gives way to sin and iniquity, it freezeth all the powers that are in him, and lesseneth all the powers of God's spirit; it is even like a weight, as the Apostle calls it, Heb. 12:1. If a man should have a great weight upon his back, fetters upon his legs, how can that man go? He must needs go very dully; so it is with sin and iniquity; when a man gives way to it, it is like plumes of lead, like great weights and burdens that clog a man's heart and affections, it makes them dull and lumpish and heavy to anything that is good; as Christ speaks of the cares of this life, if a man give way to them, they will overcharge the heart; they will lie heavy that the heart cannot stir, Luke 21:34, sin poisons all the soul, it poisons the mind that a man cannot look upon things as he did; it poisons a man's heart, though his heart were deeply affected towards God; it is strange, if a man give way to sin, how it will take off the affections from God, it separates between God and the soul, and comes between God the fountain of life and the soul, and therefore must needs be a killing and deading thing.

Secondly, Sin is a deading thing, because it doth grieve the holy spirit of God that dwells in a man; you know all the quickening of a Christian consists in the gracious assistance of God's spirit; as long as God's spirit is pleased to go along with us, and work our works for us, then we can pray and deny ourselves, then we are fitted to every good word and work; but if the spirit of God retire, if it withdraw and suspend his actions, and forbear his operations, what can a man do? A man is even a block without the spirit of God; now though the spirit of God delight never so much in doing good to the Saints, and

delight in accompanying of them, and assisting of them, and enlarging of them in all their ways; yet if they give way to sin directly, he will be grieved, and sent sad back again to heaven, as it were; and when the spirit of God is grieved, all must needs go sad and heavy with the child of God; suppose a child of God give way to vain talk and discourse; you shall see what the Apostle saith, this will grieve the spirit of God; grieve not the spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption, Eph. 4:13, he speaks of that very sin, if a man give way to it, the spirit of God will be grieved; though formerly he was pleased mightily to help, yet now he will withdraw: and then how dully shall a man go on? So if we should give way to the suffering of our hearts not to be affected with God and his truth, not to see God in all his ways, in all his goodness, and dealings, that we should not be thankful, this will quench the spirit of God, it will quench its motions; as if a man should pour pailfuls of water upon the fire, so this will quench the spirit of God, 1 Thes. 5:18,19, there is a manifest dependence between all those exhortations; and this is certain, let a man once not be affected with God, let him not see God's goodness in all his ways, let him not be affected with God's mercy and loving kindness, it will quench the spirit of God; and then consider what a lamentable case a man shall be in.

Thirdly, Sin must needs dead a man's heart, because it doth put a most woeful bitter hard task upon the soul to go through; for you know hard tasks stir up reluctancy against them; when a man hath an hard task to go through, the very thought of it dulls him; it is like a stone upon his heart; now let a man sin against grace and the goodness of God, and God's gracious dealing, let a man sin against these, it doth put a man to a most hard task to go through, to go and humble himself before Almighty God; and the soul shall find a world of conflicts, that he is loath to come to it, loath to deal about this bitter business, to go about to renew his repentance with bitter

remorse for his sins; it is like a desperate debtor that hath run himself over head and ears in debt; the very thought of coming to a reckoning is death to him, he cannot abide to think of it; it is like a boy that hath made false Latin; if his Master should call him to construe and pierce it, and give a rule for every word, he knows it is not according to rule, he hath not looked after rule, and everything is false; now he cannot abide to come to construe and pierce it; so when a man hath provoked God by his sins, and hath broken his covenant, and slighted his ordinances, when God calls him to construe and pierce, what do you make of such an action, and such a word, and such a thought? The heart is even afraid of these things, as a dog is of a whip; it is an hard task to be brought to this; as David, when he had yielded to his security, and idleness, and unwatchfulness, and so had given way to Satan, you may see what an hard task he brought upon his soul, and how his soul was ever afraid to go about humiliation; how many frowning looks doth a man cast upon the pikes he must go through, if he mean to obtain mercy; it even deads him as a dagger at his heart; David was loath to come to this, to come to a reckoning, to come to be humbled; when Bathsheba sent him word that she was with child, then God called him to a reckoning to be humbled; God told him to his face it is high time to be humbled, and ashamed; God hath been laying rods in brine for thee, and to bring thee upon the stage, and to make thee odious and vile in the sight of the world; yet he was loath to come to a reckoning, he shunned it, and shut his eyes from seeing it, he devised tricks to send Uriah home to his Wife; and when this would not be, but Uriah carried himself constantly, with feeling of the case of the Church that then lay in the field against their enemies; this could not but call for humbling, yet he shunned it still, and instead of humbling himself, he went further into the briars, and made Uriah drunk, thinking then he would go home; it is impossible but he should see the hand of God in all this, that he gave him a warning to down on his knees; but he shunned it again, and

instead of humbling himself, he devised the death of Uriah, and when news came Uriah is dead, which one would think should have been as an hammer to have knocked him down, he puts this off, the sword kills one as well as another; and till the Lord was pleased to set it on, he could not be brought to humble himself; thus it is, sin puts an hard task upon a man; a man may easily slip into sin, it is a merry way unto it; but when a man is once in, he cannot get out again, without tearing and rending, and abasing, and casting himself down before God; this is an hard task, and the soul shall find abundance of reluctancies, and the very thought of it deads the soul, unless the Lord be the more merciful.

A fourth reason why sin deads a man, is, because sin defiles the conscience, for sin is a dead work, and it goes into the conscience and defiles it, until it be purged by the blood of Christ, Heb. 9:14, sin is a dead work, and the winding sheet of it is the conscience; presently as soon as a man doth iniquity, this dead work runs into the conscience; and catcheth hold, and this defiles the conscience, and puts guilt into it; and nothing in the world more deads a man then a guilty conscience; why because it knocks a man's fingers off from that which should enliven and quicken him, it makes him see that he doth defile God's promises if he meddle with them, Isa. 38:16, the promises of God are the things by which men live; now when the conscience is guilty, it doth even knock a man's fingers off from the promises, it tells him this guilt must out first, before he can apply the promises, nay, the very hearing of the promises deads his heart, and this is the reason why good people, as long as they have not clear consciences, rather call for Sermons of judgment then of mercy; and their consciences say the promises do not belong to me; I know God is an holy God, and his promises holy, and it is no meddling with them without holiness; therefore when a man gives way to sin, he must needs dead his heart, because he defiles his own conscience;

and therefore no wonder that there is so much deadness up and down, when there is hardly a clear conscience in the Country; nay, good people, how slightly do they deal in this case, and hinder their own life and quickening, because they have not a care to come before God with a clear conscience!

The fifth Reason is, Because sin doth either utterly destroy, or mightily weaken all assurance of welcome with God; and therefore no marvel if it dead the heart; for if a man cannot look for comfort and entertainment with God when he goeth to him, it takes man off from that willingness to come into God's presence, it makes a man shy of God, and of Jesus Christ, and his Ordinances; it makes a man that he hath no desire to pray almost, nay, sometimes he hath no heart at all; nay, sometimes he totally omits the duty, he is so afraid, he cannot go to God without carnal fears and misgivings, and horrors; and this takes the heart quite off for a time, that he cannot pray at all; it is like a child when he hath committed some villainy that he knows his father knows, he is shy of coming into his fathers presence, he is afraid to come where his father is, he knows he shall be chide, and hear of his doings; so it is in this case; it is not thus with wicked and ungodly men; for they can look God in the face; but God's own people, when they sin against God; it must needs take off that cheerful willingness to go before God, that delight to be in his presence, that comfort in prayer; sin makes it an irksome thing; sin makes a man to have little heart to deal with God; for the heart doth not love to be caught by God in Satan's company, or of any lust; as a servant cannot abide that his Master should take him in any villainy or unfaithfulness, if he hath been unfaithful, it would kill his heart that his Master should take him in it; so it is with God's children, let them sin against God; it doth dull and dead their hearts, in regard of the throne of grace, it makes them have small heart to come before it: See it in Jonah; when he had fled away from God, and had put off

God's charge, and was gone down to Joppa, and was shipped into the Sea, see whether he had any mind to pray, or call upon God or no; he had none in the earth; nay, he was afraid of God, and shy of his presence, he knew he should be upbraided; indeed when God laid it upon his conscience, then Jonah prayed; but he did not pray before that, if he did, it was as good as nothing: So it is noted of David, when he had committed his sins, he confesseth he roared to God, but we can hear of no prayer; but when God sent Nathan, then he could pray; it is the title of the 51st Psalm, A Psalm of David when Nathan came to him; then he could pray; but all the while sin lay upon his soul, he could not pray, or if he did, he did but roar, he came before God with horror, and unbelief, and dismay, and had no comfort; Now when a man is privy to sin, what man that hath the knowledge of God, how ill God likes these courses, how ill he likes a man's pride and security, and neglect of worship and service; how can it choose but the thought of these things should gall his heart? And thus we see for the general, that it is sin that deadens men's hearts, when they give way to it.

Now for particulars, What are those sins that cause this deadness up and down? First, the stinginess of people in God's service, they will do no more for him than they must needs do, whereas a quickened heart that loves quickening, will rather overdo than underdo, and will rather super-abound, than be wanting; there are many duties in Religion that we have no express text of Scripture for, for such a quantity, or such a measure, or such a time, or how often; as how often we should pray in secret every day, how often we should meditate, and how long at a time, how much we should give out of alms, how much we should do thus and thus; the duty is commanded, but the quantity for time or frequency is not expressed in Scripture; there be a thousand things of this nature. Now a man that loves his own quickening, will rather overdo in this case than

underdo; as it was with Philemon, Phil. 21. Paul you know was to entreat him to do an act of kindness to receive Onesimus; now, saith he, I know thou wilt do more then I ask of thee, &c. He would rather overdo then underdo: So it was with the Israelites, when God would have them offer to the building of the Tabernacle; he did not tell them how much, but they would rather overdo then underdo, Exod. 36:5. They brought so much, that the Lord was fain to say there was enough, and too much: So it was with the Macedonians, 2 Cor. 8:3. Paul asked a little, they gave more: So it is with a man that loves quickening; if God bid him pray twice a day, rather than fail he will pray thrice a day; if God hath required some time in his service, he will rather give him more time then afford him smaller time, as Christ saith, If a man will have thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; as who should say, rather overdo then underdo, if thou beest called to do anything for the glory of God, and the good of thine own soul, or the good of others; we should imitate God in this; God gives his people above that which they ask; so we should do more than is asked. I do not mean as if we could do more than God bids us; for God requires all the heart, and all the mind, and all the strength; but I speak of a frank and free heart; when he doth not know what measure God sets down in his Word, he will rather do more than less; he will rather be with the forwardest then with the backwardest, if he love his own quickening; but when a man grows stingy in God's service, and will do no more than needs must, and takes advantage that he may do as little as may be, this deads the heart; because there is no express place in Scripture for prayer in this kind, he will take any advantage in the world, for his own security, and worldliness, and littleness in God's service, he lieth at catch; in this case this man sets open his heart to all deadness; therefore no marvel he hath no life; where is a man in town or country, that is like to Philemon, that a Minister may say, I know thou wilt do more then I say? It were well if we could say, thou wilt do as much as I say; nay, it is come to this

pass, we may say, I know you will do nothing at all; I may bid thee do this and that, but thou wilt do nothing at all; people will hardly regard the Communion of Saints at all, they will hardly regard secret prayer at all, they will heartily regard any of those duties upon which life and quickening so much depends; and this is one cause of the horrible deadness that is everywhere.

Secondly, Another cause is unwatchfulness; people do not watch over their souls, and over their ways, they do not ponder their paths, they have not an eye to their ways; this is a great cause of deadness of heart; therefore here when Christ chargeth the Church of Sardis with deadness, I know thou hast a name to live, but art dead: In the next words he gives a remedy, Be watchful therefore; as who should say, here is the cause of thy deadness, thou hast not been watchful; if thou hadst been watchful, thou hadst escaped all this deadness; if thou hadst stoop upon thy guard, and looked well to thy ways, this had never been; if a man be quickened at any time, the Devil lieth at catch; and if he do not watch, he will be deadened again, as the Apostle saith, 1 Pet. 5:8. A man had need be watchful, else he can never preserve himself from the temptations of Satan; when a City is beleaguered with the enemy, there are ever some Watchers and Scouts that lie in wait, that so if any danger be towards, they may give warning, lest it be surprised on the sudden; so when God doth good to our hearts, how should we keep watch over our souls; for we are beleaguered on every side, sometimes with presumption, and sometimes with despair; we are every way in danger, therefore we had need to watch; no sooner had Eve gone apart from her husband, and looked here and there, but the Devil took her presently; no sooner had Noah begun to taste the liquor of the grape he had planted, and delighted in it, but presently the Devil hooked him in, which he might have prevented if he had been watchful; the Devil is that Nimrod, that greedy hunter, that goeth up and down, and makes

pits, and lays snares to catch souls, and if we do not watch, we fall into them, 1 Cor. 2:13. Paul saith, I was among you with much fear; he knew what danger he was in, therefore he was in much fear; if we did love our own quickening, and the cherishing of whatsoever grace we have received, we would watch over ourselves; but where is this? Generally all the world is fast asleep, even good men and all; the Devil may sow what tares he will, there is no watching in prayer and in hearing of the Word, and doing good duties; no watching in observing the Sabbath; no watching in company; no watching alone; what may not the Devil do, when we are all as sleepy dogs, and love to snore? And dullness, and deadness, and blockishness, and worldliness, and unsettledness grows upon us to the utmost; there is nobody watching against temptations, they may come flowing in like violent waters, there is no withstanding of them; people are like to Saul, that was marvelous finely quickened at one time, he would not go on in his envy against David, he should not die by any means; no, his heart was so enlarged, that he bound his soul by a covenant, that he would be as good as his word, As the Lord lives he shall not die. Jonathan had used many arguments, and they so wrought upon him, that he could give the right hand to David, and all his malice was out, and David was a great man at Court again, 1 Sam. 19:6,7,8. But for want of watchfulness, within a little while the evil spirit came into him, and he would have murdered him again; so Jonah, when he had run from God, and God had humbled him, now he would never follow lying vanities anymore; now he would go to Nineveh and preach, let what danger would come; but by and by, not looking to himself, he is as much out of tune again as ever he was, as if he had never had these shining's, he was overgrown with passions, I do well to be angry, even to the death; I cannot tell which was the fouler distemper.

A third Cause of our general deadness, is the lowness of Religion, which men generally content themselves withal; a low kind of Religion, that will never reach half way to Heaven, that will never attain to any quickening; Religion, it is a very high thing, Prov. 15:24, it is a thing alone, a man must raise himself aloft, when he means to come into the way of eternal life; it is an high calling, Phil. 3:14. It is said of Jehoshaphat, that his heart was lifted up in the ways of God; Jerusalem, that is above; all godly souls that have true Religion indeed, are men above: Now people generally content themselves with a low kind of serving of God, that doth not come out of the suburbs of Hell and condemnation; the suburbs of hell reach a great way, a man may go even to heaven-gates, and yet be in the suburbs of hell; but to get into heaven, and escape hell beneath, is an high pitch; but men seek out a low way by the valleys, they think to come to heaven this way, it would choke most people to say, that their conversation is in heaven, as the Apostles was; that they are strangers upon earth, as the Patriarchs were, that they hate every sin, as all godly men do, that they go mourning all the day long under their corruptions and failings, and that it is the greatest grief of their hearts that they walk not according to God's goodness, and that they use all means to get rid of their sins; that they delight in every ordinance, that they delight in God's Sabbaths, and hunger and thirst after righteousness; it is the greatest desire of their souls and hearts to do thus; it would choke them to say thus, no they never attain it; this is the way of life that is above, but it is too high for fools; therefore no wonder that men never come to quickening, for they are not in the way of life, for the way of life is above, and they grope after the things below, and have not their conversation above; now how can we look for quickening, when we do not go in the way of life which is above?

Fourthly, Another reason is the vanity of men's minds; this is the cause of horrible deadness, Psal. 119:37, vanity when a man gives way to it, it doth horribly dead the heart; vain thoughts, vain speeches, vain expenses of time, vain meetings together without benefit, these are deaders, they lock up men's hearts, and exhausts all the good, and all the sap of any goodness in them; 'tis true, the children of God may talk how things go in a far country in the Church of God and other places, and they may talk of their business in the world, and this may be like bottle-beer; when it is first poured out into the cup it seems to be all froth, but by and by it turns to good liquor again; so though these discourses about worldly affairs, and how things go are froth, if they go no further; yet if they turn to good substance, and are sanctified, and brought home to the heart, to edify and awaken, and bring a man nearer to God, now they are good where there is a good use made of them; but otherwise they are horrible instruments of death, and soul-murder among men.

Fifthly, Mutual example; we do even dead one another; for people are apt to look upon one another; Ministers upon people, and people upon Ministers, and Ministers one upon another, and if we be not much cast behind one another, we hope all is well with us; this is that which deads people's hearts; whereas people should follow God's light, God's dealing with them, and not look upon others; and if we look upon others, we should look upon those that are quickened, Luke 7:44, seest thou this woman, &c. there was a woman was quickened indeed, her bowels melted, her eyes were fountains of tears, her very soul was affected, she was quickened indeed; seest thou this woman? So if we will look upon others, upon the Saints of God, seest thou this woman? Look upon those that are most quickened; but when we look upon others, and say, such a one doth so and so, and why may not I? I may do as well as he; when we do thus, this is apt to dead our hearts.

The sixth cause of deadness, is covetousness and worldliness; Christians that have been weaned from the world, so long as they keep their minds off from the world, and set them upon better things, they are full of life and quickening, and are able to pray and confer sweetly; but when as once they come to let in the world again, this doth mightily dead and damp their hearts, this doth wonderfully lay bolts and fetters upon their soul, that it cannot go on as formerly, as the Apostle shows, 1 Tim. 6:10, as soon as ever a man gives way to look after the world, presently, if he had any faith he errs from it, if he had any quickening before, he is now deadened; this deadened Demas his heart; for a time he was so full of life, that he was able to hold company with St. Paul, but when this came once to take possession of him, Demas hath forsaken me, he was gone, he was able to hold company with Paul no longer; worldliness will quickly take off all the affections, and all the quickening that was in the soul, it will presently fail, and die, and decay; therefore you shall see when the Lord would set down how dull Ezekiel's hearers were, and how heartless, he sets down this as a reason of it, their heart is gone after their covetousness, Ezek. 33, no marvel then they went not after Ezekiel's Sermons; for their hearts could not go after both at once; so long as their hearts were after the world and profits, they must needs be dead and untoward to the word of God; therefore the Apostle saith, Eph. 5:3, let not covetousness be named among you, as becometh Saints; as who should say, it will utterly dead and kill all your Saint-qualities and dispositions that are in you, if you suffer your hearts to grow earthly; the damps of the earth as one saith, doth not more quench a candle and put it out, then the love of the world doth damp grace, and put it out presently; and this is the cause of that deadness that is grown among us; we are grown worldly, and the world carries us away; we are all for the world, so that all our words, thoughts, affections, carriages, they are all little else but worldly; most people have many businesses abroad in the world, riding

abroad into the world; but who takes that short journey into his own heart? People can tend business with everybody else but themselves; they know what is done beyond sea, and the countries round about, and yet hardly any one marks how things go in his own soul, whither he goes backward, or forward; whither he gets, or loseth; everybody can ask how others do, but no man looks how his own soul doth; people are grown at great distance from themselves; I speak not of drunkards or profane persons, such as are absolutely dead in sins and trespasses, but I speak of Christians in whom we should look for life; we are grown strangers to ourselves, we are out of our own reach, we are grown to a mighty distance from looking to our own estates and conditions as we ought to do; our minds are scattered up and down about other things; therefore no marvel we are so heartless towards God.

Seventhly, The next cause is idleness and spiritual sloth, when men let their minds go as a boat without a guide; the boat goeth uncertainly when it hath nobody to guide and steer it; so people let their thoughts, and hearts, and minds run at all adventures; people do not take pains with their own hearts, and hold them to that which is good; we let our hearts be like the field of the sluggard, anything may grow in them for all us; we do not look to our hearts, that we may have good things grow in them, and that we may fence our hearts from those things which may make us untoward in the ways of God; if we have any stirrings at any time, we are like idle housewives; when the liquor hath done working they forget to stop up the bung-hole; so when men have any stirrings, then they are in motion and action; but when they are gone, they let their hearts get a vent and they are deadened again, as if they had nothing at all; as Solomon shows, Prov. 19:15, though a man hath enough for the present, yet if he grow idle, when that is spent he will famish and starve, and die; the idle soul shall suffer hunger; maybe he hath

something now, but if he be idle and sluggish, that may be all spent, and then for want of supply he may famish; so it is with the soul; though it hath something for the present, yet if it be idle, and sluggish, and slothful, and take not pains from day today, it must needs go to wrack; when God gives us knowledge of sin, we should improve that knowledge to root out sin; when God gives us insight into graces, we should employ it, that we may get those graces; if God give us his ordinances, if he give us a Sermon at any time, we should presently work with it. As it is with a graft that a man cuts off to plant and set, if he lets it lie till it be dead, it will never grow, but if he presently plant it, it will take in the ground and prosper; so if a man would presently take a good motion when it comes, if he would presently take hold of a reproof or counsel given him out of the word of God, while it hath life in it, and works upon his heart, the heart might receive much benefit; but when people are blockish and dull, they are not willing to take any pains, no wonder though they go down as they do, Eccles. 10:18, by much slothfulness the building decayeth, &c. it is so in the spiritual building; if people be slothful, all gracious things must needs vanish away, and go out more and more; and this is a most grievous thing, it is generally among all people, nay, among the better sort; for wicked men that live palpably in sin, they are struck dead in sin, and never had any color of life; but I speak of those that have had some kind of quickening, yet notwithstanding suffer themselves to be deadened through idleness; when we go to prayer, we do not put forth ourselves in prayer, our prayers are dead; when we go to the word we do not put forth our minds, and therefore our hearing is dead; our hearts are like to a sieve; when it is in the water it is full, but when it is once taken out again, not a jot remains; so it is while people are at a Sermon, may be they seem to drink in something, and their hearts are affected (yet these people are rare too) but when they are gone, all is gone, all leaks out again for want of stopping, for want of observing the things

they have heard; this is the reason there is no more life among Christians, because they are so idle and sluggish; thou evil and slothful servant saith Christ; when a man is a slothful servant, he must needs be an evil servant; Christians will confer may be now and then of grace, but with such loose thoughts that there is no edification or quickening; nay, their hearts grow dull and sleepy under the same; how is it possible a man should get any quickening, or keep it without labor and pains? Men must labor for it, as the Apostle saith, give all diligence to make this sure;; it is said of Paul, that he followed hard after the mark; there is nothing can be done in this thing without labor; as it is with our outward callings if a man will have a living in the world, he must labor for it; the earth will bring forth no fruit unless he till it, and take pains about it; so it is here much more; a man's heart by reason of sin, is cursed as the earth is, and it will bring forth nothing but weeds, vanities, fooleries, and vile passions, and inordinate affections, unless a man be still husbanding of it; therefore unless a man be diligent in this work, he can never be quickened.

Eighthly, In the next place, the neglect of secret duties is the cause of the deadness of our hearts in all duties of Religion; secret duties are the best quickeners; when a man goeth alone, and serveth God alone, as it is spoken of Peter, when his heart was dead and untoward in the high Priests hall, if he had had any life, he would have stood for Christ; What if I be one of them? What say you to that? I am one, and I confess it, and if that be my fault, it shall be my fault still; but he was dead and had no life; now what course did he take? He went out (and went by himself) and wept bitterly; he went to a private and secret duty, to humble his soul before Almighty God; when a man is sick and would recover his health, he goes and betakes himself to a chamber, and shuts the windows, and will not let the air come in; so if a man would recover life and quickening, the saving health of his

soul, he must take himself to his chamber, and privately deal with God concerning his own soul, as the Prophet speaks, Zech. 12, every family apart, the house of David apart, and the house of Nathan apart; when Jeremiah would humble himself before God, Jer. 15:17. I sat alone, saith he; so even go and sit alone.

But you will say, are not public duties better then private? 'tis true; they are so, when we may have public duties as on the Sabbath day, or any other day, when we may go to public ordinances, then to go to private duties, to private prayer, &c. this is to despise God's public worship; but if we be not diligent in secret duties, in private calling upon God, if we be not frequent in these, all outward duties of God's worship will do us no good; the preaching of the Word will do us no good, except we preach to ourselves; the prayers in the congregation will do us no good, if we pray not in our closets; now when men neglect private prayer, and seeking of God; when a good motion comes into their mind to seek God in secret, they put it off, they will do it anon, they shall have more leisure another time, and if they do it, they do it lothly and hoverly, even so, so, they do not do it roundly and thoroughly as they ought to do; this deads their hearts, Lam. 3:28, the Church sat alone; that is the way to be quickened; if a man did love quickening, he would plot and study to be alone, nay, he would search all the corners of his house for privacy; if he did love his own quickening, he would do thus, he would be frequent with God in secret; it is noted that the greatest work that ever Jacob did, it was in private, Gen. 32:24, he had sent all his company away, and dispatched them over the brook, he was left alone, and so went to tug with God all alone, and there wrestled so hard, that he would not let the Angel go until he had blessed him; so this were the way for people to take God aside, and go between him and them, and there afflict their souls and acknowledge all their vileness, there to be instant with him, and look up to him and bless him; as it is noted of

our Savior Christ, he would shift out of the way many times, and go and pray alone, Mat. 14:23. We may do that when we are alone, that we cannot do in any company; we may speak that in private, which is not fit for the Wife, or the brother to hear; a man may do that alone, which he is not able to do when he is in company; how many secret arguments hath a man to move God in private? Many secret businesses that only God and his own soul knows off; so that if he would be diligent in private duties, he knows not what good he might do to his own soul: Now the neglect of this blessed Ordinance of God, of seeking of him in secret, is the cause of this deadness; nay, the want of this duty is the cause why public Ordinances do us no more good.

Ninthly, The next cause of deadness is the not looking after inward duties in a man's own breast; spiritual life and quickening is an inward thing, and it is inward duties that must cherish it; and the omitting of these duties doth most destroy it and let it die. I say inward duties; outward duties it is more easy doing of them; as for a man to pray, and hear, and receive the Sacrament, and externally to observe the Sabbath, or outwardly to confer and sing Psalms, and read a Chapter; these outward duties a man may do them with more ease; nay, hypocrites may do them, and do do them, and yet never come to life and quickening; they do them after their manner; but there is no man can do them aright, but they that are quickened up to God; but I say men may do this, and never be quickened; but now there be inward duties, and these are the main quickeners of the heart, and the carelessness of these is a great cause of deadness; but what are these?

It is the setting of God before a man's eyes, thinking when he goeth up and down of God, of his holiness, of his precepts, of the danger of being under his displeasure, and of the happiness of being in his

favor; it is for a man to be striving against temptations, and opposing his own wickedness; if sin rise up at any time, to beat it down; these be inward duties, which no man can see; if a man were in the market cross, he might do these duties and no man see him; no man can tell what a man thinks, what he is doing in his bosom; now I say, if a man would be careful of these inward duties, what a deal of good might he gain? These inward duties are they that raise up quickening, Mal. 2:15, take heed to the spirit; many take heed to their lips, they will not speak; and to the outward man, they will not do evil; but take heed to your spirit, Eph. 5:19, speak to yourselves, saith the Apostle, we speak, may be, to others about God; this is an outward duty; but we should speak to ourselves; if a man loved quickening, he would reason the case with his own soul, and speak to himself, and ever and anon upon occasion retire into his own bosom, and recoil upon his own heart, and commune with himself; this is it, to be inwardly resisting the Devil, and cherishing of good motions; this is an excellent thing, and nothing deads a Christian so much as the neglect of these duties. It is observed of Nehemiah, when he was speaking to the King, he was doing of an inward duty at the same time, Neh. 2:4. At the same time that he spake to the King, he was careful of the inward duty to speak to God to bless him, and to be with him: So when Moses was exhorting all Israel to believe in God, Exod. 14:13,14. At the same time when nobody knew what Moses did, he was doing of an inward duty, he was crying to God; as the Lord saith, ver. 15. Moses, why criest thou unto me? This was when he was conversing with Israel, and talking with them; these inward duties may stand with any duty; they run along in prayer, and hearing of the Word: they run along when a man is in company, and when he is alone; when he is at home, and when he is abroad; when he is eating and drinking; these inward duties, if men would make much of them, it would make a man to have a gracious living heart. Now what should ail us but that we may do these duties? We have no excuse for

the not doing of them; when we are in company, what should ail us but we may think thus? I will take heed now, I will not speak words that my heart may reproach me for afterwards, I will behave myself as I ought; though a persecutor of Religion were in company, can he know these thoughts? No man can persecute or mock him for any of these; a man may think as good thoughts as he will, if he hath an heart to them; and this will keep up a man's quickening; when a man goeth abroad, what should hinder but he may be employed in inward duties, considering seriously, and thinking solemnly, how it stands between God and his soul? What shall hinder a man from these duties? Now the neglect of these is the cause of the deadness of men's hearts; people come to Church, and hear Sermons, but what do ye do within? Do you set up God's Ordinances in your bosoms? Do you set up a Christian watch in your bosoms? And prayer in your bosoms? How do you go up and down all day long? Is heaven in your bosoms? Is the fear of God in your bosoms, preserving and keeping of you? This is that which will quicken you; and a man can never be quickened, if he make not conscience of this.

Lastly, Another cause of deadness, is people's contenting themselves with what they have attained unto; if they have gotten anything, they are apt to set up their staves there, and content themselves as if all were well, this is the cause of the deadness of people's hearts, because every little sufficeth them; if they have but any hope that they are of God, and fear his name; if they find they have anything in them, they are apt to be secure, and not to be earnest to grow in grace from day today. Now when this gets into a man's heart, it will dead him presently; therefore the Apostle, when he perceived many of the Hebrews deadened their hearts this way, he shakes them up, Heb. 6:1. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection: As who should say, Let us on, on, for shame unto perfection, let us proceed further, let us not ever be learning and

never come to the knowledge of the truth; let us not be ever laying a foundation, and never building thereupon; let us not be ever going about repentance, and faith, and the first principles of the Oracles of God, and never come to perfection: This is the effect of the Epistles of Peter, that people should not content themselves with what they have, but that they may grow and go forward; Desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2:2, and grow in grace, 2 Pet. 3:18. He is beating upon this, that no man should content himself with any measure already attained; if he do, his heart will be deadened, and made dull and blockish to all goodness; and this is another cause of the deadness of people's hearts, they are at a stay, they are at a stand; every man (maybe) would be a good Christian, and a child of God; and if he can get but any hope that he is a child of God, now he is safe, and now he goeth dully and blockishly on, if he can but hold there; and if he hath any fears that he is not right, then maybe he begins to stir himself a little; but as soon as ever he gets any hopes again that he is right, he goeth on in a blockish manner, and passeth over holy things otherwise then he ought to do; and then if any spurs come into his conscience, and awaken him, maybe he stirs again, till he gets up a little hope that his condition is good, and then he falls off, and grows as secure again as he was before; and this deads the hearts of people.

I come now to the means how a man may be quickened, and the first is this. If we would be quickened, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must go to him (I speak now to good people) if you would be quickened, you must go and fetch it from the Lord Jesus Christ; he is a fountain of life opened unto all that come unto him; I am come (saith Christ) that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, John 10:10. Christ is not only come to quicken the dead, and raise them up that they may be alive towards God, barely, and nakedly; but he came to make all his people lively,

that they should have more life and quickening, and be more enlarged in grace; he came not only to work the thing, but to work a growth and increase of it more and more: Now if you would know how to come by this life in Christ Jesus, the only way is to believe in Christ, John 7:38 He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow Rivers of living water; there shall be rivers of spiritual life in that man, that shall never be drawn dry; so then, do any of us stand sticking at this, how shall we be quickened, and shake off this deadness that is in us? I say, look up to Christ, and labor truly and unfeignedly to desire him, and hunger and thirst after him; if we did search after Christ, we should be quickened presently; there is no man is dead, but he that hath no care to look after Christ, and desire him; if we would have Christ, if our hearts be open to him; if we do but desire him, and long for him, if we have but these groans, and outgoings in our souls, oh that I had but Christ shed abroad in my heart! If I had him, I should have life and quickening; if I had him, I should have right and title to all God's heavenly comforts; if our hearts did but go up and down longing after Christ, this is the way to attain to quickening. Isa. 55:1. Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, &c. Come, and ye shall have waters that shall never be dried up; the want of faith is the cause of hardness of heart, and of deadness; as our Savior Christ, when he saw they were dead, Matth. 16, he did upbraid them with unbelief; if a man did but once believe, if a man did but truly cast his soul upon God, if he had but once his eyes opened to see the vanity of all other things, to see the danger of sin and iniquity, the misery of all unregenerate people, and to see the worth of Christ, and the infinite goodness of God in Christ, what an admirable pearl it is to enjoy him; how it is better than life itself, better than the whole world, yea, then thousands of worlds; if a man did but see this, and had his heart affected with this, to be drawn to Christ, and to have his heart and mind run after him, to be possessed of him, this is faith; you that would know whether you have faith or

no, if you had all the faiths in the world, you are infidels without this faith; but if you have this faith, you have true faith; if you have a heart running after Christ, minding him, and longing for him, and casting your souls upon him for all good, accounting this your principal, and total, and main good, and accordingly affecting this, these are the works of faith; and if you have these works, you may be quickened; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, set your hearts upon him, and seek after him, and you shall have all manner of good, even life itself.

The second means is, a careful learning of the Word of God preached. When the Corinthians were marvelously blocked up in their minds and hearts, and were straightened in good things, 2 Cor. 6 12, mark what the Apostle saith v. 11. Our mouth is open to you. &c. as who should say, In our Ministry there is abundance of grace, abundance of life, and largeness of heart, abundance of gracious things; all manner of good things we bring with us in our Ministry; peace, and comfort, and hope, and all the promises of God, and all the rich treasures of Jesus Christ; we come with our arms full; you are not straightened here, but you are straightened in your own bowels; as who should say, you may be enlarged sweetly by our Ministry; we deliver unto you abundance of grace and mercy, and abundance of supply; all those deadness's, and locking's up of heart in you, would be healed by the Ministry of the Word; so may, I say, if your hearts are locked up, certainly it is for not taking what the Word offers; if you would come hungerly and greedily to the Word of God, with an heart desirous to be edified and instructed, and to apply what the Word speaks to your souls, certainly you shall here meet with abundance of grace and life; for the Word is the Word of life, and the Ministry of the Word is the Ministry of the Spirit of God and life, so that the deadness of all people is merely from their own

bowels; you are not straightened in us, saith the Apostle; no, in the Ministry of the Word is abundance of life.

The third means is, A careful shunning of all those causes of deadness which we named formerly; we must take heed of sin; for if we give way to sin, it will dead the heart, it will make a man shy of God, and put a man to woeful tasks, and breed loathness to go about duties; it will make a man to have a guilty conscience, and dead a man that way; it will grieve the spirit of God, and quench all the operations, and sweet influences, and gracious motions of the Spirit, that the sweet liveliness of his workings will be gone away, if a man give way to sin; if he give way to the world, or slackening in a godly course; if a man give way to pride or vanity, or any sin; this will dead the heart, a man's heart will presently be deadened, if he give way to the Devil, and to his temptations. In particular, you must take heed of niggardliness in Religion; they that love quickening, must labor for a frank and free spirit, that will rather overdo in God's service then underdo; as long as a man hath a free heart, he shall have a quickened heart; therefore labor to preserve it; do as Philemon, I know thou wilt do more then I say. Paul knew he had a free spirit, that if he commanded him a little, he would do more; he would rather overdo then underdo, our Savior Christ calls for this free spirit; If a man take thy coat, give him thy cloak also; rather overdo then underdo in any good thing; have a free heart; if God bid thee pray, pray three times, five times a day, rather than not often enough; there be many duties that God doth not set down how often, and how frequent, and how long; now labor for a free spirit; rather do twice as much, then underdo.

Again, Take heed of lowness of Religion, of taking up a low, and base, and mean kind of Religion, that will not reach the Kingdom of God; there is a low kind of Christianity, that will not be able to attain to

salvation; a low faith, that doth not make a man to have his conversation in heaven; a low repentance, that reacheth not to mortification; a low profession of Religion, that comes not to the power of Godliness, Prov. 15:24. The way of life is above; it is an high thing, therefore take heed of low Religion; for people think that any kind of righteousness will serve turn; if they have but a little Reformation and Religion, they presently think this is godliness; but let us take heed of this low Religion, that will never do the deed.

Again, We must take heed of want of Watchfulness; we must set up a gracious and Christian watch in our hearts from day today; when the Lord had found fault with the Church of Sardis for being dead, in the next words he bids them be watchful; as who should say, the want of this watchfulness, and looking to yourselves, and having a care over your thoughts and affections, lest you should be drawn aside, the neglect of this is the cause of all deadness.

Again, We must take heed of vanity; as David saith, Psal. 119:37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me O Lord.

Again, We must take heed of covetousness; for we shall never have any gracious work upon us, if we give way of it.

Again, We should take heed of slacking and abating private duties; we should carefully call upon God every day in secret, when there is nobody by but God and our own souls; if we find backwardness to this duty, know it comes from the Devil, that would drown us in perdition if he could; therefore we must resist him, and go about it; for certainly otherwise we cannot be quickened.

Again, We should take heed of slighting inward duties, the holy ordinances of God in our bosoms, holy meditations, gracious strivings against corruptions when they arise, setting the Lord before

us, seeking God's presence in all places; we must have a care we have gracious purposes, and endeavors, and strivings inwardly in our bosoms.

Lastly, Let us take heed of contenting ourselves with any pitch we have attained; but still labor to grow in grace, lest we fall short, and never enter into God's rest.

The next means is to be earnest with God to quicken our hearts; to pray to God for his grace, that God would be pleased to put life into us; we should make Elijah's prayer, that prayed to heaven for fire to come down upon the sacrifice; so pray earnestly to God to send down his celestial fire into thy heart, to warm thee, and heat thee, and stir thee up to that which is good; as the Church doth, Psal. 80:18. Quicken us, and we will call, &c. Of all Petitions under heaven, we should pray most of all for life, next unto the glory of God, and the salvation of our souls (nay indeed, as the very means for both) we should pray that God would quicken us; into all our prayers let us put in this Petition, that God would quicken us; evermore to have it as the standing desire of our souls, and the daily request and suit we have at the throne of grace that God would quicken us; there is no grace we have more need of then this; and indeed it is that which sets all other Graces a work; if we did know how ready God would be to welcome such a suit, we would be more ready to pray to God for it; there is no man so tenderly welcome to God, as he that prays for quickening; the more he is weary of deadness and common professing of God, the more welcome to God; he would fain fear God indeed, and please God indeed; when a man is possessed with deep studies how to attain to this, this man is a welcome man to the throne of grace; therefore let us stir up ourselves to this; there is no mercy better than this, that God should quicken us, Psalm 119:156. Great are thy tender mercies, quicken me, O Lord! He takes here

quickenings for all God's gracious mercies and tender compassions; he takes the quickening of his heart as a gracious effect of God's infinite mercy to his soul; if we had but this, how welcome would good duties and opportunities of doing and receiving good be unto us?

The fifth means is to be diligent, and to take earnest and effectual pains in this work, and in all Christian duties, in all the worship of God; there is a secret blessing of God upon those that take pains, even in the meanest calling; you shall have poor Widows that have four or five small children to keep; yet being painful, it is a wonderful thing what a blessing of God is upon them, that they make a shift to live, and never come to trouble the Parish; such a blessing of God there is upon the diligent, as Solomon saith, The hand of the diligent maketh rich, Prov. 10:4. So it is in regard of spiritual life; there is a secret blessing of God upon the men and women that labor, and are diligent about the means of grace, and are careful to take pains to have them made profitable to their souls; upon those that are diligent in prayer, and striving against sin, diligent in hearing of the Word, diligent in partaking of the Sacrament when it comes, and diligent about the Sabbath, that they may not lose the benefit of it; it is a wonderful blessing that shall accompany such men; they shall thrive in grace, when as others shall be like Pharaohs lean kine, that devoured all their fellows, and yet were lean and ill-favored still; it is not the greatness of a man's comings in that makes a man rich, but the well-managing of it; there is many a rich Heir comes to poverty, when as another that was never born to a foot of Land, yet with pains, and labor, and industry, is well able to live, and give more to any good use, than twenty base idle fellows; let a man hold but a little ground, twenty acres, he may grow more rich upon it, being a good husband, than another man that holds twenty times as much, and is a spend thrift, and lazy, and careless, and never looks how business

goes forward; there is a blessing of God upon labor and industry, as Solomon saith, Prov. 13:11. He that gathers by labor shall increase. So it is here; it is not he that lives under the best Ministry, that is most quickened, but he that lives under a poor Ministry, and is diligent, he is better than hundreds that live under the powerful Preaching of the Word, and never are careful to improve it. It is noted of Johns hearers, that many of them had more life, then they that sat under Christ's Ministry: It is noted of Job, though he dwelt in Midian, where was no means of grace, yet he had more grace and life in his heart then almost all the Church of God that dwelt in Zion; there was hardly a man in all Israel like Job; Paul, though he came into the Vineyard after all the Apostles, yet by his labor and diligence he gat before most of them all; so a man that sits under the Ministry, and takes pains with his heart, that the Sermons he hears may do him good, that he may be the better for them; if a man labors to get good by the Sacrament, to get good by conference; if he labor to have every Ordinance of God made profitable to him; this man, with a little grace, shall grow more than thousands that go on idly, and yet have more helps then he; therefore if we desire to be quickened, let us be diligent, and take pains, and not go with our hands in our bosoms, like Solomon's sluggard.

Sixthly, Another means is to exercise that grace we have; there is never a man in this Congregation hath so little grace, but if he did exercise it, so far as it would go, who knows how much quickening he might quickly have? Which of you do not know that there is a God? And that there is a Heaven, and a Hell, and the Principles of Religion? If you would but make conscience to make use of all the checks of conscience, and the knowledge you have, if you would but make use of the relenting's you have now and then, and the motions you have now and then, if you would but make use of them, and exercise them, this is the way to quicken you; let a man have but a

little knowledge, and let him exercise it and improve it, and frame his life and conversation accordingly, knowledge shall be multiplied to this man; and so again, let a man have any relenting's, any melting's now and then at a Sermon and exercise these, strike while the iron is hot, and put them to the utmost, this is the way to be quickened; as it is the saying of one, Everything is increased with the exercise of its own kind; as it was with the bread in the Disciples hands, while they were distributing of it, it increased; so it is with the graces of God's spirit, peculiar and saving graces, and common graces; let a man exercise the graces of God's spirit, this is the way to abound in them, and to have them quickened and strengthened, and made more and more operative in a man; therefore let us exercise all the graces of God's spirit, and improve them all; grace is like a snow-ball, the more it is rolled up and down, the bigger it grows; so let a man but go and improve all the graces of God's spirit that he hath bestowed upon him, there will be addition to every one of them; by repenting a man may learn to repent; and by relenting, a man may learn to relent; and by striving against sin; he may learn to strive against sin more and more.

The last means is to consider the examples of the worthies in all ages, and such as are even in our days, we should consider these, and these will quicken us up to be more forward; when St. James would quicken up the Christians to whom he writes, to wait with patience the coming of the Lord, he quickens them by the example of Job and the Prophets; so when he would quicken them up to prayer, he presseth them by the example of Elias, he was a man as well as we, saith he, and had the like passions, yet he prayed when the heavens had been shut three years and six months, &c. Consider this; the zeal of others may provoke us; specially if we set it before our eyes, we should think with ourselves, What he so believing, and I so full of doubting? He so lively, and I so dull and blockish? He so affected,

and I so untoward? This should shame us, and provoke us to stir up ourselves by looking upon such, especially upon those that have taken up the profession since we did, and yet have gone beyond us; it should awaken us; this is an excellent means to quicken us; as our Savior Christ, when he would exhort his Disciples to suffer persecution, saith he, consider the Prophets that were persecuted before you,; so if we would be quickened up, we should look upon the Saints that have been quickened before us, that we may have their grace and comfort.

We come now to the last thing, and that is to persuade you by some Motives to shake off this deadness; Motives are special things to quicken up a man; the Apostle when he would quicken up the Corinthians to love, he useth divers Motives unto them; the first is taken from the collation of love, with all the extraordinary gifts of God's spirit; he shows, without love they are all nothing, though a man had all knowledge, and all faith, so that he could remove mountains, and had not love, it were nothing; so that you see love is an excellent grace, 1 Cor. 13:1,2,3. Another Motive he takes from the effects and adjuncts of love, love suffereth long, &c. from the fourth to the seventh verse. Thirdly, He useth another Motive to show how love doth generally surpass most graces in the endurance of it; Prophetes they shall cease, knowledge that shall cease and be done away, but love that shall never be done away; love never faileth. Lastly, He compares it with the cardinal virtues, with the principal graces, namely, faith and hope, and shows how love is beyond them, hope edifies a man's self, but love edifies the whole Church of God; faith and hope must vanish, and will not go into the Kingdom of heaven with us, but love it doth always accompany us; so that you see the Apostle is careful to use motives to quicken up people to that which he exhorts them unto; the Scripture as it doth bid us do a duty, so it useth motives to quicken us up to the doing of it.

And again, When it forbids any sin, it useth motives to take off our hearts from that sin; as when the Apostle would dissuade from the unworthy receiving of the Sacrament, what abundance of motives doth he heap one upon another to terrify us from it? 1 Cor. 11:23. &c. the first is from the institution of the Lord Jesus Christ, I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, &c. as who should say, what will you profane his institution. Secondly, From the time when he instituted it, the same night he was betrayed; in his agony and in the midst of his sorrows he thought of your good; and will you profane such a mercy and blessing? Thirdly, From the nature of the Sacrament, it is the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; and will you not reverence that? Another is from the end of the Sacrament, it is to show forth the Lord's death till he comes; therefore how should we have a care of this? That we may come to the Sacrament in a gracious and reverent manner, duly meditating what it is, having a lively apprehension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to keep a constant memory of what he hath done for us. Another is from the greatness of the sin of unworthy receiving, he shall be guilty of the body and blood of Christ; again, from the danger of it, whosoever eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself; again, from the particular judgments that God had inflicted upon that town, for this cause many are sick among you, and many sleep; and questionless it is for this cause, for your unworthy receiving of the Sacrament; you see what abundance of motives he brings for this; now I say if Motives be good in any point, look whatsoever we exhort people unto if it be good to use Motives to stir them up to it, then much more in this point; in the point of deadness to shake it off, in the point of quickening that they would labor to get it; and indeed when a man useth Motives to faith and repentance, it is not only to get that, but to quicken them up to faith and repentance; when a man spurs a horse, it is not only to make him go, but to quicken him up to

go; we are all dull and careless and blockish; now Motives serve to stir us up, Eccles. 12, the words of the wise are as goads to provoke and stir up people.

Well then, The first motive shall be this, to consider the woeful ingredients of this sin of deadness, the horrible sins that are contained in it, what a compound of spiritual diseases are in this sin.

First, There is a dullness and blockishness of mind, dull and heavy to learn anything that is good; as it is said of the Jews, Acts 28:27, when a man hath an unteachable mind, though he be never so long under the word of God, it cannot strike into his heart, and enter into his understanding, his mind cannot feel the weight of divine truths; take outward truths of profit and pleasure, a man may lead him up and down with these truths he feels weight in these; but for the word of God he hath no understanding in that: may be he can tell what the Ministers say, and talk of it; but for the weight of divine reason, the mind is blockish to this; men are like to a blockish scholar that hath gone seven years to school, and yet is not beyond the primmer; so when a man shall sit so long under the Ministry of the word, and yet be a stranger to it, as if he had never heard of it; he hears discourses of faith, and can speak of it, and talk of it, of the letter of it as well as the best believer, and yet is as blockish to go about it as can be; what an horrible thing is this? That the truth should come to a man's mind, and a man should be dull to conceive it.

Secondly, Another evil is awkness and averseness of heart, listlessness to the ways of Jesus Christ; as Christ saith of the Jews, Mat. 15:8, their hearts cannot be pulled to that which is good, their hearts are untoward, and have no list or disposition that way; even as if a man should go about a thing that he hath no heart to, so people go about prayer and the hearing of the word, as if they had no heart

to it; they have no heart to prayer, they have no heart to think soundly of God, and of their latter end; they come to duties, but their hearts are a thousand miles off.

Thirdly, There is senselessness of conscience, it is not tender of little sins, it feels them not at all; and as for great sins, it feels them but a little; may be people's consciences find fault with them from day today for doing what they do, and tells them they ought not to do it, but yet they will not leave their sins; it tells them thus and thus they ought to do, but it hath no power to make them do it; may be it accuseth them, but they are never the better, people's consciences are dull and blunt and have no force at all.

Fourthly, For coldness and lukewarmness of affections; the affections of a man are not set upon God; they pray without affections, and hear without affections, the doctrine of eternal life doth not affect their hearts; hatred of evil is cold, and love of God and goodness is cold, as Christ saith, the love of many shall wax cold, and so their desires are cold and languish and come to nothing; we can find tears for other matters, but not for our sins; we can have our affections soon stirred when ourselves and our own wills are crossed, but God may be dishonored a thousand ways, and we never grieved or moved at it; so when we hear a fine story, and carnal news, this delights; but when we hear the word of God, the truth of God that concerns our eternal well doing, we are not moved, or affected at all with that.

Fifthly, Another ingredient of this sin is the weakness and faintness of endeavors; if people have any endeavors, any kind of putting themselves forth to that which is good, it is with faintness, as if they cared not whither they went about it yea or no; as Solomon saith, Prov. 13:4, people desire mercy and pardon, and would have hope

and salvation, and the Kingdom of God, but will not be at the cost and charges they ought to be at for these things; this is nothing but the deadness of our hearts.

Lastly, That same dullness and drowsiness of the whole man; though men be careful enough of outward things, yet how careless are they of their souls? Were our hearts broken and contrite under these things, we should be soon quickened; as the Lord saith, Isa. 57:15. I revive the spirit of the contrite one; so God would revive us if we were sensible of these distempers of ours; if we would humble ourselves before God, and plead to him for help, he would help us; but when we do not lay these distempers to heart, and seek out to God for redress, no marvel though we are dead and dull still; well then, is it so? That there are so many horrible ingredients in this sin of deadness, then how should we labor to fling it away, and use all means to be quickened? The Apostle being to dissuade from following the will of the Gentiles, he useth this very argument, the abundance of the vile ingredients that is in the will of the Gentiles, 1 Pet. 4:3, so you may see how the wise man dissuades, Prov. 26:25, when he speaketh fair, believe him not; for there are seven abominations in his heart: so let us think there is seven abominations, yea seventy times seven abominations in this sin of deadness; therefore let us look out that God may help us and quicken us, and revive us in all our ways.

The second motive is to consider that as long as we are dead we cannot pray, Psal. 80:18. Lord, quicken us and we will call upon thy name; as who should say, Lord, we are not sit to pray and call upon thy name except thou quicken us; therefore quicken us, that we may call upon thee: So Ministers cannot preach unless they be quickened; as Dr. Ames tells a story of a godly man of France, there was such cold preaching that he was fain to go out of the Town to sit under a

powerful Ministry; therefore we cannot preach if we be dead; the Scribes and Pharisees preached without Authority and life, they were dead, and therefore had no authority in their preaching, but Christ preached with Authority; if we were quickened we should be the better able to preach: So again, you are not able to hear unless you be quickened; a dead heart may hear a thousand Sermons, but what doth it work upon them? Even as good as nothing; if Paul or Apollos, or an Angel from heaven should preach to us, unless God quicken us, all is nothing; nay, Christ tells us, that his own Ministry, and Johns Ministry, there were not two such in all the world again, yet how dead and fruitless were they? Whereunto shall I liken this generation? &c. Mat. 11:16. &c. the meaning is this, John the Baptist he came mourning and in a doleful manner, fasting and afflicting himself, and crying out Repent; he mourned but none would relent; Christ he came piping, he came in another manner, he came eating and drinking, and he preached gracious things, the Kingdom of God and the acceptable year of our Lord; now saith he, you have not danced, all these things have not affected your hearts a jot, you are as blockish as if you had no Ministry at all; as Christ saith, Mat. 8:22, let the dead bury their dead; what doth he mean by that? He means those that are dead in their souls; those that are dead in their spirits and souls, they are fit for dead employments and nothing else; the coherence was this, there was a man came to Christ, and was willing it seems to be the Disciple of Christ; but oh saith he, first I pray thee, let me go and bury my father; bury thy father? Saith he, any man may serve for that, let the dead bury their dead, those that are fit for nothing else may do that; but if thy heart be alive, thou art fit for me, thou art fit for spiritual employments; but when a man hath a dead heart he is fit for nothing; as Christ, he gave the bag to Judas, he was the fittest man for that; so let a man be in office, if he be dead, he hath no heart to punish sin, no not so much as to use his faithful endeavor to root it out; nay, he will pull down the guilt of the sins of

the parish upon his own soul, rather than he will stickle a little for God, Judge. 4:8, how backward was Barak to go against the enemies of the Lord? If you will go, I will go, saith he to Deborah, otherwise he had no heart to go; so Esther, how dull was she to stand for the Church of God? She would let the Church be ruinated rather than she would go and speak to the King in the behalf thereof, but that Mordecai stirred her up soundly; now is not this a sufficient motive to stir us up to labor for quickening? How can we do the things God calls for from day today? We should stand for him, and call upon him, and set up his worship in our families; we should fear his name, and set him before our eyes, and fight against sin, and labor to please him in all our ways; now without being quickened we are fit for none of these things; now what a woeful thing is it when we shall not be furnished to every good work as we should, and fitted to do that which God requires of us; therefore let us shake off this dullness and blockishness of spirit.

Thirdly, Another motive is this, we can have no true sign at all to our souls, that we have any true grace at all as long as we are dead; when Christ is said to give a man grace, he is said to quicken a man, Joh. 5:21, conversion is called the life of the dead; a man's repentance is no better than the repentance of a reprobate, unless it be repentance from dead works, and repentance unto life; if a man hath faith, it is not the faith of God's elect if it doth not quicken him, I live by faith, saith Paul, Gal. 2:20, justification is communicated only to a man that is quickened; God together with justification doth quicken a man, he doth revive him and make him alive towards God; nay, we have no argument that we have our sins forgiven us, unless God hath quickened us, Col. 2:13, he hath quickened them, having forgiven them all trespasses; when God forgives the trespasses of his people, he doth quicken them, he takes away the dullness of their hearts, and the blockishness of their minds, and the senselessness of their

consciences, and their awkness and untowardness to that which is good; he doth quicken them up; every man hath life, for we see how lively men are in seeking after their profits and pleasures, people have life enough, but it is upon things here below; and they have affections enough, love enough, and hope enough, and joy and delight enough in the world, but they are set upon carnal things; but if grace comes into the heart, it is the vigor of the heart; now as long as we are dead and dull, what sign of grace can we have? If we have grace, yet we cannot have any proof and comfort of it as long as we are drowsy and dull; 'tis true, no man can have any grace but he hath some life; but if he doth not quicken up himself, he hinders himself of the peace and comfort that otherwise he might have; hence it is that the conscience is troubled, and people are unsettled, and are so full of fears to die; hence it is that people are so like to the sea, the waves whereof cannot rest; their minds are unquiet and unsettled; it is for want of quickening, if we were quickened we should have great peace come into our souls.

Fourthly, We cannot grow in grace unless we are quickened; as long as we are thus dull and heavy and lumpish to the things that are good, we cannot grow in grace. Hos. 14:7, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; first they shall revive, and then grow; first God quickens a man, and then he makes him grow; the Philippians love was dead to Paul, afterwards it quickened again; now saith he, your love flourisheth, Phil. 4:10, now their hearts were quickened, it began to grow; but when a man hath a dead heart, how can he grow? As he said, Joh. 15:4, can the branch bear fruit without the vine? So may I say, can a man's heart grow in goodness without life? It is only a living creature that can grow; if a plant be once dead, it withers away and cannot grow; if a man have a dead heart, though he should hear lectures and sermons every day, he would never grow, he would be never the more holy, never the more godly; if he should have

family prayer, closet prayer, yet if he should be dead, he should have never the more ability against his temptations; though the ordinances of God be admirable helps to growing, yet if a man be dead and dull, they will never help him to grow in grace; though grace be of a growing nature, yet a dead heart starves all the graces that a man hath.

Fifthly, Another motive is this, as long as we are dead, we shall be so far from growing, that we shall be hardly able to keep our own, Rev. 3:2, strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die; as who should say, thou art so far from growing, that the good things that are in thee are even ready to die; thou wilt lose that very good that is in thee if thou dost not shake off this deadness and carelessness, and heartlessness to that which is good; as it is with a man that hath a consumption upon his body, he is so far from growing that he rather pines away, he waxeth more and more faint, and groweth deader, and waxeth nearer to his end, he pines away; so when a man is dead, (though not quite dead) his heart is deadened, he doth pine away; as the Prophet saith, Ezek. 33:10, if we pine away, how shall we do? Yet thus it is, if a man hath a dead heart he doth pine away; I, and again, how is it possible for a man whose heart is dead to prayer, and he hath no affections to that which is good? If there be any opportunity to that which is good, he hangs off; how can this man do otherwise but wax worse and worse? For he wants that which should work out sin; if it be a springing water, it will work out the mud; but if it be a standing water, it will grow thicker and thicker, and will be noisome; so if the body be alive, though it be never so full of ill humors, if it be lively, nature will work them out; but if the pangs of death be upon a man, every disease and distemper gets the victory, his nature cannot work it out now; so it is with a man that hath a dead heart, he cannot work out the corruption that daily bubbles up in his heart; as Eli, though he had never so many corruptions, he had no heart to root

them out; 'tis true, he reprov'd his sons, but it was to no purpose, as good never a whit as never the better; so when Solomon was grown dead, and had lost his former life of grace, afterwards when corruption grew in his heart, he could not work it out; for when God had chosen Jeroboam to be put in his room, though Solomon knew that it was of God, and he set him up to be King, yet he could not work out this corruption, but his heart to his dying day rose up against Jeroboam, and he sought to kill him; he wanted the life of grace he had before, and sin got up, and he could not work it out soundly to his dying day. Now is not this a most grievous thing? The very consideration of this, how should it provoke us to shake off this deadness? Can that body do well that hath lost his expulsive faculty? When distempers arise it cannot expel them, it must needs be the destruction of the body; so when the life of the soul is either in part or wholly taken away, how can he work out his corruptions and distempers that daily arise in him? We have need of grace, and life, and quickening; we are tempted every day, and the corruptions that dwell in us, are ever boiling up. Now if we have not the expulsive faculty to purge them out, the heart must needs be in a woeful condition.

Sixthly, This sin of deadness, in some sense, is worse than any other sin, and that in six respects.

First, Other sins, for the most part, are in one part of a man; as drunkenness is in the appetite, and covetousness is in the concupiscible faculty, and pride and ostentation is in the heart, and ignorance is in the mind; but deadness is in all the whole man; as it is with a languishing disease; other diseases, one may be in the head, another in the neck, another in the back; but a Consumption runs over all the whole man; So it is with deadness; as it was with the Church of Laodicea; when they were grown dead and careless, he

chargeth them that they were dead all over; Thou art poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked; this heaps all miseries upon a man; such a man is like unto Judah, From the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, there was no sound part, Isa. 1:6. It is a general disease; it is like the deluge that drowned the whole world, it drowns the whole man; I confess drunkenness, and adultery, and such particular sins, may kill and damn a man; but I say by accident, deadness is worse than they; 'tis true, drunkenness, and adultery, and profaneness are worse; but why are they worse but because they have this deadness too? But if they could be taken alone, and a man might have a living heart towards God otherwise, they should not be worse than deadness.

Secondly, Other sins are against one commandment of God, or two, or so; but this deadness is against all the commandments of God; it is a sin against prayer, for we should pray with life; it is a sin against hearing, for we should hear with life; it is a sin against the Sabbath, for we should keep it with delight; it is a sin against all the Ordinances of God, for we should come to them all with life and affection. Suppose a servant, his Master should bid him do a thing; he bids him go to one place, he goes to another; he goes and drinks, and swills; another servant he goes about that his Mr. bids him, but whatsoever his Mr. bids him do, he goes about it slothfully, and by halves; this servant is a worse servant then the other why? Because this servant offends in all the business he hath to do whatsoever his Mr. sets him about, he mars it, and doth it to halves: So deadness of heart it disables a man to every duty, to whatsoever God requires of a man; and this is one of the reasons why he that breaks one of the commandments of God, is said to break them all, Jam. 2:10,11. Why? Because he deads his heart, a man that gives way to sin against any one commandment, deads his heart to all; and so by reason of that deadness, he becomes guilty of all.

Thirdly, Other sins are not so deep in the soul; but this deadness is deeper then all; a man will be willinger to lay down any in then deadness, and to take up any duty then quickening; a man had rather do anything, if he may do it without life: if the bare hearing, praying, and profession will serve turn, maybe he will do that; but to do all with life this the heart is loath to come to; when it comes to lay out all the strength and vigor of the whole man upon God, the heart cannot abide this. Judah was content to turn to God; but to do it with life, this they would not do, Jer. 3:10. Treacherous Judah hath not turned to me with the whole heart, &c. He doth not deny but they turned unto him; but they would not do it with their whole heart, with life, with all their power and strength; thus they did not turn unto him. As it was with the Ruler in the Gospel, he was content to observe the commandments of God, not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to swear; All these have I observed from my youth, saith he; but when Christ came to call for life, that he should sell all, forsake all, and follow him. That is the life of a man, the soul and heart of a man must be put forth; he was sad at that saying: So Laodicea was content to do anything; the spirit of God layeth nothing to her charge, he chargeth her with no particular sin, but lukewarmness only; she would do anything; but to be fervent and zealous in it, to lay out her strength for God, that she would not do; so that we had need to take heed of deadness of all other sins it is a deep sin, and is the harder to be gotten out; and the harder it is to be gotten out, the more pains is to be taken.

Fourthly, other sins may be but acts; as a man may be drunk, but he may not have the habit of drunkenness; as Noah was drunk, but he was not a drunkard; we see David committed adultery, but he had not the habit of adultery; but deadness is an habit, Eph. 2:1. Now when a man leaves sin in a dead manner, he leaves it, but his affections are not crucified to it; he doth good duties, but he is dead

to them; this man comes near to the estate of sin: now an estate of sin is worse than any particular act of sin.

Fifthly, Other sins are the first death of the soul; we are all under trespasses and sins, Rom. 5. Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. We are all by nature the children of wrath; we were all once dead, but now, if after we are Christians, we grow dead again, we grow twice dead; of all sins we should take heed of deadness, for that causeth the second death; not the second death of damnation, but of being dead after a man hath been quickened; as Saint Jude speaks ver. 12, twice dead; so we are twice dead. Now other sins do make a man but once dead; but after the Gospel hath come among us, and hath stirred up our hearts, and quickened us in some measure, if we grow remiss and dead, and cold again, we are twice dead, or at least grow and tend that way, and so our estate is more dangerous; therefore how should we take heed of this!

Lastly, Other sins, though God threatens hell and damnation against them, yet more specially against deadness; did you ever hear of a more special threatening then that 2 Thess. 2:10,11,12, when men do not receive the truth in the love of it. He doth not say, When they do not receive it, but When they do not receive it with affection, with all their hearts. You may see there how terribly God threatens, when we do not receive the truth in the love of it; we do not love God's Word; we do not love prayer, and his ordinances; we do not love the communion of Saints; we do not love obedience to God's truth; this is a most woeful thing; though we do receive it, yet if we do not receive it in the love of it, see there what he saith; For this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they might all be damned, &c. So when Ephesus lest her first love, God threatened to remove the candlestick, Rev. 2:4,5. When Laodicea was grown cold and careless, and of a middle temper, God's threatens to

spit her out of his mouth, Rev. 3:16. When Eli was grown cold and remiss, and wanted zeal and life to stand for him, see how terribly God threatens him, I will do a thing that whosoever hears it, both his ears shall tingle, 1 Sam 3:11. Nay, saith he, I will judge his house forever for this thing, v. 13. What remains then, but that we should with all our might, and all care and diligence, even set to both our shoulders for the casting off this sin of deadness, that if it be possible, we may come to be quickened, and serve God as we ought to do, and follow his heavenly Kingdom with eagerness, that none of these things we have spoken may befall us.

Consider first, we have life, and why may not God have it? He hath breathed into our souls the breath of life; in him we live, move, and have our being; he hath given unto us all life and breath; and if we have life, why may not God have it? If he hath given us affections, why should they not be given to him again? If he hath given us thoughts, why should we not bestow them upon him? If he hath given us dispositions and inclinations, why should they not be set upon him? The Rivers that come from the sea, return to the sea again. It is said of the Macedonians, that they did yield themselves to the Lord, 2 Cor. 8:5. So we should yield ourselves to the Lord; if God did ask anything that were not in us, it were another matter; if we had no thoughts and affections; if we had no heart and inclinations; then no wonder thought we did not give him them; but when we have them, why should not he have them? All things are of him; therefore let all things be to him; shall our lusts have our thoughts, and not God? Shall the world carry away our minds, and not God? That is against reason.

Secondly, Consider that all the world is alive in their own courses; let Christians be alive in theirs; as the Prophet speaks, Micah 4:5. Every man walks in the name of his god, let us walk in the name of our

God. So I say, every man follows his god; those that have their belly for their god, all their mind and affections run that way; those that have their pleasure for their god, and their profit for their god, how eager are they after these things? As one saith, the world is like the Ant; poor little creatures, they go carrying of straws after their manner, and are so busy; so it is with the world; what a deal of drudging up and down, and going this way and that way is there in the world? One for one thing, another for another; one for his Mammon, another for the lusts of his flesh, and the pride of life; men are busy and stirring, everyone is setting forward; why should not we be as forward in our way? If we be Christians, and the servants of God, why should not we bestir ourselves for him? The Devil himself is a spirit, and is working and busy, as himself saith, Job. 2:2. Then let us walk up and down, and bestir ourselves this way, and that way, and every way for God, and be as active and agile for him; let us consider how the poor prisoners in Ludgate beg for a token, what eagerness they use, that though a man had no mind, yet their importunity will make him give them something; and shall not we beg earnestly of God to pardon our sins, and quicken us, and humble us for our deadness, and for the time to come, to make us earnest for the Kingdom to come; if men be so earnest for babbles, how earnest should we be for these precious jewels?

Thirdly, Consider the worth of these things, the worth of the Kingdom of Heaven, the worth of eternal life, the worth of the Gospel, the worth of prayer and all God's holy Ordinances; are they such poor beggarly trifles, that we follow them with such a slender pursuit? Are they such beggarly commodities that they are not worth the looking after? Certainly Heaven may justly challenge our best desires, our best affections, our best pains and endeavors, and the best and flower of all our parts and learning, as the Church saith, Cant. 7:9. My beloved is sweet; so our beloved is sweet; sweet things

go down pleasantly; so how should the word be, and prayer be? How sweet should all the things of our beloved be? They should go sweetly down, nothing should delight us more. When Solomon set up his Throne, it is said that he laid out the best gold upon it; so if we would have the crown of life, we must lay out our best parts, and affections, and endeavors upon it; how sweet should the calling upon God, and the going to God's house be? What a shame is it, that when such heavenly things, such precious jewels are to be had, people will not come to them, whereas these things should be the sweetest things in the world? If we were careful of the good of our souls, and were affected with Heaven and heavenly things, as we ought to be, we should be tender of this; how should we take heed of pride, and covetousness, and anything that should hinder us of so great salvation?

Fourthly, Consider, if we be quickened, nothing will be hard; all the difficulty of Religion is over, if a man be quickened; for nothing is hard to a willing mind, when a man's heart and soul is set upon it; nothing is hard, as the Apostle saith, to him that loves God, His commandments are not grievous; all the difficulty, that we cannot pray, and hold our hearts to the Word, and overcome our corruptions, all lieth in the deadness of our hearts; if we would have mastery over our corruptions, if our hearts be dead, we must look for the more toil, as Solomon saith, If the iron be blunt, if a man doth not sharpen the edge, he had need put the more strength to it, Eccles. 10:10. So when a man's heart is dull and dead, there is the more difficulty in the overcoming of any lust, in the doing of any good duty, everything comes hardly off. Now when a man's heart is quickened, it is like oil to the wheel, it makes it go easy; when a man's heart is quickened up towards God, what is it but that man can do?

Fifthly, Consider, If we be quickened, we shall have a great deal of peace, and joy, and comfort. I may say as the Church in another case, Revive us again, O Lord, and we shall rejoice in thee, Psal. 85:6. So I say, if we were revived, if God did quicken our hearts, if we were earnest with him to do it, and we could once attain unto it, we should rejoice in God; those that follow God with an earnest heart; they have those joys, which no other can intermeddle with; God gives them unknown comfort, unknown peace, and unknown support; the more a man follows after God, the more he shall partake of God, a man shall have joy unspeakable and glorious.

Sixthly, We should make all heaven to rejoice; when the Father had his prodigal Son come to him, that was before dead, and was now alive, saith he, It is meet we should be glad, Luke 15:32. So when any poor creature that was dead before to all goodness, is now made alive, and is quickened up in all the ways of God, it is even meet that there should be mirth in Heaven, that the Angels in Heaven should rejoice; whereas if a man go on in God's service dully and blockishly, it is as vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, and the heavens are sad over us.

Seventhly, If we were quickened, we should not only do ourselves good, but we should do others good too; we should be earnest to do it; there is an excellent place for this in the story of David; David being marvelously quickened, just as he came from Gath, there met him 400 poor destitute and afflicted men, and presently he made the 34 Psalm, wherein he saith, O come and taste and see how good the Lord is; blessed are they that trust in the Lord: presently he calls upon them to be quickened also. So Paul, when he was quickened up himself, though he were before the Judge, and went upon life and death, yet he regarded not that, but he labored to quicken Agrippa too, insomuch that he made him to cry out, Thou persuadest me

almost to become a Christian; and he would not leave him there, but saith he, I would not that thou only, but that all that do hear me this day, were not only almost, but altogether such as I am, excepting these bonds: O, thought he, that all this company were but acquainted with that I feel and find; a quickened heart will labor and strive to do good unto others.

SERMON XXI.

Watch therefore and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die, &c. - REVEL. 3:2.

We told you this Epistle contained three things. First, a Reproof of the most of them in that Church for their grievous sins. Secondly, a Remedy to cure them of those sins. Thirdly, A Commendation of certain virtues in those persons that were not carried away with the iniquities of those times. The Reproof we have spoken of already; and now we are come to the second part, and that is the Remedy; for when Christ doth reprove them, he doth it not for ill will, but for their good; and therefore he gives them good directions. The Remedies he gives this Church are five.

The first is, Be watchful, as who should say, This is the reason you go down the wind, and want life, and are dead and dull in Religion, because you are not watchful.

The second Direction is, Strengthen the things that remain: as who should say, if you would be careful to fortify those good things that are in you, you may stand out against these temptations; a little grace will go a great way if it be well managed. Now he doth urge this direction three ways. First, because these things they have are but remainders; they had a great deal more once. Strengthen the things that do remain; as who should say, all is even almost quite gone; you had a great deal more zeal and forwardness; but what you have now, is but the remainders and the leavings; therefore it is high time to look about you.

Secondly, Because even those remainders were almost gone too, Strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die; as who should say, they will be gone too, if you bestir not yourselves, and look well to your estates and conditions.

Thirdly, Because thy works are not perfect; they are nothing else almost but hypocritical and unsound, I have not found thy works perfect before God.

The third Remedy is, Remember how thou hast received and heard, &c. as who should say, consider how thou hast been formerly; consider how the Word hath been delivered, and how thou hast received it.

The fourth Remedy is, Hold fast; as who should say, labor to get up again, and hold fast, that the Devil, and the world, and the temptations to sin; may not get away the good things that are in thee, that they may not spoil thee of the good things of God, and of the hope of eternal life.

The fifth Remedy is, Repent; that is, bewail thyself, and lament thy unfruitfulness, and unwatchfulness, and carelessness this way, and humble thyself before Almighty God; thou mayst yet have mercy; when a man doth confess his sins, God is just to forgive them, and is ready to vouchsafe mercy and quickening, and comfort; therefore repent, saith he.

Well then, the first remedy is to be watchful; to watch, is to be attentive, to be considerative, to look what may do a man good and what may do a man hurt, that he may thereafter carry himself; it is for a man to have his eyes in his head, to have his wits about him for spiritual things: This is the subject of it, it is properly in the mind, and in the heart; it is a Metaphor taken from the body; for the body

when it is asleep, the senses are locked up; the eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear, they are all wrapped up, they are not lively and operative; but when the body is awake, the senses are all open, the eye can see, and the ear hear, and the senses are ready for every Object; from hence it is derived to the souls of men, they may be said to sleep or watch; for when the soul is careless and negligent towards a thing, may be dangers are towards a man, and he doth not fear them, nor study to prevent them; maybe there is a great deal of good coming towards the soul, and he goes drowsily about it the soul now is said to be asleep; but when the soul looks seriously and consideratively about things, then it is said to watch; so that there is a sleep of the soul, and a watch of the soul, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Thes. 5:6. So that this watchfulness is nothing else but the active prudence of the soul, whereby it stirs up all the faculties to look about, that if any good be towards it, it may get it; if any danger be towards it, it may abhor it; this is the watchfulness here spoken of; for this drowsiness and sleepiness is a part of the corruption of our natures, whereby we are marvelous careless of God and eternal life, that though we be in the gall of bitterness, and by nature the children of wrath, yet this is the corruption of our nature, to look sleepily upon this, that danger may be upon us, and we never observe it; and though there be eternal life to be had, yet we are as it were asleep, we do not study how to attain it; though there be misery insupportable, and unspeakable, and sure and certain to fall upon us, unless we be delivered; yet we do not think of these things, we have no fear at all, or else our hearts are drowsy, and are content to make anything serve the turn. Now when the soul is roused up, and made to have a due consideration of these things, now it is awakened, now it is watchful.

The Point we observe from hence it this, That it is an excellent and sovereign thing for a Christian to watch; and therefore Christ

commends it to his disciples, and commends it to all people to the end of the world, Mark 13:37. That which I say unto you, I say unto all, watch. Now it is good to watch in five respects.

First, In regard of ourselves; for our own selves are false unto ourselves; if we be godly men and women, we are two selves; we have a bad self, whereby we are apt to be proud, and carnal, and ungodly in all our ways, and to forget God; and we have a good self, that is better minded. Now it is an excellent thing, when this good self shall watch over this bad self, and have an eye to it; as if a man had a pilfering servant in his family, would he not watch him, and eye him? Would he not watch him what money he had in his house, and observe what is in his house from day today? So we having such a deceitful self about us, we had need to watch continually, as the Apostle speaks, 2 John. 8. Look to these, that we lose not those things, &c. As who should say, you will lose the benefit of all the good things that are in you, if you do not look to them? There is a thief in thy bosom, a deceiver that will steal and cozen thee of all, if thou look not to it.

And here first we should watch our own hearts; for our own hearts are deceitful, as the Prophet speaks, The heart is deceitful above all things, Jerem. 17:9 It is very sly; and how easily doth it deceive us, and carry us aside? Therefore we had need watch over it, as the wise man saith, Prov. 4:23. Keep thy heart with all diligence. If a man were to ride upon a wild horse, would he not have a care to keep the bridle? Would he let the bridle go? Then he would run away and he should hardly catch him again; his business will be hindered and his time spent; so it is here, a man's heart is like a wild Colt, like an untamed Heifer, if a man let it go; a man had need always to have the bridle in his hand; if a man do not watch it and observe it, and hold it in, it will run away, and a man cannot catch it again; as a man that is

ringing a bell, if he let the rope go, he cannot readily get hold of it again; so a man's heart is slippery, therefore a man had need ever to be watching of it.

Secondly, We had need watch our thoughts? What slippery things are our thoughts if they be upon that which is good? Will they be long there? They are now there, now gone again; therefore how careful should we be to hold our thoughts to that which is good? The thoughts are so loose and fickle, and inconstant, and uncertain, that though they be on good things for a minute of an hour, they will be ten times as long upon vain things; there is no trusting of our thoughts, we need not say as David of the men of Keilah, will they deliver me to Saul? Will the lusts of my heart deliver me to Satan? Nay, they will deliver us, if we watch not over ourselves.

Thirdly, We should watch over our affections; they are admirable things, if we set them upon the things that are above, and be watchful to keep them there; what admirable advantages are they? They are the wings of the soul to help us in prayer and any good duty we go about; they will wipe away the difficulties of the ways of God; but they are marvelous uncertain things, that if we be not always looking to ourselves, though our joys and delights, &c. be upon heaven and heavenly things, they will run upon the world again and lose themselves there, so that our affections had need to be looked unto.

Fourthly, The Conscience had need to be looked unto; for though the Conscience be the best part of a man, yet it will flatter us and speak peace to us if we look not to it, where is no peace, and will check us very carelessly, and will not hold forth our duties nakedly, if we do not watch over it.

Fifthly, So again, We should set a watch over our tongues, over our very words that we speak; as David saith, I will set a watch before the

door of my lips, Psa. 141:3, when a man speaks his words, it is as if he should bend his bow to shoot; now when a man bends his bow to shoot, he had need level well, or else he will not hit the mark; so if we be not watchful over the words we speak, we shall speak vainly, and to God's dishonor; therefore saith Solomon, he that keeps his mouth, keeps his own soul; he that watcheth over his lips that he may not offend, watcheth over his own soul.

Secondly, It is good to watch in regard of the world, for the world will get in, and undo us if we take not heed, when we are about our callings, when as we let our eyes look upon our wares and commodities, upon our barns or our Cattle, or the like; whatsoever comes into our eye is apt to poison us, and whatsoever we see or touch, or handle is apt to do us mischief; how many thousands are carried away by their eyes, by what comes into their senses? As Amaziah cried out, 2 Chron. 25:9. What shall I do for the hundred talents? He could not lose an hundred talents, but his eyes were marvelous eager after them, they were a stumbling block to him, he could not go so freely about the commandments of God for fear he should lose them: Demetrius having comings in by his calling, when the word of God showed what an unwarrantable calling he had, he had rather put off the word of God than his calling; O saith he, by this calling we have our gain: So powerful is the world over men, that it can keep men in unwarrantable courses; the world winds into men and makes their affections earthly; how many thousands are there that can hardly find any competent time to serve God as they are so taken up with the world when they come to the Ordinances of God; their hearts are so spent upon the world, that the Ordinances cannot work upon them; therefore had not a man need to watch over himself? As a man that eats fish may choke himself if he take not heed; so our Savior tells us, that the cares of this world are choking things; a man had need be careful how he speaks of the world, and

thinks of the world, for fear he be made listless and heartless to the things of God; this is the reason why people have no more heart for heaven, because they do not watch against the world, the world poisons and chokes them. Let a man have never so sweet dispositions, and be never so awakened and startled, yet if he give way to the world, and the things of the world, his heart will be taken off again from these things.

Thirdly, It is good to watch in regard of the Devil, in regard of Satan; it is the Apostles own exhortation, 1 Pet. 5:8, be vigilant and sober; for your adversary the Devil goeth up and down like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour.

Consider first what a subtle enemy he is; if a man were to deal with a subtle enemy, he would watch and have a care of himself, lest he should have advantage against him; he would think with himself, There is some mischief intended towards me; he would look to all his ways, lest a snare should be laid for him; when David knew that Saul dealt subtly with him, you see how he looked to himself, he scouted everywhere, that Saul could come nowhere but David looked to himself; he was very careful of himself, so that Saul saith, I hear he deals subtly: So it were good that the Devil heard that we dealt subtly; for he deals subtly with us, and collogues, and colors, and varnisheth; in matters of evil, he sets the best side outward; and in matters of good, the worst side outwards; if any good be to be done, he labors to make a man dead in the doing of it; if anything be sinful he hides the danger of it, and shows a man nothing but the pleasure and delight and profit of it, and a man shall see nothing else almost; the Devil is so subtle that he knows what we delight in, and where he may have us; he knows what sins we are prone to, and where he may get us; he knows what will hit our humor best, he knows what will like us best; there was but one passage wherein Peter was naked, and

the Devil caught him there; if he had taken any other course, a hundred to one but he had withstood him; he seeth where the water is low, and there he leaps over; therefore how careful should we be when he is so subtle?

Secondly, Consider how diligent he is; he is ever trudging up and down from place to place; as Saul hunted David up and down Town and Country, so the Devil hunts up and down; all places are full of him, the streets, the market, the house, the fields, our beds and closets, our Pulpits; wheresoever we are, he will be sure to be there too; he is diligent to follow us everywhere; now if we do not watch we shall be caught by him; we may say of Satan in some sense, as David of the spirit of God, whether shall I go from thy spirit, and whether shall I flee from thy presence? &c. so, whether shall we go from Satan? We can go nowhere but he will follow us; he is as busy as a fly about a bald head; though they be beaten off again and again, yet they will come again; though our Savior Christ beat him off, yet he comes again and again, and hath more and more flings at him; nay, he set Peter to tempt Christ: He rangeth over all the earth, therefore we had need watch.

Thirdly, Consider his strength; he is a strong enemy, he is the strong man, Mat. 12:29. 'Tis true, notwithstanding all his strength, he cannot force us to sin; he can but say as he did to Christ, cast thyself down; he can but say lie, and covet, &c. he cannot force a man; nay, whatsoever he puts into us, it is not a sin if we give not way to it; a man may put it out again if he will; he did but provoke David to number the people, he might have resisted it; he cannot force a man; but yet he is a strong enemy, and comes with fiery darts; and he is strong in regard of our lusts and corruptions that are so strong; there lies the Devils strength; he hath that in our own bosoms that is so mightily on his side; therefore we had need to watch.

Fourthly, Again, Consider the malice of this enemy; he is the enemy that doth it, as the Apostle Peter saith, your adversary the Devil; he is an adversary <H&G>, his temptations may be overthrown, but his malice can never be overthrown; a man can never make his peace with him, so long as he lives in this world; he is like a frenzy man, as 'tis said, he is full of wrath, knowing his time is short.

Fifthly, Again, Consider the Devil hath nothing else to do; if the enemy had something else to do, a man might be the less careful; as it was a comfort to David that Saul had something else to do; when Saul was on one side of the mountain, David on the other, because he had something else to do, the Philistines invaded his land, this took him away; but the Devil hath nothing to employ his time about, but only to watch to do mischief; therefore we had need be wondrous watchful over ourselves.

Fourthly, It is good to watch in regard of the wicked, the Devils instruments; and where shall we not meet with them? We must go out of the world, if we will go where they are not; they are everywhere: Now if we do not watch, it is impossible for us to walk up and down in the world, but we shall be surprised and learn their works; how many thousands are poisoned with the errors of the wicked for want of watchfulness? The Galatians, if they had watched, they had never been drawn from the truth; so for practical errors, how many cursed principles get into men's hearts and appear in their lives? That such kind of Religion is good Religion; that such kind of faith is good faith; they have abundance of cursed principles: Now if we look not to ourselves, how shall we be carried away, as the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 3:17, so may be thou art in a wicked family, as Lot in Sodom; now I say it is impossible for thee to stand in such a place, but thou shalt be hooked in, in an horrible manner; the Apostle puts a chiefly upon the Saints in Caesar's house, Phil. 4:22,

chiefly those that are of Caesar's household; it is a wonder of wonders there should be Saints in Caesar's house; it is impossible for a man to be among the wicked, to have wicked neighbors and companions, but he shall be drawn away by them, if he be not watchful over his own soul.

Fifthly, It is good to watch in regard of good things. I speak to the Saints of God.

First, It is good to watch in regard of our graces; look what grace a man hath, it is as a precious jewel, and thou mayst lose it if thou be not watchful; thou mayst lose a great deal of faith, and quickening, and heavenly mindedness, or any good that is in thee, thou mayst lose a great deal of it, if thou look not well to it: As a sheep that hath a great deal of wool, if she go among briars and thorns, how soon may a great deal of it be torn off? So a poor creature that walks in the world among so many briars and thorns, among so many temptations, he may have all good things rent away if he look not to it; if a man had a great deal of money in his purse, and were among cutpurses and cheaters, would not a man have an eye about him? It is said of a godly one, 1 John 5:18, he keeps himself, &c. he looks what he hath and carries about him, that he may not lose it.

Again, We should watch our graces, to increase our graces, and strengthen them; watchfulness is an excellent thing to strengthen grace; as it is in the Text, watch, and strengthen the things that remain; whereas if a man do not watch, his graces will die and decay, every temptation will overcome him; now we have need of more grace, though we be mortified, and lively, and fear God, and regard his name, and are humble, &c. yet we had need be more humble, and more vile in our own eyes; now, how can we have this unless we be watchful? The Apostle therefore when he had called upon Christians

to be watchful, in the next words saith he, grow in grace, 2 Pet. 3:18, for if a man be watchful, it is the way to grow.

Thirdly, We should watch our graces that we may work with them, and exercise them, and improve them upon all occasions, we should watch all opportunities to occupy with our talents; it is said that God will have his people to seek good, Amos. 5:14, to seek how to do good from day today; so we should watch all opportunities to do good, and to stand for God, and glorify his name, and adorn the Gospel that we profess; opportunities do not come so often, we had need take them when they come, they are precious things; now if we do not watch, God will many times tender us these things, and we shall have no heart to them.

Secondly, It is good to watch all good duties; What is the reason that people pray no better, hear no better, draw near to God's table and partake of the Sacrament no better, they get no power against sin, no power against corruption? It is because they do these things without watchfulness, Mat. 26:41. Christ saith, watch unto prayer; we must be watchful if we will get good by the Ordinances of God.

First, We should watch before the duty; when we are going to prayer, and going to God's courts, we should be watchful; a prudent man looks well to his goings, Prov. 14:15, wheresoever he goeth he looks well about him, that he may observe all circumstances; how many thousand lets and impediments are there? Which if a man take not off aforehand he cannot perform the duty aright; if we had been watchful we might have done the duty better a great deal.

Secondly, We should be watchful in the duty; when we call upon God, we should take heed how we come into his presence; when we hear the Word, we should be careful that we be not carried away with vile thoughts, nor suffer anything to attempt us when we are about

any good duty; the Devil will be about us to interrupt us, therefore we had need be watchful against him.

Again, We should watch after the duty, that we may not lose the fruit and benefit of it; most people when they have been at the Ordinances of God, are as if they had not been there; when they have been at prayer, as far from power against sin, and drawing mercy down from heaven, as if they had never been down upon their knees.

Thirdly, It is good to watch in regard of God.

First, Sometimes God comes with motions, and draws nearer to us then he doth at other times; therefore now we had need take hold of them, Isa. 55:6, call ye upon him while he is near; as who should say, sometimes God is nearer then at other times; O now have your eyes in your heads, and let not God go, but make use of this; if ever God speaks to our souls, or open our eyes, let us make use of these things, and be up and a doing, lest they slip away from us.

Secondly, Sometimes God doth extraordinarily help us, and give us extraordinary favors; let us watch those favors, for then the Devil is most busy; when God doth any notable thing for us, when he gives us peace, or joy, or comforts or power against sin, or whatsoever it be, then Satan is most busy; so soon as Christ had that extraordinary favor from his Father, to be owned from heaven before all the standers by, This is my beloved son &c. The next news we hear of, he had a terrible assault by Satan; when God had showed great favor to Saint Paul, in rapturing him up into the third Heaven, the next thing he met with, was Satan to buffet him.

Thirdly, Sometime God doth punish us and afflict us: now how should we watch to get good by our afflictions? This is the reason

that afflictions, and crosses, and distresses are so often among us, and do no good; it is for want of watchfulness.

Is it so that it is good to watch? Then how may we lament the horrible neglect of this duty? I speak not to drunkards and profane persons; no wonder though they do not watch; neither do I speak to the common sort of Christians, that content themselves with civility and fair carriage: but I speak to those that are of the better sort; how horribly is this duty laid aside? This is the reason of the want of grace, and that people go down the wind, and that there are so many Apostates and Decliners; and this is the reason that so many become very unsavory and unfruitful in their lives; the reason is because they do not watch; what drowsy thoughts have we to be delivered from the wrath of God? What lumpish, heartless care have we to do good duties? This is the reason of the vanity of our minds, and the hardness of our hearts, and that so little good is done by preaching among us, because people do not watch. When you sow your corn, you set hullers to drive away the fowls: so why do you not set up hullers, a watch over your own hearts, that so it temptations come to pick away the Word, and the benefit of it, you may resist them? How should we labor to hide the Word in our hearts, that it may do us good?

The second Use is to exhort us all to take up this duty of watchfulness, nay, to watch in all things, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 4:5, to watch in our eating and drinking, that we may not eat and drink our bane; to watch in company, that if they be good, we may get good by them; if evil, we may get no hurt from them; we should watch in good duties, for we shall meet with the Devil there too; everyone that hath the fear of God before his eyes, whatsoever grace he hath, he should watch over it; whatsoever good work he hath to do, he should watch, that he may go on in it; for watchfulness

is an helpful duty; watch and pray; it is helpful to prayer, and so for all other duties, it is a duty destined to another duty, so that we can do no other duty without watchfulness; therefore we had need to watch.

First, Consider the misery of them that do not watch, they must needs decline, and wax worse and worse; you see the Church of Sardis here for want of watchfulness grew dead, nay the very good things in her were ready to die.

Secondly, Consider the good of watchfulness; if we watch we shall be satisfied with grace; if we have grace, we shall increase it, Prov. 20:13. Slothfulness keeps a man in poverty, but he that openeth his eye shall be satisfied with bread. It is true, as in outward things, so in spiritual things; let a man be drowsy and slothful, he shall be a poor man and a beggar, and shall have nothing to show for eternal life; but if thou wilt open thine eyes, and look about thee, thou shalt be satisfied with bread, with the bread of life, with the image of God, with righteousness and holiness; the more thou watchest, the more abundantly will God bless thee.

Thirdly, Consider that men in their outward callings are watchful; the shepherds watch their flocks, and the husbandman his seasons, when to sow, and when to reap his corn; when to sell it, and when to buy it; how much more should we for the good of our souls?

Fourthly, We should consider the examples of God's Saints; David he watched, at midnight I will arise and praise thee; he would rise out of his bed in the night, and pour out his heart before God, and bless God for his goodness; he would not do it in his bed, but he would go out of his bed and do it by his bedside upon his knees; how should this stir us up to watchfulness?

Now I come to the second Remedy, and that is to strengthen the things that remain, and the rather, because they are but remainders, and ready to die, and their deeds are not perfect before God. These words are diversely interpreted by Divines; some understand them personally, Strengthen those persons that remain; as if he should say to the Angel of the Church, Thy people are generally cold and dead, and drowsy, there is hardly any life in them; now those that do remain, strengthen them, that they may be awakened, they are ready to die; there are hardly any of thy hearers that are upright and sincere before God, therefore strengthen them; thus Pareus, and many others interpret it; and this is a very good sense; for a Minister is bound to strengthen all his people, if any be drowsy, to awaken them; if any be dead, to quicken them; and the Lord complains against Ministers when they do not do thus, Ezek. 3:4. The diseased have they not strengthened, &c.

But then there is another Exposition of these words given by Divines, that understand it of things, and not of persons; and so it is in the Original, Strengthen the things that remain; that both Minister and people would strengthen the good things that were in them; for the Minister was grown weak and remiss, and the people weak in all good things: Now the Spirit calls upon the Angel of this Church, and in him upon all the Congregation, to strengthen the good things that were in them.

So that the point of Doctrine is this, that it is every Christians duty to labor that he might be strengthened, specially if he hath had more grace formerly then now he hath; it is every Christians duty to strengthen the good things that are in him.

For the opening of this word strengthen, it hath an opposition to weakness. Now there is a double weakness.

First, Of those people that are unconverted, that are weak to the resisting of sin, and doing any that is good; they have some principles in them to resist sin, and do good, but they are weak, as common illuminations, and natural conscience, and fear of wrath, and hope of Heaven, and shame of others, and the good example of others, and living under the means, and restraining grace, and the like; these things may do a great deal of good, but they are weak, and cannot make them resist sin, and do good soundly; thus unconverted people are weak. This is not properly the weakness that is opposed to strength, that he would have them get out of the weakness of unconverted people.

Therefore secondly, There is another weakness, and that is of the children of God themselves; they have weakness to resist sin, and do good; and this is twofold.

First, There is a weakness of Beginning. Secondly, of Declining.

First, In beginning; when a child of God is a beginner in grace, and is but a babe, Heb. 5:12. When for the time ye ought to be, &c. Such as are babes have need of milk, they cannot digest strong meat, they are too weak for that; as may be a new beginner hath gotten faith, but it is weak, he is not able to apprehend the promises of salvation, and the assurance of God's goodness and mercy towards him; he hath much ado to apprehend Christ himself, and uphold his heart; so a man may have some knowledge, but it is weak; and some resolutions and endeavors, but they are weak; corruptions bear him down, and his mortification is weak; he cannot master many of his heady and mighty lusts. Now such people as these are to be exhorted to strengthen these good things that God hath begun in them: Hath God begun any good things in thee? Any lively fear of his name, any hatred of evil, any love to goodness, any longing and thirsting after

righteousness, any endeavor after eternal life, any faith? Thou shouldst labor to strengthen these things, that they may abound in thee, and that they may be confirmed and established in thee, that thou mayst be made unblameable against the coming of the Lord Jesus; but this is not the meaning neither.

Secondly therefore, There is a weakness of declining, when a man hath been stronger, and now hath abated of his strength, and is grown weaker; a strong man may grow into a consumption, which may spend him away till he comes to be an Anatomy, and so is grown weak; so many Christians that have been stronger, they are now grown weak, they are grown into a consumption of graces, they are grown to be an Anatomy, to be nothing but even skin and bone; they were wont to have more faith to apprehend a promise, but now they have more doubting; they could pray strongly, but now they are faint and weak; they were powerful in every good duty, but now they are down the wind; they are like a Jack that wants winding up, they had need be wound up again; they are grown more choleric, and peevish, and pettish, and have less strength over their corruptions, and are made more ready to be drawn away. Now such persons are exhorted to strengthen these things; and the rather, because they are but remainders; you have had more grace, and have let it die and decay; therefore strengthen that which remains, and is ready to die; so that there are two parts of this Doctrine.

First, That every man should be earnest, and use all manner of holy means to strengthen himself. 'It is true, First it is every Ministers duty to labor to get strength into his people, to strengthen their understanding, and knowledge, and judgment, to strengthen them in the promises, to hold forth Jesus Christ nakedly unto them, to expound the free grace of God, that they may be strong in faith: So if a Minister sees they are weak to bear afflictions, he should labor to

support and bear them up, and pour some spirit into them, and enable them to bear: So if he find they are unable to bear temptations, he should use all arguments to piece them up that they may stand against the wiles of the Devil; a Minister hath his own strength given him of purpose to strengthen his brethren, Isa. 35:3, the Lord saith, Strengthen the weak hands, &c. He would have Ministers call upon people to get strength, and to use all means by preaching and teaching, and exhortations, to get some strength into his people; it is a Ministers duty, not only to gather Saints, but to perfect the Saints; whither should the people come but to the Minister to get strength in grace?

Secondly, It is every neighbors duty to strengthen his neighbor; Christians should strengthen one another in all manner of good duties, as coals of fire do warm and heat one another when they are together; but if they are severed, they will be dead; so Christians, when they meet together, should labor to warm, and heat, and quicken one another. Saint Paul writes to the Thessalonians to mark all the weak and feeble people among them, and to strengthen the feeble-minded, 1 Thes. 5:14.

But then thirdly, Every man should do this duty to himself, to strengthen the good things that are in him; we see all the world labors to be strong in outward things, some to be strong in riches and wealth, some to be strong at the Court, and others to strengthen themselves in their friends and alliance; as Abner labored to be strong for the house of Saul, for he knew he should be nobody if that went down; if a man have a case to defend, he will make himself as strong as he can to defend himself; if a man be to fight a battle, he will make himself as strong as he can; nay, people will strengthen themselves in their wickedness. Now if it be so; then how much more should we labor to be strong in the grace of God? If we have any good

things given us of God, we should strengthen them; as Paul saith to the Corinthians, when he saw they were babes still and were weak, and never came to strength, he calls upon them at last to strengthen themselves, 1 Cor. 16:13.

Because we can have no comfortable argument to our souls that we are true Christians except we get strength; every true Christian is a very able man as Paul saith, Phil. 4:13. I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. He was a strong man, and able to do great things; what man of a thousand can be rich, and not be proud and vain, and let his heart follow after pleasures and the things of the world? Yet a true Christian can be rich, and yet not be thus; so what man almost can be poor, and not be discontented, and repine against God, and take unlawful courses? Yet a true Christian is able to be poor, and yet not deny God, nor distrust God, nor fall a carking and caring; so likewise a true Christian can have a peevish nature, and yet not be peevish; he can have as crabbed a disposition as anybody else, and yet not be crabbed; he can have as vile a cursed nature as any man under heaven, and yet have a good disposition; he is able to do all things, as Job saith, Job 9:19. If you talk of strength, God is strong. So it is with a child of God that hath the image of God in him; if you talk of strength, he is strong; a man cannot have any true argument to his soul that he is a true Christian, unless he be strengthened to do the things of God, unless he be lifted up of God to do supernatural things; a true Christian is no weakling; a man saith, I cannot do thus and thus, it is my weakness; then thou canst not say thou art a true Christian; for a true Christian is an able man, a mighty man; nay all the graces of God's spirit are strong, that if a man hath any degree of them, he may do wonders with them, 1 John 5:4. This is our victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. He doth not say great faith, but our faith; a little faith, though but as a grain of mustard seed, is able to overcome the world; a true Christian

can overcome sin, and the world, and the Devil, and whatsoever is contrary to him; a natural man may believe in some sense, but he can nothing with his faith, it is not of the right stamp; but a true Christian he can do wonders with his faith; he can draw near to God, and cry Abba Father; he is able to purify his own heart; all things are possible to him that believeth, it is a powerful thing; Jacob had power with God, saith the Text; he is able to set himself against every lust, and go about every duty, and please God in all his ways in some measure; a little faith is strong; so love is a strong grace, it is as strong as death, Cant. 8. If a man hath but a little true love to God, it will enable him to do strange things, it will make him suffer anything, do anything, leave anything for God. Now natural people they say they love God, but it is a weak love, it cannot make them leave a lust for God, it cannot make them do anything for God, it cannot carry a man beyond nature; but all the graces of God's spirit are marvelous strong things; therefore as ever we desire to have a sign and token that we are true Christians, and have the grace of God in truth in any measure in us, we should labor to strengthen all the good things that are in us; for if we do not strengthen them, they are not of the right stamp.

Secondly, We can never do any act of new obedience unless we be strengthened, as the Lord saith to Joshua, Josh. 17. Only be thou strong, and do my commandments, &c. He would have him strong, that he might observe all the Law of God; as who should say, Joshua, thou canst never be able to observe my Law, there be mighty performances, things that flesh and blood can never reach unto; therefore unless thou hast strength, and divine strength, thou canst never be able to do this; therefore be strong, strengthen thyself, labor to have all the courage and might that may be. God bids us do nothing but he requires all the strength of the whole man, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy strength; it must

be thus; if the water man be to row with the tide and the wind, he puts forth no strength, the stream will carry the vessel; but if he be to row against wind and tide, now he must put forth all his strength, else the boat cannot go; nay, it will go the contrary way; so if we would please God, and work the work of God, and attain to his heavenly Kingdom, we must row against wind and tide, and without tugging and hailing, and putting forth a great deal of strength, we shall never do it; as suppose a man be wronged and offered an injury, he cannot be quiet an hour together, but he is abused and misused, and mocked, and opposed; now he cannot be patient unless he be strong, and have great strength to deny himself; as Col. 1:11. Be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, to all patience and long suffering with joyfulness: As who should say, if you would have patience, you must be strengthened with all might, specially if you would be patient with joy; may be a man may be patient, but then he is surly and lumpish, and all amurts may be he bears, but he is like a block or stock, he cannot joy in tribulation, he had need have a great deal of strength to do this; so if a man would pray, can he pray without a great deal of strength? It is not a little heave will lift up a man's heart to God; I lift my heart to thee; he gave a great lift to his heart; and Heb. 5:7, it is said that Christ prayed with strong cries; we cannot pray aright unless we come with strong cries and strong desires, so if a man hear the word, if it awaken him and quicken him, he will lose all again, and be as blockish as he was before, unless he be strong; we can do no good duty without strength, and therefore we had need to labor for strength.

Thirdly, We can never overcome temptations, nor make our part good against temptations without strength; nay, we cannot resist them, or combat with them, or stand in the field against them, but we shall be beaten out, and be overwhelmed if we have not strength; if we would go to heaven we shall be sure to meet with abundance of

temptations; and if temptations will put us out of the way, we shall have enough of them; if they can sway us, and make us do this and that, we shall not want temptations; if a bowl hath bias, the strength of the arm will take away that, though the bias be never so strong; as long as the strength of the arm lasts, the bias goeth according to the strength of the arm; when the strength of the arm is gone, then the bias begins to sway it: So if a man have strength, it will swallow up the bias of temptations; but when a man hath no strength, then the bias of temptations carries him away, then the world bows him, then pleasure and his natural inclination sways him this way and that way, whereas if a man had strength he might resist temptations. 1 Cor. 15:58, be steadfast, and immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord; that is, if you were strong, you would be immovable, and abound in the work of the Lord; all the world could not withdraw you from the work of the Lord; for all temptations, you would abound in good things; what infinite need have we to resist temptations? None of us can arrive at heaven, unless we be able to go through thick and thin, and a world of temptations; blessed is the man that endures temptations, he shall have enough of them; and happy is the man that can endure them, and overcome them; if we be not strong, if we have not this spiritual might, what shall become of us? If we have not strong love to the truth, we shall be hooked away from it; if we have not strong love to obedience, we shall be disobedient; if we have not strong love to the ways of God, we shall be pulled away from them by force of temptations.

Fourthly, Without strength, if we should chance to fall, we cannot get up again; what man is there that falls not? In many things, we offend all; how often doth the godly man fall into sin, through weakness and infirmity, and ignorance, and sometimes in a worse manner? Now if he have spiritual strength in him, then he may rise up again; if he hath a strong relation to God in Jesus Christ that cannot be broken,

then he may get up again; as the body; if it hath abundance of sores, and blains, and divers diseases and distempers upon it, yet as long as the strength of nature lasts it may work them out again; if you give this man Physic, as long as the strength of nature lasts, Physic may do him good, but if the strength of nature be gone, the disease will overcome him, it will be his death; so it is with a Christian, as long as there is any spiritual strength in him, it will work out corruption; if a man have strong relation to God, strong interest in Christ, strong apprehension of the evil of sin, and of the goodness of God's ways, strong fear of God, and a strong judgment, these will work out any sin and corruption; but if he hath not these, he can never get up again, as the Apostle saith, Heb. 12:12,13, lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, &c. as who should say, if you will strengthen your feeble knees, then though they be lame, they will rather be healed then turned out of the way; but if you let your feeble knees be weak still, then if you have any lameness or any distemper, you will be turned out of the way; but if you strengthen your feeble knees, when you have been lame, and have any distemper, you will rather be healed then turned out of the way: You shall see when Israel were without the true God, and were distempered, they were Idolaters, and all manner of wickedness was grown upon them; now when God would have Asa purge out these abuses, see how he calls upon him, 2 Chron. 15:7, be strong, &c. now in the words following we may see Asa did strengthen himself, and reformed all the abuses, and set up the worship of God, and went on admirably in that work, now he had gotten strength.

Lastly, If we have not strength, we can never do anything God bids us with ease; but if we have strength, we may not only do what God bids us, but do it with ease; as when a man hath a strong memory, he can get two or three leaf's by heart with ease, he hath it presently;

another that hath a weak memory, will be conning and conning it I know not how long, and as fast as he remembers one thing, he forgets another; he hath much ado to get it; so if a man have a strong judgment and understanding, though he meet with an hard word or passage, he will understand it, and pick out the meaning; whereas one of a weak understanding may be studying all the days of his life, and yet never apprehend it; so when a man hath got spiritual strength, he can do what God bids him do; and leave what God bids him leave with ease; he may pray, and humble and deny himself with ease, and lay those lusts aside, which before he had as live have parted with his blood as parted with them; when a man is strong in his love to God, and strong in the consideration of God's goodness and mercy, he can do these things with ease; my yoke is easy (saith Christ) and my burden is light; whereas to a natural man it is the heaviest yoke and burden in the world for a man to be tied to abstain from all vanity, from all vile passions, and inordinate affections, from all sinful pleasures, and covetous desires; it is a burden intolerable for a natural man, it is because of his weakness; but now a gracious heart that hath gotten spiritual strength, can do it, and do it with ease.

The first Use is to condemn those that have no strength at all, that are not capable of this Exhortation, we cannot say strengthen the good things that are in you, because they have no good things in them at all, they have nothing of saving grace and of the covenant of life wrought in them; they have nothing but the common graces, that may be in a reprobate; as Paul saith, Rom. 8:7, of the carnal mind, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be; it cannot be subject; there is no strength of grace; there is strength enough, but it is let out upon the world; may be they have strong parts and gifts, but there is no strength to this duty; to be subject to the Law of God, he is not able to do it; as Christ saith of the corrupt tree, it cannot bring

forth good fruit; it hath as much strength to suck from the earth, and to bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit, and as much fruit as a good tree but it cannot bring forth good fruit; so a natural man thinks as much, and speaks as much, and eats and drinks, and sleeps as much as a godly man doth, and goes about the business of his calling, and hears the word of God may be, and prays as often as a godly man doth, but he is not able to bring them to a good end, to do them well, he hath no strength at all as Christ saith to the Scribes and Pharisees, how can ye escape the wrath to come? They had great parts and strength in other matters, but to escape hell, and shun the wrath to come, they had no strength to do that, they were as weak as water there; what a woeful thing is this, when a man hath no strength to overcome his sins, and deny himself? When men have eyes full of Adultery, and cannot cease from sin, 2 Pet. 2:14, this is a miserable condition for a man to be in.

Secondly, This may condemn those, that though they have some good things in them, yet they do not strengthen them that are of the strain of the Church of Sardis, that let their graces die and decay, and go down the wind, and perish and consume; they suffer a consumption in their graces, rather than watch and strengthen the things that are in them; what a lamentable thing is this? Though our faith be never so weak, we are hardly able to lay hold upon one promise; and when we study to find sign of conversion in us, we can hardly find any; and yet notwithstanding people will not strengthen their faith, and other graces. Let us not deceive ourselves: if we be Christians let us show it by the strength that is in us; for if we be true Christians, we must be able Christians to do all the works of God, able to fight against our corruptions, able to do good duties, able to obey the Gospel; he that hath the least strength of true saving grace is able to be upright in all his ways, he is able to observe all the commandments of God in some measure, he is able to carry himself

uprightly against every evil way; in one word, he is able to keep all the word of God in some measure; he that hath but the least strength of grace is able to do this; as the Lord saith, Rev. 3:8, of the Church of Philadelphia, though she had but a little strength, yet she kept the very word of God; a little strength of saving grace; will make a man do more than the whole world can do; it is able to make a man reach above all the reach of nature, and all natural parts, and morality and civility, and all the fair carriages that ever were; it is able to go beyond all; there is more wisdom in the least degree of saving grace, then in all the Politicians in the world; and more knowledge in the least fool in Christ's school, then in all the wise men under heaven; I mean true saving knowledge; therefore let us not deceive ourselves, but as we desire to be able to say that we are true Christians, let us labor to strengthen all the good things that are in us, that our faith we think we have to show for heaven may be a strong faith, and that our hope may be a strong hope, that we may purify ourselves by it, and that the fear of God may be a strong fear, to make us depart from hell beneath, and so that our desires may be strong to the throne of grace, and our endeavors strong against our corruptions, and our care and conscience strong from day today to do the works of God.

The second Use is a Use of direction, what we are to do to strengthen the good things that are in us. And first, Let us labor to have all the powers of our souls strengthened by the strengthening the powers of the soul; I mean this; you know that divine operations are above nature, above the reach of the powers of our souls naturally. Now if we would be strong to do the works of God, and divine things, we must get our hearts to be raised and lifted up to a higher strain, to a sublimer pitch; as it is said of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. 17. His heart was lifted up in the ways of God. That is, his heart was strengthened to walk in the ways of God; and now his heart was lifted up; the Text shows he did great matters; he could restore the worship of God, and

make the Priests and Levites do their duties; he could do admirable things for the glory of God. Now his heart was lifted up above the reach of nature; so we should labor to have all the powers of our souls lifted up to God; we are not converted to God, unless God hath raised up our minds, and wills, and affections; as it is said, God raised up Judges to deliver Israel from their enemies: The meaning is, they were no more able to deliver them then other people; but God raised up their spirits, and lifted them up, that they were able to go about the function God had set them in: So Jer. 51:11, before God had raised up the spirits of the Medes, they were a weak people, they durst not meddle with Babylon; but when God had raised up their spirits and lifted them up to an higher pitch of courage and strength, they were not only able to go against them, but to overcome them; so before God raise up our minds to an higher pitch, we are not able to know God aright; we are not able to do good, and mortify sin, and be crucified to the world, we are not able to go about these things; but when God hath raised up our hearts, and the powers of our souls, we can then go about them; as the water is not able to boil the meat of itself; but let the fire come and raise the water to an higher pitch, to a seething quality, now it is able to boil the meat; so it is with a man's heart; therefore we should labor earnestly with God in the use of all good means, that we may get the powers of our souls raised and lifted up on high, that they may be able to reach the works of God, and attain unto them.

And first labor to have strong minds and understandings; I do not mean strong literal knowledge; for with a little of that a man may have strong love to God, and zeal to his glory, as we may see in the book of Martyrs. Elizabeth Sackwell, and Katharine Hurst, and others, they were marvelous ignorant; when they were asked what a Sacrament was, and how many there were, they could not tell, and yet were admirable Martyrs, and sealed to God's truth according to

that knowledge they had, and laid down their lives for the Gospel, though they had not this knowledge; therefore I mean not that, though that be very good; and without some literal knowledge the mind cannot be good; a man may have literal knowledge without spiritual, but not spiritual without literal; therefore it is good, but that is not it; therefore we must labor to have strong spiritual understandings, that we may understand spiritually the things of God, as David saith, Psal. 119:34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Law; as who should say, if ever any man doth sin against thy Law, it is because he doth not understand himself; therefore you see how eager he is that God would give him understanding, that he might understand his ways, and understand what his will is, that so he might do it, that he might understand it savingly, powerfully, and deliver his Law into his heart; God delivers his Law into every man's heart; but saith he, grant me thy Law graciously; he prays that God would not only deliver his Law to his understanding, but in a gracious manner; a man never sins against God, but his understanding is deceived; when we are proud, we are deceived, for we think too well of ourselves; when we are worldly, we are deceived; for we think the world is better than it is; so when we are dead to good duties, we are deceived; for we look upon God's ways and ordinances, as if they were not such admirable things; it is through the deceitfulness of our understandings that we give way to sin. Now if our understandings were strengthened, we should be fenced against the deceivableness of sin, that when the Devil comes with his delusions, and the temptations of the flesh with false colors to put us upon sin, the understanding would be strong, and see the weakness of all such reasons; every man follows reason; reason is a strong thing, and leads all the world; no man doth anything, but he hath some reason for it, the worldly man hath some, though not true reason why he is so carnal, he is afraid he shall not know how to live, therefore we should be earnest with God to strengthen our

understandings, that we may see the baseness, and beggary, and folly of all such vile reasons as these; if the understanding were sound, it were a marvelous strong thing; A wise man is strong, yea a man of knowledge increaseth strongly, Prov. 24:5. Therefore I say we should labor to have sound understandings, that God would give us to know his Word as it is, and to look upon things as they are, that the world may not seem to be otherwise then it is, and our names, and credit, or anything in the world may not seem to be more beautiful than they are, that we may look upon things in their own colors, that we may have light; if we had the light that comes from above, we should be marvelous strong; as Paul saith, Let us put on the Armor of light. So Heb. 10:32, saith he, After you were enlightened, you endured a great fight of affliction. When they had true light come into their hearts, that they durst not be impatient, then, though they had mighty afflictions upon them, they endured them, they had light come in, they could not rise up against God; if our knowledge were strong, our corruptions would be weak, our carnal hearts would be weak, we should not be so able to go against God and his commandments; I can do nothing against the truth, saith Paul; why? He had a strong light, he saw so clearly that it was the truth of God, and it was the way to be damned forever to go against it, and he saw so clearly what an admirable thing the truth was, that he could do nothing against it; as Joseph saith, How can I commit this great wickedness, &c? He had such a light, and so saw the nature of the evil, that he durst not do it for a world; the understanding is a very strong thing, see it in that which is in wicked wretches; what a deal of strength hath that little knowledge of God that is in their hearts? When a wicked man knows that his courses are of the Devil, and he is informed and reads it in the Word of God, he knows his ways are condemned of God. I tell you this knowledge keeps a great deal of stir in his heart, and makes his conscience afraid, and sometimes qualms come over his heart, and sometimes makes him resolve I will be a

drunkard and adulterer no more; it makes him that he cannot go so freely about his wicked courses, Mark 6:20. When Herod knew John the Baptist was a godly man, this made him fear him. So when Saul knew assuredly that David should be King, though he went out to destroy him, he let him go; nay, a very persecutor, if he knows they be the people of God he persecutes, it will make his very heart ache, and will make him give over his persecution, except he be marvelous strong, Isa. 11:9. Why? How will God bridle persecutors? The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord There shall be such a deal of knowledge, that they shall not be able to hurt in my holy mountain; nay this knowledge may make wicked men mightily to deny themselves. Balaam, though he was greedy after riches and preferment, yet when he knew that it was God's mind that he should not curse Israel, he should provoke God; saith he, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, &c. Nay, knowledge may work Reformation, After they escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 2:20. Now if knowledge be such a thing where it is not rooted soundly in the mind, then how strong would it be if we did get our understandings soundly informed? If we would get knowledge rooted in us, the very knowledge that God hath commanded us, to serve him, and fear him, that he hath revealed his wrath from Heaven upon all disobedience; that Christ is the Savior of the world, it would strengthen us against sin, and to do good; therefore let us labor to have strong minds.

Secondly, Let us labor to have a strong will, as David had, Psal. 119:15,16. I will meditate in thy precepts, I will delight myself in thy statutes, I will not forget thy Word. You see how absolutely he is set upon it, I will do thus and thus, and I will not do the contrary; this is a strong Will; and therefore you see what admirable things he could do, because his Will was strong; what is the reason people are so

weak? They cannot resist sin, they cannot give over such a lust, they cannot get life and quickening in prayer and other duties; if an Enemy come, they cannot put it up; if affliction come, they cannot bear it patiently; if they are called to stand for God, they cannot put off carnal fears; this is the weakness of our Wills; if our Wills were absolutely set that way, we should be marvelous strong, and break through all oppositions; all the strength of a man lies in the Will of a man; if a man's Will be set upon a thing, he will go through fire and water; he will do it; therefore we should labor that our Wills may be strong in the works of God, to the pleasing of God, and hatred of evil, and opposing of all the ways of the flesh; as David saith, Psalm 119:10. I have sought thee with my whole heart. We should do thus; you may see this in wicked men, when their hearts are absolutely set to do evil, how do they go through difficulties? Nothing shall hinder them; how wonderfully did Saul persecute David, over hills and dales, and caves of the earth, over rocks and craggy places? If he had not been furious and mad, he could not have followed him in such places; nay, he spurned against conscience; God met with him oftentimes, and infatuated his counsels, which could not but be as hedges in his way; but he broke over all: Whence was this? His Will was absolutely set, 1 Sam. 23:23, he was resolved, if David were to be found under the copes of Heaven, he would have him; so if our hearts, our wills were absolutely set to find God and his grace; if we would say, if Christ be to be found, we will have him; if he be in Heaven or Earth we will have him; we will run over all Ordinances and duties; what sin will we not leave? What course will we not take? If he be to be found, we will have him. A man might go through any difficulty, if his Will were absolute; the Will is a strong faculty, it hath the command over the whole man; the mind thinks, and the heart intends, and the affections stir, and the tongue speaks, and the foot walks, and the hand works, but the Will sways all; nay, if a man's appetite be to a thing, yet if he will not do it, he may refrain it; the

Will is the strongest faculty in a man; as soon as we hear the Prodigal had a Will to go to his Father, the next news we hear, he did go; I will arise and go to my Father, and now nothing could stay him; if our Wills were set earnestly towards God, that we would serve him, and obey him, and would not be carried away with our lusts, what a deal of strength would this help us with? We should be strong to trample Satan under our feet, and mortify our lusts; and this is the reason God accepts the Will above all, if there be a willing mind, God accepts it, nay, not only accepts it, but rewards it also, 1 Cor. 9:19. If I do it willingly, I have my reward. The will is the strongest faculty God knows; if he hath a man's will, he hath all that ever a man can do, he hath all his power, nay, he hath more than his power; the will is able to go beyond a man's power; as it is said of the Macedonians, 2 Cor. 8:3, they did to their power, and beyond their power; the will is a mighty strong thing; therefore if we will be strong in the Lord, let us labor for strong wills.

Thirdly, Let us labor for sound affections, that our affections may be conversant about God and all his holy laws and commandments; which way a man's affections run, so they run mightily; that way a man's strength runs, as the Prophet saith, Isa. 63:15, look down from heaven; where is thy zeal and thy strength? That is, when God is zealous for his people's good, he puts forth his strength for their defense; therefore the Prophet cries, Lord, where is thy zeal and thy strength? So we may say, where is our zeal to God, and against sin, where is our zeal for good duties, for heavenly-mindedness, and the spreading of the Gospel, and doing good in our places? If we were but zealous and earnest in our affections, we should not go so dully and faintly in the ways of God as we do, it would make us strong; we see how strongly men follow after the world, when they are zealous for the world; so if we were earnest after God, we should be strongly carried after him.

Secondly, If we would get strength, let us labor to believe; for when a man hath once gotten faith, now, though he be never so weak, he may say, God is my strength, Psal. 73:26. A man that hath gotten this faith, may say as David, Psal. 71:16, I will go in the strength of the Lord; I will go to prayer, to the word, to the Sacrament, I will go about my calling, when I am put upon my business, I will go in the strength of the Lord to do it; if this man wants strength, he goes and even borrows strength from heaven, Heb. 11:34, by faith, of weak they became strong; as the rivers that watered Paradise, their heads and springs were out of Paradise; so though there be streams of mercy and grace, and power, and love communicated to us, yet the heads of these are out of us; Christ is the head from which we must fetch all; I can do all things (saith Paul) through Christ that strengtheneth me, Phil. 4:13. I can do all things; you will say, this is to brag and boast; alas no, I can do nothing, it is Christ that strengtheneth me; like the Ivy that creeps up by the wall, so a Christian creeps up by Christ; there lies all our strength; therefore all our care should be to believe, to get off from our own bottoms: a true Christian is never so weak as when he will be himself, when he goes about actions himself; if he would let Christ do all, and he only take that course Christ bids him, and never go his own way to work, he were a strong man, Isa. 30:7. It is your strength to sit still; the children of Israel were so busy to help themselves, they would to Egypt, and they should help them; saith God, you shall never have help this way; your strength is to sit still and wait upon God, and trust in him; so I say, then is a true Christian weak, when he departs from Christ, and doth not keep close to him; suppose a man should be in misery, there be but two ways to help him, the one is by himself, the other is by Christ; now, suppose a man were in such a straight, that he must be delivered in a quarter of an hour, or else he is undone; shall a man go to prayer now, or to his own strength? To prayer if it were for a man's life; now when a man goes to his own

strength and parts, this weakens him; we should do everything better if we would go to Christ, and set our hearts upon him, if we would use the means, but hang upon God, this were our strength.

Thirdly, We should fly all occasions of evil; may be a child can contain itself from the dug (when it is newly weaned) so long as it comes not near it; but when the child seeth the dug, now the fancy runs upon the dug again, and now it cries for the dug again; it is because it is not perfectly weaned; if it were perfectly weaned, though it saw the dug, it would not look after it; so we are not perfectly weaned from sin; therefore though when we resist occasions and temptations of sin, we are able to abstain and contain ourselves, yet because we are not perfectly weaned, if we give way to occasions we lose all; when we will rashly venture upon the occasions of evil, we lose our strength; therefore saith David, Psal. 101:3. I will set no evil thing before mine eyes; as he would not do it, so he would not have it in his sight; every man is privy to himself, and may know what thoughts, what desires, what appearances, what customs, what speeches are occasions of evil to him; he might know what doth occasion him to sin; maybe he had not committed sin but for this or that; now when a man shall give way to these occasions, and not stand upon his guard, this loseth all a man's strength; as Saul he was privy to himself how testy and furious he was, and if he had any instrument of fury in his hand, he had no power over himself; yet he would ever be with his javelin in his hand, when he was in the field, or in the house, still he had his javelin in his hand; now you may see what mischief he exposed himself unto, he flung it twice at David, and a third time at his own son Jonathan; if he had been careful not to have given way to the occasions of sin, knowing how weak he was, and that he had not command over himself, he might have escaped this; a man that is furious had not need always to have a sword about him; a man had need shun all the occasions of evil; Joseph was a

strong man, how can I do this wickedness? &c. all the temptations of his Mistress could not allure him; what was the cause of this? He would not hearken to his Mistress, nor be with her, Gen. 39. What made Achan to be so weak? He must needs take the Babylonish garment, and the wedge of gold; he gave way to the occasion, I looked upon it, saith he; he being privy to his own covetous heart, should have been shy of giving any occasion to the flesh; but he giving way to the occasion was weak and not able to stand.

Fourthly, We should never go up and down without a constant continual purpose to please God; when we first rise in the morning, we should think with ourselves, well, I purpose to take heed of sin this day; so when I am at dinner, I will take heed that I let not the remembrance of God go out of my mind; I will have fresh thoughts of him while I am at board; as it is said of Daniel, be purposed not to defile himself with the Kings meat: So when we go into the fields, we should think with ourselves, I purpose God willing, to beware that I may not come home with a guilty conscience, and do things that may be to my shame and wounding another day; when we are to come among wicked people, we should resolve before we come, I will let fall nothing to dishonor God; thus if we would go armed up and down, we should go strongly; if we would make serious resolutions to cleave to God, and not to do evil, this would strengthen us; now when temptations meet us unresolved, we are not able to put them off.

Fifthly, We should frequent the Ordinances of God. First, We should be careful of hearing the word of God in a godly manner. Strength and beauty are in his Sanctuary, Psal. 96:6, there is strength to be had in God's house, in God's courts; his Word and Ordinances are the food of the soul, that as bread strengthens a man's body, so this spiritual bread of life strengthens a man's soul. So again, For prayer, to go to God in prayer, that would strengthen us, Prov. 18:10. So the

Sacraments, they are a means to strengthen us; to go to the Lord's Table with hunger and thirst, and serious consideration of our own unworthiness, and of our need, and with true faith unto it; the Lord's Supper is a means to strengthen, as it is noted in the primitive Church, Acts 2:42, so again for meditations, if we would meditate of the things we hear, of God's word, and his blessings, and judgment, and warning we have from day today; if we would digest these things, and chew them from day today, they would yield a great deal of nourishment unto us; as David saith, Blessed is the man whose meditations are in God's Law, he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers side; and his leaf shall not wither, Psal. 1:2,3, that man shall flourish like a green bay tree: So for holy conference, that is a great means to strengthen all good things; as those good people, when the times were bad, mark how they strengthened themselves, that they might not be infected with evil; they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, Mal. 3:16.

Sixthly, We should put forth ourselves to the utmost in good duties; it is our laziness and idleness that we are not more able to do good, and that we are so frail and infirm to do anything that is of God; if we would take pains and put forth ourselves, we should be strong; and indeed what is strength but taking of pains when a man puts forth himself? As Eccles. 10:10, that is, a man must take the more pains; the more pains a man takes, the more strength he puts forth; there is no creature that God hath made besides man, but doth act to its utmost strength; the fire burns as much as ever it can; and the light shines as much as ever it can; and the stone goes down as low as ever it can; every creature works as far as it can; but now man he can limit his strength, because he hath reason and will, and according as he sees a thing more or less necessary, according as he sees it easier or harder to be attained, accordingly he lessens or puts forth his strength; and it is great reason that God should give man power to

limit his strength, for he is to deal with the creature as well as with the Creator; and if he should love and seek the creature as much as ever he can, this were Idolatry; therefore the Lord hath given a man power to limit his strength, not to let out all his love or fear upon anything here below; but yet God doth not give a man that power to limit his strength, and the exercise of it towards his Maker, but he should let out all towards God; as David saith, let all that is within me praise the Lord; he opens his floodgates wide, and lets out all towards God.

Seventhly, Consider that all received strength is worth nothing unless God give us new supply; wherefore are true Christians weak at any time, but because they think thus? I had true grace in the morning, and an hour ago I had the fear of God and the hatred of sin; and the consideration of this makes him that he is not so careful to keep close to Christ, and to take heed of falling; he thinks, I had power the other day, and I was able to resist temptations then; this makes a man weak; he thinks he had grace a while ago, and so trusts to that; for if a man do not still look up to Christ, and cleave unto him, as if he had no strength, the man is presently a weak man, as weak as another man, and cannot stand; a man cannot be strong in the grace that is in himself, but in the grace that is in God, Eph. 6:10. Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might: And as Paul speaks to Timothy, though Timothy were a man that was as strong as any man upon the face of the earth almost, yet he bids him not count himself strong in the grace that was in him, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 2:1. As it is with the air, which is not strong with the light that is in itself, but with the light that is in the Sun; therefore we are careful not to shut the windows; for if we shut the light of the Sun out, the air though it be light now, will be dark again in a moment; therefore though the room be light, yet we keep the windows open, for the light of the air is strong in the light of

the Sun; so a Christian should keep his windows ever open towards Christ; if a man ever turn his back again upon Christ, and neglect Christ, if he do not cleave to Christ, and take heed he do not provoke Christ against him, he is gone, he is as weak as can be; as Ezra speaks, Ezr. 7:28. I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord was upon me; no otherwise, if the Lord should take away his hand, he were gone though he had never so much strength, wisdom and parts; he were nobody without God.

Eighthly, Lastly, Take heed of striving against knowledge, or willingly; that weakens us horribly; and in particular take heed of pride; no man so weak as a proud man, nor so strong as an humble man, as a Divine speaks; a man that is sensible of his own weakness, of his own being nobody, of his own folly, and that he is able to do nothing of himself, he that is sensible of this is strong; as Paul saith, 2 Cor. 12:10, when we are weak then are we strong; that is, when we are humble and weak in our own apprehension and consideration, when we lay this to heart, that we are weak, then are we strong; for this makes a man lay about him, to cleave unto God.

I have laid down divers directions for the strengthening of those good things that are in us, and I will now add one more, because it is seasonable for the time.

Make conscience of using and improving the Sacraments, for they are excellent Ordinances to strengthen a man.

First, The Sacrament of Baptism; I do not mean the mere receiving outward baptism, that is a weak thing; but when a man hath a care to improve his baptism. It is noted of Abraham, that he had faith before his circumcision; but he received circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith, for this, that he might be the father of the faithful, Rom. 4:19. Now he could believe incredible wonderful

strange things, that would have staggered him before: So when David was to fight against Goliath, he was a great warrior, and a mighty soldier, and David a weak stripling; now see how he strengthened himself against Goliath; he useth three argument, and one is taken from the Sacrament of God's covenant; he was an uncircumcised man, but David was circumcised, and within the covenant; What is this uncircumcised Philistine, to one that is circumcised and in covenant with God? And he hath given me the Sacrament of it, that he will help me and be with me, and stand by me in all estates and conditions. So it was with the Gaoler; before when the Magistrates bid him put Paul and his fellows in the worst prison, he durst do no other; and when he saw the prison doors open, he would have killed himself, he was not able to have any power over himself; but when he had faith and was baptized, now he was able to take them out of the prison, and carry them to his own house, and give them the best entertainment; though the Magistrates counted them Rogues and vagabonds, he had gotten strength now.

Secondly, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is of great force, being used with faith and due preparation according to God's Ordinance; it is a Sacrament for the very nonce to help a man's faith, and strengthen him in every good thing.

First, Because this is the very nature of the Sacrament; it is the Sacrament of growth and increasing in grace; the other Sacrament puts a man into the estate of grace, and this strengthens a man in the estate of grace; therefore when Christ administered the Sacrament, he tells us, we may receive it as our very bread; now Psal. 104:15, bread strengthens a man's heart: He tells us if we come to the Sacrament aright, as our bodies receive bread and it strengthens them, so we may receive that which will nourish our souls; take, eat, this is my body; will not this bread nourish you? Directly my body is

such a thing, that do but take it by faith, it shall strengthen you, just as this bread strengthens the body; as Elijah went in the strength of that meat he eat forty days and forty nights; so if we come to this Sacrament understandingly and preparedly, it is most certain we shall have strength; may be not that we would have ourselves; maybe we would have more grace, and more assistance, but we shall have that strength whereby we shall be able to go on in the service of God, doing good, and shunning evil from day today; My flesh is meat indeed, &c. And indeed it will nourish a man; as it is said of Jonathan, he was weak and faint, and his eyes grew dim; but when he tasted a little honey, his strength came to him again: So the Sacrament received by a true Communicant, that sets himself to prepare his soul to partake of it, he shall have his eyes enlightened, and his heart quickened, he shall have some succor and relief from it to go about every good word and work.

Secondly, It is a seal of God's Covenant, and therefore must needs strengthen a man that is in Covenant with God, if he come to it as it ought to be come unto; for what is the Covenant a true believer is in? I will make an everlasting Covenant, never to turn away from them to do them good; and I will put my fear into their hearts, &c. Jer. 32:40. It is an everlasting Covenant, I will never let them go, I will put a strong fear into their hearts, that they shall not do as the wicked do, they shall stand in awe of God; it is a strong light; others shall be deluded; they shall not be deluded; it is a strong apprehension of the Word and Will of God; this is the Covenant of God. Now when a man shall come to have this sealed, when God shall give this Sacrament to make this good, and he takes the Sacrament upon it, that he will walk according to this Covenant, according to the grace that God hath given him; this man hath all the witnesses in heaven and earth; why should he be weak in faith then? There be but three witnesses in heaven; he hath these that hath faith; there be but three on earth, the

spirit, water, and blood; by spirit, is meant the same spirit that works true faith and obedience in the hearts of his people; then water, that is the water of Baptism; and blood that is the blood of the Lord's Supper; the Lord doth witness eternal life to this man's heart; therefore what can this man want?

Thirdly, This Sacrament is Communion with Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 10:16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? &c. So that when a man comes to the Sacrament aright, he hath communion with Jesus Christ; therefore he must needs be strengthened, though he were never so weak before; as Solomon saith of the Conies, they are a feeble folk, and yet they make their houses in the Rocks, Prov. 30:26. So true Christians are a feeble folk, and yet they make their houses in the Rock, where they eat this spiritual meat, and drink this spiritual drink; they drink of that Rock Jesus Christ; when they draw near to this Table, they draw near to Christ, and therefore must needs gather strength; they come to this Rock to be rooted and established in this Rock; and therefore must needs get strength.

Fourthly, Because this Sacrament is a Sacrament of communion with the members of Christ; a man that rightly receives it, doth increase the communion of Saints over all the world; though he never saw them, yet he is loved more and more of all the Saints; therefore he must needs grow stronger: Take a man that is woven into every man, there is hardly any man of any power but loves him, he hath friends everywhere; this man is a strong man, as it is said of Absalom, he grew strong, for the people increased continually with him, 2 Sam. 21:15. So a Christian must needs grow strong, that truly hears the Word, and receives the Sacrament; for people still come flocking more and more unto him; for still as the Church comes to grow or any soul comes to believe in Christ, he strengthens himself; as Paul

was strong in every Town where he went, in regard of the communion of Saints; such a man is strong in regard of his infirmities, he hath many to help him to bear them; he is strong also in regard of advice and counsel, he shall have the counsel of the Saints, Job 4:3. If a man be doubtful what course to take when instruction comes, it strengthens a man much: Now when a man hath communion with all the Saints, what abundance of counsel hath he? You may see how weak David was, he was not able to beat down his wrath and impatience: Now when Abigail came with her good counsel, he blessed God for it.

Let us have a care to come so to the Sacrament, that we may be strengthened in all good things, that we may be more quickened up to every good word and work; for it is a strengthening Ordinance; it is appointed of God for the very nonce to strengthen God's people in all business and employments they have to do from day today. When Moses and all Israel received the Passover, God smote the first borne of all Egypt, Psal. 105:30. This was a seal that God smote all the strength of the Egyptians, but there was not one weak person among the Israelites: So if we did receive the Sacrament aright, there should not be a weak Christian among us, God would smite the Egyptian, and weaken the strength of all their lusts and corruptions; is therefore any among us weak, and he cannot do this and that? His lusts are like the sons of Zeruiah to David, too hard for him; Though I be anointed King, I am weak, &c. 2 Sam. 3:39. So dost thou say, I am very weak this day, and though God hath anointed me King over my lusts, and I am a Christian that should have power over my lusts, yet these base lusts and cursed corruptions are too hard for me; I say, if we did but wisely and carefully, as we ought to do, go to the Word and Sacrament, and the rest of God's Ordinances, we should have marvelous supply and help to carry us on in our Christian Combat: It is a very remarkable thing, that when God would have Joshua and all

Israel go about that same hard work, to go and encounter with 31 Kings of Canaan at one clap, and they were now newly come into the Land of Canaan, and were hemmed in, the waters of Jordan came back, and they could not go back again, it is to be noted that before God would have them strike a blow, he would have them take the Sacrament of Circumcision; you know the Canaanites might have come and cut their throats when they were sore; nay when they were circumcised, God would not have them go fight yet, but they must take the Sacrament of the Passover, which would cost them seven days; one would think this was not the way to be strong; but this was indeed the way to be strong, to go in the strength of heaven; this made the spirits of their enemies melt for they were now within the Covenant of God; therefore how should we help our own souls, if we would but go in the strength of God's Covenant to prayer and every business we have to do, and if we would but rightly partake of this Sacrament as a seal of the Covenant? Nothing would make it so strong as this.

This may seem to condemn the most of us all generally. How do Christians miss of the partaking of the Sacrament? What a deal of weakness is there among us? Where is there a strong Christian? They can hardly do anything, or suffer anything; whence is all this? This comes from not receiving the Sacrament as they ought to do; as the Apostle saith of bodily weakness, 1 Cor. 11:30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. He speaks there of their unworthy receiving the Sacrament; this is the cause that your bodies are weak: So this is as true of the weakness of the soul; for this cause many are weak among you, and many have such sick souls; nay, many are even dead to all manner of good, even for this cause, the not receiving the Lord's Supper in a right manner; for if the Sacrament were duly come unto as it doth require, it is to strengthen us in grace, and against Satan; but when people come hand over

head, when they prepare themselves slightly, pray slightly before they come, and come careless and negligently, and take not pains to come in due fashion, they rather strengthen themselves in sin and Satan against them; as it is said of Judas, after he had received the sop, the Devil entered into him, John 13:27, you see he went away with more hardness of heart from the Lord's Supper, then he came to it; he went away with more wrath and discontent against Christ and his blessed company then before; the Devil had more strength then he had before: A true Christian that comes to the Sacrament as he ought, gets more strength to his faith, more strength to his lively hope, more patience and meekness; he strengthens all the graces of God's spirit, and strengthens himself against Satan and his own flesh, and against his lusts and corruptions; but when a man comes otherwise, he doth not only not get strength against corruption, but corruption gets strength rather; he goes away with more corruption of heart, and more guiltiness of sin then before, and is more heartless to prayer and good duties: The Devil deals with men, as the Monk did with Henry the 7th. Emperor; it is reported that he was poisoned by coming to the Sacrament; for he had poisoned it; so the Devil poisons the Sacrament to most men, they eat and drink their own damnation, when they go away from the Lord's Supper they are worse than when they came, more weak and unable to put off Satan, and more exposed to his fiery darts; whereas if the Sacrament were approached unto according to the due order that God hath set down in his Word, we should gather strength from it.

This may serve to show the reason why people get no more good by the Sacrament, and do not meet with this strength that the Sacrament administers to every worthy Communicant in general, because they do not come in a right manner to the partaking of it; and when they do not regard the manner, God doth not regard the matter; when they do not come faithfully, and readily, and

preparedly to the Table of the Lord, the Lord regards not their coming, and they shall get no good by it; as Solomon saith, When a man is not ready to hear, he offers the sacrifice of fools, Eccles. 5:1. So when a man receives the Sacrament, and is not ready to receive, he receives the Sacrament of fools; he doth not consider what a sacred thing it is, and what great matters are required of him, and what care and conscience is requisite thereunto; we should examine ourselves, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 11:28. We must not only eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, for so even wretches and carnal people do, and never partake of any strength; but we must partake of it after a right manner, as Christ saith, Luke 12:47. He that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself to do it, shall be beaten with many stripes; so when we know it is God's will we should come preparedly, and we will not prepare ourselves; God will not strengthen us and help us against our lusts, but our lusts shall get head against us. This is in general. Now I come to speak of some particular reasons that hinder men from partaking aright of the Sacrament.

First, Because people come not to the Sacrament with a sense and feeling of their own wants; if we would partake of strength by the Sacrament, before we come we must feel our wants, how we want hope, and patience, and faith, and strength, we want spiritual understanding in the ways of God; we should not only see this, but feel it; people, may be, see this, that they want this or that; but there is no sound feeling of their wants; they are without faith, and do not feel it; without hope and patience, and do not feel it; they do not find the want of these things. Now Prov. 9:4,5. Wisdom saith to him that wanteth understanding, Come eat of my bread, &c. When a man doth want understanding, is not only without it, but feels the want of it; he is not only without strength and faith, but feels the want of it; he sees

the want of wisdom and discretion, and God's helping of him more and more; if it be so, eat of my bread, &c.

Secondly, Because people come without true repentance to the Lord's Table, they do not repent of their sins, they do not break the league between them and their own ways, they come to the Sacrament, and mean to think as they have done, and speak as they have done, and keep company as they have done, and behave themselves in their places and callings as they have done, and no otherwise then they have done; and though they cry God mercy, and make some prayers, yet the covenant between them and their wicked courses was never broken; and therefore it can do them no good: People come to the Sacrament as Judas did, he came fresh from the Pharisees conspiring the betraying his Master, and as soon as he had done, he meant to go to them again, and so got no good by it; whereas if we would get good by the Sacrament, that it may build us up in knowledge and believing, in having a care to please God, and making conscience of all our ways, we ought to root out our sins and corruptions, and fling away our lusts and vile affections; we should throw sin out of doors, as the Israelites were to throw leaven out of doors, and not to have any in their houses; nay we should deal with sin, as Ammon did with Tamar; he hated her now more than he loved her before; nay he put her out, and bolted the door after her; so though we loved vanity, and worldliness, and passion before, yet now we should hate them, and put them out of doors, yea bolt the door after them, that they may come in no more. This is the way to come to the Sacrament, so as to get strength thereby; and the want of this is the cause that people go away so weak.

Thirdly, Because they come without faith; they come doubting to the Sacrament, Rom. 14:23. He that doubteth, is damned if he eat. I may apply it to this; he that doubts is damned if he receive the Sacrament,

his own conscience will reprove him, his own soul will say, I have not done well, I have not pleased God in coming; his own conscience will condemn him, and damn him; when he looks upon the Covenant of grace, he cannot apply it, conscience puts him off: This is for want of true faith; if people would come to the Lord's Table with faith, they would receive strength, as it is said of Moses, Heb. 11:28. By faith he received the Passover; so if by faith we would receive the Lord's Supper, and beat down all doubts and fears of flesh and blood, and resolve to cast ourselves upon Christ and his promises, and let him have the disposing of us; if we would truly cast ourselves upon Christ, and believe in his name, and so come to the Sacrament, we should have strength; how can we get strength without this? Eph. 3:17. When we come to the Sacrament, we come to partake of Christ, and receive Christ, that we may dwell in Christ, and he in us. Now he will not do thus without faith; faith is the wedding garment; if we come without it, we shall be bound hand and foot and cast into utter darkness; may be thou wert fettered before, but now thou shalt be more bound, even bound hand and foot, that thou canst not stir, as the Apostle saith, Above all things take the shield of faith; so I may say, if you will come to the Sacrament to your own peace and comfort, above all things take the shield of faith. When men come to the Sacrament only with bodily eyes, and bodily hands, what do they get? Nothing but a piece of bread, and a drop of wine; but if they had faith, they should have the evidence of things not seen; Christ, and heaven, and the covenant of grace, are not seen with bodily eyes; faith would help them to the evidence of these things not seen; as St. Austin speaks of a worthy Martyr, when he was to suffer Martyrdom, he took the Sacrament to strengthen him to suffer Martyrdom; and the Martyrs in the Primitive Church, every day expecting Martyrdom, they every day received the Sacrament to help them with strength; but when we come to the Sacrament without faith, we

deprive ourselves of this benefit. Now as long as we give way to our sins, doubting will reign, and faith cannot be in our souls.

Fourthly, Because they do not seek earnestly to God to bless the Sacrament to them, they do not make themselves strong in heaven before they come; they do not go with strong cries and groans to the Throne of grace, that God would quicken them that they may get the good they ought to do at it. If we would come to the Sacrament of Lord's Supper as we ought to do, we should be earnest with God and wrestle with him, that he would make us sensible of our wants, and that he would pluck up our hearts to come with faith, that he would strengthen us, that we may behave ourselves well when we are there, and when we come away; every Ordinance of God is sanctified by the word and prayer, 1 Tim, 4:5. Now because either people do not pray at all, or if they do, they are not earnest with God, therefore it is that they return home little the better.

Fifthly, Because they do not behave themselves well when they are at it, they are not well occupied when they sit at the Lord's Table, they know not how to employ themselves as the duty requires; this is that would help us to true strength by the Sacrament, if we were well employed when we were at it. Cant. 1:12. While the King sitteth at his table, &c, saith the Church, that is, while the King was enjoying communion with me, and I with him, I was just at the same time very well employed; I labored in some measure to stir up all the graces that were in me, that my Spikenard might send up a sweet perfume into his nostrils, that my faith might work, and my love might work; so while we are sitting at the Lord's Table, and the King sitteth down to bid us welcome; we should labor to be well employed, to keep vanities out of our minds, and employ them well, that we may have a good meal before we go.

Sixthly, Because people when they have been at the Sacrament, they do not examine themselves diligently, whither they have got any good by the Sacrament; I have received the Sacrament, have I got any good by it? Is my faith strengthened? Am I yet backward to God's will, untoward in his worship, dead in his service, am I still hovering and doubting in my conscience, have I no care of God, have I got no good by the Sacrament? If people would but call themselves to account, whither they have got any good by the Sacrament, this would do them a great deal of good; it would make them bewail and lament, and cry out if they got no good; people let things run on at six and sevens; if they get good, so it is; if they get none, so it is, but lay it not to heart; whereas a godly heart when he hath been at an Ordinance, calls himself to account, and takes it marvelous heavily if he see he hath got no good; as the Church when she prayed, and saw her prayers did not prevail, it was a bitter thing to her; Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass thorough, Lam. 3:44, when she saw she prayed, and strived, and tugged with God, and there was no comfort, O how she took it to heart, she made it the burden of her complaint; so if Christians would do thus, The Sacrament doth not take, the Lord covers himself with clouds, and hides himself from me, he will not own me; we should go crying and yelling up and down to see that we do not get good by the Sacrament; if we would do thus, we might get good by it.

Seventhly, If people do get good by the Sacrament afterwards, yet they do not interpret this to be by the goodness of God in the Sacrament; may be they meet with some comfort and assistance now and then which might do them a world of good, and strengthen their hearts wonderfully if they did look to it; when they have gotten many good blessings, now they do not construe this to be by reason of God's Sacrament and Covenant; if they did look upon it, O this came by virtue of God's Covenant, and the seal of his Covenant to my soul,

this would make them strong in God's Covenant, and help them exceedingly; thus David did, if he got any mercy at any time, still he laid it upon going to God's Ordinances; this I had because I kept thy precepts; This I had because I prayed unto thee, and sought thee earnestly; I followed God earnestly, and now I see his infinite goodness and mercy towards me, how he hath rewarded me; I confess it was a poor thing I did, God might even have flung it as dung in my face, but see how he hath rewarded me: So if Christians would say, this I had because I was careful, though I had formerly neglected God's Ordinances; yet at last I came to seek him earnestly with my whole heart, and to come more preparedly and diligently to the Lord's Supper, and now this I find I had by it; how hath God blessed me since? How hath he assisted me, and lifted me over many rubs and temptations? I will have a care of this therefore afterwards; this would strengthen a man wonderfully, but for want of this people get little good.

Eighthly, Because Christians do not rouse and stir up the Sacraments that they have partaked of formerly, they do not provoke their souls to extort the efficacy and fruit of former Sacraments; when Moses had perceived that all Israel had entered into Covenant with God, he rouseth up their hearts to look upon this Covenant, Deut. 26:17,18,19. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, &c. As who should say, you have entered into covenant with God this very day; now rouse up yourselves and consider what God hath done; this very God hath promised you to set you up above all Nations; then stir up yourselves and believe God, and say, Why should I distrust God? Certainly he will bless me, and do good to me; and this day thou hast vowed thyself to God, therefore rouse up thyself and think there is no going back; I have made a covenant, and taken the Sacrament upon it, and now there is no going back; as Luther speaks of a good Virgin, she was marvelously tempted by her lusts and

corruptions; she helped herself by the covenant; I am a Christian, and am baptized, I have taken the Sacrament upon it, and will not yield; and this did marvelously help her; but when Christians neglect this, no marvel though they continue weak still; nay, most people though they have been at the Sacrament make no conscience of their vows to God, they break covenant with God, therefore no marvel they get no good by the Sacrament.

SERMON XXII.

Be watchful therefore and strengthen the things which remain, &c. -
REVEL. 3:2.

Strengthen the things which remain; As who should say, thou hast some grace in thee, but what grace? Nothing but the remainder of a great deal; more thou hast had formerly; thou hast been more earnest, and more fruitful, and hast abounded in the work of the Lord, thou hast had more a great deal, thou art horribly grown down the wind, thou hast nothing but the remainders of what thou hadst, therefore it is high time for thee to go and strengthen the things that remain.

Now here by the way, before we come to the main point, we may observe That a child of God cannot fall totally away; there will be ever something that remains; though he may lose much of his good graces, he cannot lose all; though Sardis was brought to a low ebb, yet there was something remaining; I say, a child of God can never come to such a low pass, but he shall have something remaining; he may have horrible declining's, and woeful decaying's of grace, but he can never come to this pass, to have no grace, no faith, no love to

God, no care of his name, to be a wicked man again, there will be something remaining in him that is good; as we may see, 1 John 3:9. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, for the seed of God remaineth in him; a child of God that is born of God cannot sin, that is, he cannot absolutely and totally fall away, there will be good things in him as long as he lives, there will be a seed remaining in him forever; he can never be a bankrupt, and come to nothing; he shall be a godly man, and a child of God, and one that fears God's name forever; he cannot lose all, though he lose much; as it is said of Jehoshaphat, though he yielded much to sin, and gave way to the lusts of his own heart in an horrible manner, yet there was something remaining in him; though he had greatly dishonored God, and distempered his own soul, so far forth as to love the ungodly, and to help those that were the enemies of God; yet saith the Text, there are good things found in thee; he was not quite deprived of all the graces of God's blessed spirit, but there were good things in him still; so the five wise Virgins, though they slumbered and slept, and were exceeding secure, yet their lamps were not gone out; I may compare a Christian to a cup of right Canarie Wine, that no frost in the world can quite freeze; it may freeze it very much, but yet there will be some spirits of the Wine remaining unfrozen; so godly men are an everlasting foundation, all cannot possibly be spent and consumed in them, they shall have something remaining in them. Now I will tell you, First, What is not the reason of this. Secondly, What is the reason of it.

First, Not anything in himself; it is not any grace received in itself, it is nothing in thee; no not the image of God in thee, nor any holiness, nor mortification; there is nothing in him keeps him from falling away; for let a man have all the grace that ever any man had, he may fall totally for all that; nay, if he were as holy inherently as Adam in his innocence, he may fall away totally; nay, if he were as holy as the Angels in Heaven, and were in the same estate that the Angels in

Heaven are; they are not immutable in their own nature, therefore that they are confirmed in grace, it is God's goodness and mercy to them, it is nothing in themselves; those Angels that do stand, may fall notwithstanding anything that is in them; no grace received will keep a man from falling totally away, if he have not the fountain and the favor of God to keep him, if he have not a better bottom then himself; intrinsical unchangeableness is only a property of the Lord, Mal. 3:6. All creatures may change, if they had a thousand times more of the image of God, yet they may change and fall, and lose all notwithstanding anything they have received; it is nothing in a man's self; Now I will make this appear that it is not anything in a man's self.

First, Because the godliest man in the world is bid to look upon himself as one that may fall absolutely into any sin in the world in himself; for all the love he hath of God, he may yet hate him; for all the fear he hath of God, he may yet slight him; a child of God is commanded to look upon himself, as left to himself, to be in a woeful case; that he may fall finally and totally away, to be nothing and worse than nothing; as the Apostle saith, Gal. 6:1, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such a man, knowing that ye yourselves also may be tempted; that is, consider, it may be thy case, thou mayst be tempted to fall as well as he, and worse too; you that are spiritual, though you be never so spiritual, though your minds be never so wrapped up with God, and taken up with spiritual things, yet you are not so spiritual, but if you will hearken to the counsel of your own hearts, you may be carnal and brutish; look upon thyself as a poor miserable creature; though thou hast never so much grace, thou canst not keep it, unless thou hast a better keeper then thyself.

Secondly, Because the people of God are bound to fear themselves (I bring the very arguments that they bring that hold a child of God may fall away totally; therefore I grant them that the arguments are good, that in themselves they may fall away) and I say a child of God is commanded to fear; be not high-minded but fear; that is, though thou hast an excellent faith, and standest by faith, yet be not high-minded, do not think thou art higher than thou art, and remoter from the power of the flesh than thou art; be not proud and conceited; for all the faith thou hast, thou mayst distrust God; and if God leave thee to thyself thou mayst be an unbeliever, and as vile an infidel as ever breathed upon the face of the earth; in thyself thou hast as vile a wretched heart as any man, which if thou wert left to thyself would quickly show what it is, Phil. 2:12,13, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for God worketh both the will and the deed: As who should say, I do not deny but a child of God both depend upon the good pleasure of God, and is built upon his eternal counsel; he is not built upon his own pleasure, he doth not stand upon the hap hazard of his own will, but upon the good pleasure of God's will; but saith he, it is our part to fear: for we for our part may fall, we can do nothing, no more than we are holpen; no more than God doth stand by us, and keep us from falling; it is our part to fear and tremble from day today; as the Apostle saith, Heb. 4:1 let us fear, lest having the promises of entering into his rest, any of us should fall short: Let us fear; as who should say, we are in danger of coming short, we are in danger to fall, and not to reach the Kingdom of Heaven; how many temptations are there? What a vile flesh do we carry about with us? Therefore let us fear.

Thirdly, The children of God are commanded to take heed, lest they fall totally away; where note they may for all that is in themselves, for any grace that is received; therefore God calls upon them to cling to him, and to cleave to him, that he may not be provoked to withhold

himself from them; as we may see Heb. 12:15, take heed lest any man fail of the grace of God, &c. Take heed, look diligently to yourselves, lest any man fail of the grace of God; if you mean to go to heaven, I can tell you, you must have care and diligence, and look to yourselves; take heed you be not proud and worldly; take heed you suffer not security nor any other corruption to steal upon you, and hinder you from going on in a godly course; take heed lest any of you fail of the grace of God; what do these words import but that a man in himself is in grievous danger, in regard of falling totally away? So 1 Cor. 10:12, he that stands, let him take heed lest he falls, though he stand never so firm for the present, though he be never so stout and courageous; no man ever went so far in the ways of God but he might turn back if he looked not to himself; no man was ever so zealous, but he might be lukewarm if he looked not to it; no man was ever so quickened, but he may be deadened, if he look not to it; therefore he that stands let him take heed lest he fall.

Fourthly, Because the children of God are commanded still to grow in grace, because there is no grace yet received, or that can be received in this world, is enough to keep them from falling totally away; if a man think with himself, this grace I have is enough, I need no more, if he do stand at a stay, and limit himself, and think this will suffice, he is mistaken; there is no grace, if it were a thousand times greater than that which the best Saint in the world hath, that can secure a man from falling away; therefore when the Apostle would persuade Christians to take heed that they did not fall away, 2 Pet. 3:17, he bids them grow in grace; would you not fall, but stand steadfast? Would you not be led away with the errors of the wicked? Know assuredly that all the graces you have received are not sufficient; but grow in grace, labor to be more humble, and meek, and patient, and zealous; labor to make more conscience of your ways, to have a more tender heart, to be more taken up with God,

and more careful to please him; to be more earnest and frequent in prayer, to mark his word, and look to your steps every day; labor to stand firmer and stronger yet; for all that you have attained to it is not so much, but it may be weakened and born down; Therefore grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, Because the examples of Apostates and backsliders are propounded to the very Saints, for them to take warning by; as the Apostle propounds the example of the Jewish Apostates to the Romans; if God spared not the natural branches, &c. Look upon them, see how they are fallen away, how that Church is Apostatized; therefore look thou to thyself, lest that which befell them befall thee; lest thou sin against God, as they did, and so that light upon thee, which did light upon them; so the Apostle doth propound the example of Alexander and Hymenaeus and Philetus even to Timothy; though Timothy was elect of God, yet he knew Timothy was of a flexible nature, and might change and fall, and fall totally in himself, if he did not look to it; O saith he, hold faith and a good conscience, &c. 1 Tim. 1:19,20. He propounds it even to Timothy, that the falls of Apostates might make him wary and careful to stand upon his guard.

Seventhly, Because the children of God are fain to pray that God would keep them from falling away finally and totally; which is a sign that they may fall away totally in themselves, notwithstanding whatsoever acquaintance they have with God, or whatsoever virtue they have gotten from Christ's death, yet they are to go to God to keep them from falling away; as Psal. 119:43,44, take not away the word of thy truth, &c. As who should say, Lord, forever keep me, do thou never forsake me utterly, though I may provoke thee to forsake me very much, yet never take away the word of thy truth utterly out of my mouth, then I shall never be able to hold out to the end; if thou

wilt keep me and uphold me, then I shall keep thy Law forever; but otherwise I shall never do it: Nay, Christ plainly tells us, that he is fain to put in, and pour out his prayers before his heavenly father, that his dearest Saints and elect may not fall away; as who should say, Father, they may fall totally away, if thou do not preserve them; as he saith to Peter, Luke 22:32. I have prayed that thy faith fail not; faith is the best grace that any child of God hath, and love proceeding from faith is a good grace; but they are all failing things, and may be worn out by corruptions; therefore Christ prayeth his heavenly Father that it may be fed and cherished, and kept by his heavenly Father, that it may never fail; implying it would fail otherwise: Nay, the children of God are fain to confess in their prayers it were just with God to let them fall totally away, by reason of their sins, by reason of their unthankfulness and unfruitfulness under the means, and want of knowledge of his son Jesus Christ; they confess it were just with God to be weary of them, and give them for gone; nay, the children of God, the best of them all do find that it is a very hard thing to keep themselves from decays of grace, and declining's, and weakening's; they find that they have much ado to hold their own, much more to grow in grace, and increase more and more; to grow more and more heavenly, and more and more virtuous, and more and more self-denying; they see how many thousand corruptions and temptations they have, and how backward their own hearts are, and how soon they are surprised, that they have much ado to keep that which is begun in them, much more to increase it, and grow in it: Nay, the children of God may so far fall away, that in their own sense and feeling they may think that they have not a jot of grace, so that they are sometimes ready to conclude against themselves, that they have no grace, they were never wrought upon, never subdued; many times it is thus, and though they do not conclude thus, yet how often are they put to this desperate lift? To look every moment when they

shall fall, and fall totally and lose all, they shall not have a relic of grace in them; it is thus with the Saints of God.

Lastly, Because there is no grace received is able to hold without continual influences from Heaven; this is the nature of the grace of the second Covenant, that it is by continual influence; it is not like the first Covenant; when God gave Adam all his portion in his hand, not only for the present, but forever; if he would he might stand forever, he need not pray to God to keep him, but if he would obey God, he might stand of himself, by the Covenant that God had made with him; but under the Covenant of grace, grace runs thus, that grace is but for the present; if a man stand now, if he would stand the next hour, he must have a new supply of grace; though he be never so patient now, he may be impatient in a quarter of an hour; though he be never so humble now, he may be as proud as Lucifer in a quarter of an hour; I say, God under the Covenant of grace gives a man only for the present, so that now he may know it is in God's hand; he is kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation; so that grace is in a child of God, as light is in an house; light is never so in an house, but in a moment it will be dark if you shut the windows; so it is with a true Christian, he had need keep his windows open towards Christ, he hath need of continual shining's of grace from heaven; as Christ teacheth us concerning our daily bread, give us this day our daily bread; so it is much more in regard of grace for our souls; good Lord give me wisdom and faith, and patience this hour, and so the next hour, and the next day; give me the comfort of this day, and the assistance of this day, give me the concurrence of thy grace this day, and so the next; and we must never leave praying to God to accompany us with his grace from day today; for a man stands not by the grace that is in him, but by the grace that is in God; as the Apostle saith, Heb. 6:10, be strong in the Lord, by the power of his might; he doth not say, be strong by the grace ye have received, but

be strong in the Lord; be sure you call upon him, and keep close to him; there is all you stand by. So 2 Tim. 2:1, be strong in the grace in Christ Jesus; if any man in the Church might be strong by the grace in himself, Timothy might; he was as virtuous a young man as any in the Church; no man that Paul loved so as Timothy; I know no man like minded, saith he; he was so endued with God's spirit, and the graces and virtues thereof that there was none like him; yet Paul doth not bid him be strong in the grace that was in him, but be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; grace is in a child of God, as heat is in the water; though it be never so seething hot, yet take it from the fire, and it will fling out all the heat, and be as cold as ever it was; so it is here, notwithstanding all the graces that are in a child of God, if he do not hang over Jesus Christ, and keep close to him, the daily incursions of sin will consume his graces; the temptations of the flesh, and the Devil within, and the world without, will consume them all, unless a man be a good husband, and receive new supply from Heaven; so that we say that no grace received can keep a man from falling, but that he may fall totally away in himself: Now to come to the true reasons why a child of God cannot fall totally away, but something of the Image of God shall remain in him; though he may lose much, yet he shall not lose all, but something shall be remaining in him; the reason of this is nothing else but the mere goodness of God to him, that God will not let him so fall, and God hath covenanted so with him, that man that truly believes in his name, he shall be kept forever through faith unto salvation; he shall not be quite broken off, but he shall have some grace, he shall have something of God in him, something that shall distinguish him from all wicked men in the world; as the Lord saith of David, Psal 89:33, though they did sin against him, and carry themselves unworthy that God should keep them; yet notwithstanding the Lord would whip them and chastise them, but his loving kindness he would never take from them; why? Because he had sworn by his holiness that he would

never fail David; so that here we see it was merely through the goodness of God to David and his elect people, that they were kept from falling away; so Psal. 37:24, saith he, the righteous shall not be utterly cast down; a child of God may fall, and fall foully and fearfully, he may stain his own conscience in a lamentable manner, and wound his own soul, and disable himself to good duties in a fearful manner; but yet though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, there shall be some standing still, it shall not be an utter fall; so he that doth these things, shall never be removed, Psal. 15:5, he speaks there of a man that shall dwell in God's holy mount, and he names who it is, one that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, &c. so that you see it is the promise of God, that this man shall stand forever; he shall never be totally unsettled; he doth not mean he shall not be moved at all, but not absolutely, so as to be quite and clean thrown down; but yet no thanks to himself, but thanks to the promise; otherwise he might be moved, and unsettled, and break his neck, and fall and never rise more; but the promise is, that he shall never be moved, Psal. 112:6, the righteous shall never be moved, he shall be had in everlasting remembrance; the Lord will remember a righteous man in the midst of all temptations; let all the Devils in hell set upon him, the Lord will forever remember that man, and never let him go from him; so that you see it is merely the goodness of God, not from anything in himself, not from any grace received, but merely from God's goodness; he may thank the rock he is built upon; as Christ saith, Mat. 7:25. He that heareth these sayings, and doth them, I will liken him to a man that built his house upon a rock, &c. The house fell not, but he may thank the rock; it was built upon a rock; so a child of God is built upon a rock; as we have a Proverb, how can he but swim that is held up by the chin? So a child of God, the Lord holds him up by the chin, he shall never sink so as to be drowned; he may fall, and fall fearfully, but not totally; but there shall be something of God remaining in him forever, the Lord will

ever keep some truth of grace in that man's soul that he hath given the truth of grace to. 2 John 2. For the truths sake (saith he) which dwelleth in us, and shall be in us forever. When God hath put in the truth of saving grace into any of his people's hearts, it shall dwell in them forever, the Lord will take an order for the keeping of it; therefore though a child of God may be grievously overcome, yet God doth ever let something or other remain he doth ever exempt something; God deals with his children in regard of their souls, as he dealt with Job in regard of his body; though he let the Devil have a great deal of power over him, yet he did limit him; he is in thy hand, but save his life; though he would not let him have power over his life to kill him, he let him have Jobs children in his hands, and he let him have his goods in his hands, his cattle and his substance in his hands, nay he let him have his health in his hands, so that he did strike him with boils, and blains, and woeful sickness, but yet save his life, you shall not take away his life; so God deals with the life of his Saints; though he may let the Devil horribly tempt them, and the World horribly carry them away, and the lusts of the flesh horribly vanquish them; yet saith God, he is my child, and the Devil, and the Flesh, and the Temptations of the World shall never kill him; save his life, let him never be dead in trespasses and sins as a wretch.

But you will say, What is it that doth remain, and what shall forever remain in the children of God? You know David fell into adultery to lie with another man's wife; he fell to that pass, that he labored to defend his sin, and maintain it, that it might not come abroad; he added murder to it; what grace, what fear of God, what love to his Majesty, what regard of God's commandments, what goodness or holiness at all was in David's heart now at this time? So Solomon, when he gave way to Idolatry over all Israel, to the Idols of Moab, and Ammon, and Edom, and the Philistines round about, that the true God was not truly worshipped; what grace had he? Was there

any goodness or piety in Solomon at that time? So when Peter denied his Master, and forswore him, and confirmed it with an oath, and cursed himself if he knew the man; what grace was in Peters heart at that time? So when Asa threw the Prophet into prison when he came to reprove him; what grace remained in him at that time? Thus the enemies of this Doctrine argue against it; therefore they say a child of God may fall totally. Was there any grace at all in David's heart when he was committing adultery and murder? Was there any grace at all in Lots heart when he was committing drunkenness and incest one night after another?

I answer, There are four things which shall ever remain in God's children, and shall never be taken away quite and clean after they are once converted, and brought home to God.

First, They have an Unction, an anointing from the holy one, and that is in them, and shall abide in them forever, 1 John 2:27. The anointing which ye have received of him dwelleth in you, &c. This same anointing, it abides in the people of God forever: By this same anointing, I mean the opening of their eyes, whereby they look upon God and Christ, and his goodness, and holiness, and righteousness, and the commandments of God; and sin, and hell, and the world, and profits, and pleasures; they look upon the things of the world, and upon the things of heaven, in another manner than any other people do; God opens their eyes, that they look upon things in a different manner from other men; and this unction shall abide in them forever: 'It is true, sin may horribly dazzle their eyes; by reason of the corruptions of the flesh, and the deceivableness of sin; they may be marvelously weakened in this unction and darkness and deadness of soul may blind their eyes, and dim their looks; but it can never be quite taken away; they will have a better sight of God, and Heaven, and Christ, and heavenly things, and of the Ordinances of

God, and of the world, and their callings, and the business of the world, they shall see these things after a different manner from the world; as for example: A child of God shall see more of the word than any other; others may see the word, and yet continue in sin still; but a godly man shall see that in the word, that he dares not live in any sin for a thousand worlds. So for the Sacrament, he seeth more than a natural man; a natural man seeth nothing in the Sacrament, but he may come to it as he doth come to it, he may live in his sins still, he sees nothing in the Sacrament, he doth not see that he eats and drinks his own damnation if he come unworthily; but a child of God seeth that in the Sacrament, that he dares not come unpreparedly and unworthily by any means; he seeth that in the Sacrament that requires preparation and worthiness; so for sin, he seeth that in sin, that he dares not go on in it; he will rather die at stake, rather than do as the world doth; though through weakness and want of cautiousness, sin may get great advantage against him, yet it shall never bear him down, and the unction keeps him that he dares not lay the reins upon his neck. This is one thing shall ever remain in a child of God; and this appears by two things.

First by this, That if ever the Devil get a child of God to commit sin, he cannot carry it away as others do, but it makes the heart bleed, and wounds the conscience; he seeth such things in yielding to sin, and giving way to the Devil (I speak of known sins) the unction doth so wound him, that he cannot carry it as others do; if he tell a lie, he cannot bear it as the wicked can do, they can be merry, and jovial, and carry it away, it never troubles them; but where this unction is, it lies heavy upon the soul; as the Prophet David had this unction in the midst of all his falling into adultery; for you may see, for all he lived ten months in the sin before he came to thorough repentance; 'tis true, he did so, yet all this while he had this unction; for so himself confesseth, Psalm 51. My sin is ever before me. Though he never

sought to God soundly and thoroughly for ten months together, yet still good things were in him, his sins were ever before him, it did haunt him as a ghost, and wound his conscience; his unction did show him, what a beast am I, what a wretch, what have I done?

Secondly, It appears too by this; That a child of God, though he hath sinned never so much, yet he cannot stand it out; but let him be soundly dealt with, he is not able to hold out, but he must submit to the Lord; it is a sign this unction is in him; for he seeth God's Word, his displeasure, his grace and goodness; a child of God may be horribly peevish, and horribly transported in this fashion, to the dishonor of God, and opening of the mouth of the ungodly; but come and deal with him, show him his sins, he is not able to maintain bucklers against it; he seeth that in your reproof which will burst all his bones, and make him stoop, and fling away his sins, and cast away his disguisements; as it was with David when Nathan came to him, O saith he, I have sinned, he resented presently; the unction made him see that in Nathan's Sermon, that he was not able to hold out any longer, but now his soul bleeds, and melts within him; so when a child of God comes to the word, and hears his sins reproved, he cannot carry himself as the wicked do; they can hear the word, and keep their sins still; but a child of God hath an unction, and when the word doth discover his sins to him, he cannot hold up his hand against God, but he must fall down and bow before him.

Secondly, There shall ever remain in a child of God lusting against every known sin; there will be ever in a child of God, both before and after the committing of known sins, lusting against the flesh, the sanctified part will lust against the unsanctified; he shall never sin with an whole will, and full consent, as the Apostle speaks, Gal. 5:17. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, &c. There is a spiritual will in a child of God, that will ever lust

against the carnal will, so that a man cannot commit sin with his whole will, as a wicked man doth; as Paul saith, Rom. 7:25. He did not sin with all his soul, with all his heart; his mind was for God, the spiritual part of his will was against his sin; I find another law in my members, rebelling against the law of my mind, &c. He did not sin with all his will; for he had another law in his heart, rebelling against the law of sin and death; therefore the Apostle saith, 1 John 5:18. Whatsoever is borne of God sinneth not; that is, he cannot sin with his free will, with his whole consent. I will make this appear by five things, that a child of God can never sin with his whole will.

First, Because he never sins, but it is against his standing purpose and resolution, and determination in himself; a child of God hath a purpose never to sin against God, by using all manner of ways, by striving, praying, laboring, endeavoring, coming to all God's Ordinances, and taking all courses to resist sin; he hath this purpose; a wicked man now hath no purpose not to sin, but he hath a secret purpose to sin; a Drunkard hath a purpose when he meets with his companions to go to the Alehouse and drink with them; and a covetous man hath a secret purpose to be worldly; so let a man be a vain and an evil companion, he will not give over his company-keeping, they are his friends, and he will converse with them; tell him he must converse with the Saints of God, he will not, he hath a secret purpose to the contrary; but if a child of God sin, it is against his purpose, he hath a standing purpose not to sin, Psal. 119:27, Psal. 39:1, Psal. 101:3. So, I will never forget thy precepts, I will consider thy testimonies, and I will turn my feet unto thy ways. There are abundance of places of Scripture that show that a child of God ever takes up an absolute purpose concerning holiness and godliness of life and conversation. Now if a child of God be born down at any time, it is against the purpose of his heart, which is a sign that he doth not sin with his whole will; for if a man's will were absolutely set

upon wicked courses, then he would have a purpose and resolution to live in them; but a child of God hath always a purpose to do the contrary, and to walk in God's ways.

Secondly, Because a child of God never sins, but it is against the study and composure of his heart, it is against his course against the frame he composeth to himself, which is, that he may not sin against God, but that he is borne down with sin, Psal. 119:112. I have inclined my heart to keep thy statutes always, even to the end. He had a study and composure in his soul to keep God's statutes and to keep them always, even to the end; therefore whensoever David sinned, it was not with his whole will; for he sinned against the study and composure of his heart.

Thirdly, A child of God never sins, but there is something or other that breaks the fullness of the voluntariness of it; as for example; if a child of God sins, sometimes it is out of ignorance, he doth not know that he offends God; if he did, he would not do it for a world. Now ignorance doth lessen the voluntariness of a thing; a man in ignorance may do a thing which he would not have done if he had known it; therefore when a child of God sins in ignorance, his will is not with it.

Again, If he sin against knowledge at any time, then it is through inconsiderateness, it is in his haste; you know inconsiderateness doth lessen the will mightily; a man may in haste do a thing, which when he comes to think of, he would rather have cut off his right arm then have done it; therefore this is an argument that all his will was not in the committing of the sin, because he did not consider of it, he did not do it deliberately. Psal. 116:11. In my haste I said all men are liars; in my haste I said I am cut off from thy presence.

Again, If he do it with more deliberation, yet there is something still that doth lessen the will; there be grievous and violent passions. Now violent passions do exceedingly take away the will; a man in passion will do things that his will is absolutely against; a man will stab his dearest friend in fury and passion; as when David murdered Uriah, it was merely out of passion, the passion of shame, lest his sin should come out; to the dishonor of God, and the shame of his Kingdom and Crown; he was overwhelmed with shame and fear of the disgrace of his sins, and in fear he did do it. So Peter was in fear when he denied his Master, in fear that he should be put to death, when at the same time I dare say many qualms came over his heart, O that I were not here! O that I were not put to this! So when Jonah ran away from God, it was in a passion.

Again, Suppose that passion be down, yet something or other there will be still, that will lessen the will, as violent temptations and impulsions to sin; when a man himself at the same time hath a great act of his will to resist these temptations and impulsions to sin; when a man at the same time hath a great act of his will to resist these temptations, but the temptations are greater, and so he is born down; but here is not all the will; for he would not do it; a wicked man may have reluctancy, and resistance against sin in his conscience, but a godly man his will is against it.

Fourthly, A child of God can never be brought so low as to make a trade of sin; He that committeth sin, is of the Devil, 1 Job. 3:8, that is, he that committeth sin by way of trade; now this cannot be in a child of God; he is of the Devil that makes a trade of sin; a child of God his course is to the contrary, it is his trade to cleanse himself, and purify his heart by faith from day today; if he be impatient, he cannot make a practice of it; a child of God cannot sin, for he is sanctified. Psal. 119:1,2, they do no wicked thing, &c. This is by way

of trade and occupation; a child of God doth never sin in that fashion; therefore it is certain his full will is not to sin, for if his whole will were after sin, he would go on in it, and live in it, and make a practice of it; but he dares not, nor will not make a practice of it.

Fifthly, A child of God doth never so sin but he hath an aptness in him to rise again; a child of God hath a greater aptness to rise again and repent, and love God again; he hath a gracious heavenly aptness above all other men in the world; let him sin never so much, let his fall be never so great, there will be this aptness left, and it shall remain in him continually; and this is an evident sign he never sinned with his whole will; for if he did sin with his whole will, he would be as unapt to repent as if he had never been converted; as Solomon saith, Prov. 9:8. As who should say, a wise man is apt to take a rebuke, he is apt to take it in good part; he will take it humbly and obediently, if he be a wise man; and this is a sign his will is not absolutely set upon folly; but if you tell him you have played the fool, and dealt unadvisedly, why would you be overtaken with such a corruption? You have provoked God, &c. he will love you for it, he hath an aptness so to do, and this aptness shall ever remain; and this is another good thing remaining in the children of God, that is, a lusting against sin.

Thirdly, Another thing is forever to have a tender disposition to look after God, and to have an eye to God; this shall never be taken away quite and clean; as you may see in Jonah, though he had run away from God in that lamentable manner, yet saith he, I will look towards thy Temple; his thoughts were there, his mind was to have God's love, his goodness, and countenance to shine upon him; he must have an eye to that above all things in the world; but you will say, affliction made him do that, he was now in the Whales belly; but you

may see, he looked upon God before he was in the Whales belly; for when the Mariners asked him what he was, saith he, I am an Hebrew that fears God; and as a proof of this fear, you may see how he submitted to God; I have run away from God, saith he; he confessed his sin, and took shame to himself, and submitted himself to be flung into the Sea, that God might have glory by his drowning if he would.

So that all was not drowned in him; now that this disposition remains appears by five things.

First, Though a child of God should grow to never so sluggish a pace in Religion, that all his vigor in prayer is gone, he hath not the affection and heart in good duties that once he had, he is lumpish and untoward; yet in the midst of all these distempers, he cannot lie down to this, but he hath abundance of heaves to God to quicken him again; as David saith, Psalm 119:25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust, O quicken thou me according to thy word. His wings were off, and his chariot-wheels were knocked aside, he could not go on in good duties with any pace, he was lumpish and untoward, his soul cleaved to the dust; and yet you see what heaves he gives, he would be quickened, he would not be at this pass; Oh that God would quicken him! This was his disease, and the burden of his soul, O quicken me! O the lamentable throws and secret yearnings that are in a poor soul that is dead and dull! He cannot pray, nor find the Word work upon his soul, he can receive no fruit and benefit by the Word of God; O the moans, and yearnings, and looking's up to God, that God would quicken him! Though he hath no heart almost, but is marvelously borne down, yet he is not able to lie down under this, it is a disease to him; O quicken me!

Again, Let him be never so much hardened, as a child of God may be fearfully hardened; yet in the midst of all he hath a feeling of this

hardening, whereupon he makes out after God, and will never give him over, till he hath freed him from it, Isa. 63:17.

Again, Though a child of God be never so secure, as he may be secure and grow careless of God, yet in the midst of all, he can never be quite overcome by security, so as quite and clean to forget God; no, he must listen after God, and will hearken after God, and hear the voice of God in some measure, when the word reproves him, and finds fault with his courses, he doth hearken to it, he is not quite asleep; as the Church saith, I sleep, but my heart waketh, Cant. 5:2. She did take notice of God in the midst of all her security; it is the voice of my Beloved, saith she.

Fourthly, A child of God can never so far go down the wind, but he shall forever love the Image of God, and love mercy, and love holiness and goodness, and love the Ordinances of God, and the Image of God, wheresoever he sees it; nay, he doth love the children of God, and this is a sign unto him that he is passed from death to life, when he hardly hath any other sign; 'tis true, when sin and corruption hath exceedingly defiled God's child, it may make him shy of God's children, and make him wind out of their company; but yet grace makes him love them, they are the amiablest persons in the world in that man's eye, he blesseth the very ground they go upon, he hath this ever left in him; and by this a child of God may know that he is passed from death to life, because he loves the Brethren, 1 John 3:14.

Fifthly, A child of God shall never be brought so low, but in the midst of all he shall chide, and check, and find fault with his own soul, not as wicked men do, by reason of the terrors of conscience, but in a gracious manner; why have I done thus? Is this the thanks for the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ? Is this the thanks for the

Gospel? Are these the fruits I bring forth under God's Ordinances? Why am I thus dull to good duties? Why am I thus dastardly and cowardly for God? There will be these gracious chidings; though sin and corruption makes him full of legal terrors, yet there be some gracious checking's and expostulations, as David saith, Why art thou so heavy O my soul? O be quickened, O be awakened, hear better, and pray better! He doth check and condemn himself in a gracious manner, and he can never like of these courses; this will be forever.

Lastly, Another thing that shall be in God's children forever, is the habits of grace; they shall ever have these; though the acts of grace may be asleep, and cease working, yet the habits of grace shall ever remain; as a man, though through violent sickness he may run mad and frantic, and lose the act of reason, and be like a mad man; yet the habit of reason is in him still, because he hath a reasonable soul; and let the distemper be gone, and he will put forth the acts of reason: So a child of God, though for the present he be horribly distempered, and all the acts of grace are asleep; yet he hath the spirit of God in him, and therefore hath the habits of grace; although no grace were shining in David's heart in the act of them, when he fell into the sins of murder and adultery; yet he had all graces in the habit of them, in the root of them; as a tree, though it seem to be quite dead, yet life is in the root; so a child of God will have the habit and life of grace ever remaining in him, and this appears by two things.

First, A child of God in the midst of all his carelessness and negligence, there is a miraculous preserving of that man, that though that man hath been very careless, and wonderful unwatchful, and exposing himself to the temptations of Satan; yet he shall be strangely kept, that he shall not fall, in a wonderful manner, though it be no thank to himself, 1 Sam. 2:9. This is an evident sign of God's spirit in him, that though he let him get abundance of knocks, yet he

will not let him get that fatal knock, but he carrieth him along from day today.

Secondly, It appears by this, that this man shall never be to be converted again, but he shall forever be a new creature; though the spirit of God hide himself, and withhold his former operations, yet he will not go quite away, because a child of God shall never need to be converted again: 'It is true, the rising up of a child of God out of sin, into which he is fallen, is called conversion sometimes; as our Savior Christ saith to Peter, When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Nay a child of God may think he hath need of new conversion, and that he must begin all anew again; as David said, Create in me O Lord a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me, Psal. 51:10, as though he were to begin anew again: But a child of God is never to begin anew; no, regeneration is an incorruptible thing, 1 Pet. 2:23. His righteousness remaineth forever, he shall never have quite lost it, so as that he shall be to seek again, as if he had never had it; for if regeneration were to be renewed, a man should be reprobated again; but there is but one Faith, one Baptism, one Lord Eph. 4. Therefore if there be but one Baptism, there is but one Regeneration; The faith is but once delivered to the Saints, Jude 3. God delivers his virtues and graces but once to the soul, and is never to deliver them again; indeed they may be smothered and choked sometimes, and lie under the ashes, as coals under the embers, but they shall never be quite extinguished; there needs nothing but a stirring up and provoking of the gift of God that is in them; and this is a sign that they never fell totally away; for if they fell totally away, they must have new repentance, as if they had never had it, and they must be converted again, and regenerated again with a second regeneration, which was never heard of.

The first Use may serve for the confutation of those that hold that a child of God may fall totally away; here you see he cannot; though he may fall never so grievously into foul sins and grievous distempers, yet he shall never fall totally, but some good things shall remain in him, Psal. 37:28. The Lord preserveth his Saints. And Jude 1, they are called a people sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ. And as the Apostle speaks, 1 Pet. 2:10. He that doth these things shall never fall. A child of God shall never fall totally; it is everlasting life that he hath; that faith which he hath is an eternal grace; he that believeth hath everlasting life; so the fear of God is an everlasting grace; The fear of God endureth forever, Psal. 19:9. And therefore those that totally fall away, show plainly that they were never the children of God; as the Apostle saith, If after they have been enlightened, &c. they fall away, it is impossible they should be renewed by repentance, Heb. 6. Because they were never right, there was never any true grace in that man's heart; but saith he, I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, Heb. 6:19. As who should say, they that have things accompanying salvation, can never fall totally away.

The second Use is for comfort to God's children. Hast thou true faith, or any good things wrought in thy soul? Thou shalt never lose it; though thou mayst suffer a great deal of sickness, and fall into many decays of grace and goodness, yet thou shalt never lose all; there shall be some good things remaining in thee; the Lord will not suffer thy righteousness to fall forever, he will have thee in everlasting remembrance; therefore what a comfort ought this to be to every true believing soul?

Again, This is a great comfort against all fears. Art thou afraid thou hast no grace? I beseech thee believe the Word of God rather than thine own sense and feeling; thou hast heard the Word of God say a

child of God can never be without grace, he can never fall totally away; therefore though sense and feeling tell thee thou hast none, yet believe the Word that saith thou hast, 2 Cor. 5:10. We walk by faith, and not by feeling, saith the Apostle. The best of God's children sometimes are put to this, to live by faith, and not by sense at all; though God help thee not in prayer, nor quicken thee in good duties, and though thy sense and feeling tell thee thou hast no grace, believe it not, but believe the Word of God that tells thee a child of God shall never be without grace to the worlds end, but something shall remain in him for evermore; therefore be of good comfort, though thou see nothing, and thy neighbors see nothing, yet believe neither thyself nor thy neighbors, but rather believe the Word of God than a thousand witnesses; for it is certain, a child of God shall never fall totally away.

Again, It may be a comfort against all manner of temptations; God knows how thou mayst be tempted and assaulted; the Devil may be let loose upon thee; but still remember and think with thyself, I was told, a child of God can never fall totally away one whose heart God hath once inclined, one whose soul God hath once sanctified, one whom God hath once turned, and brought home to him in some measure, I have been told he shall never fall away; therefore hold this principle even to death, against all the Devils in Hell; God is my God, and I have grace, and shall have grace, and shall never be totally off the hooks as long as I live; as David, though he said God had forsaken him in regard of sense and feeling, yet he holds this principle still, My God, my God, Psal. 22:1.

Again, This is a great comfort against all persecutions: we know not what persecutions and what troubles we may come to, and what may become of us before we go hence: Now it is a great comfort to hear this, that come prosperity, come adversity, come what can come,

come temptations on the right hand, and on the left hand, come fire and faggot, come prison, come banishment, I tell you a child of God shall never be a bankrupt, he shall never be void of all the spirit of God, and all the graces of God, he shall have something in him still remaining. 'It is true, a child of God may be brought to that pass, that persecutions may be heavy to him, and may be a grievous cut, and he may be ready to put off this, and ready to consult with flesh and blood to put it off; and unless a child of God provide for persecution, it shall be harder for him to bear it; but yet if thou be a child of God, the Lord will never leave thee nor forsake thee, as the Apostle saith, Heb. 13:5, though the cross and affliction be never so bitter and irksome to thee, yet thou shalt have something or other that shall make thee able to bear it, and to go on in it; though thou dost but hang by the fingers ends, yet something shall bear thee up, so that thou shalt not fall.

Lastly, Labor to make it sure to our souls that we are godly; for we see what an happy estate it is to be godly; once godly, and ever godly; once a believer, and ever a believer; a man that is a godly man shall never fall totally away; therefore labor to make it sure that thou art a child of God, and hast the grace of life in thy heart; and then be of good cheer, and take that comfort the Prophet takes to himself; the Lord is my hope, I shall never be greatly moved, Psal. 62:2. As who should say, I do not indeed deny but I may be moved; but though I be moved, I shall never be greatly moved; I shall never be so moved as to break my neck, and be utterly undone; to be quite and clean forsaken, and given over for gone, so as to be removed from all hope of the Gospel, and fear of God's name; a man may be horribly assaulted, yet a child of God shall never be at such a pass as that the Lord shall leave him utterly.

We come now to the second Motive, and that is that these remainders were ready to die; we may take these words to concern the whole Church, or every particular soul that was guilty of it; but we will speak of them only as they have reference to the Church:

From whence we observe that a particular Church may be ready to die; this must not be understood of the Catholic Church, or any part of it; as if the Catholic Church or any members thereof could die; for there is no true believer, that believes in Christ by a true and a lively faith, can possibly perish or be destroyed for evermore, John 3:16, this Church is a Church that Christ hath undertaken for, to defend unto the end, Mat. 16:18, lo, I am with you to the end of the world, Mat. 28:20. So that this Catholic Church of Christ, in all the members of it, it is a safe Church; and though all particular Churches should fail, yet shall not one member of this Catholic Church; the Church is the first born, whose names are written in Heaven, Heb. 12:22,23, and if this Church cannot be in one Town, it will be in another; if it cannot be in one Kingdom, it will be among another people; the woman in the Revelation, hath the Wilderness to fly unto in the most desperate times; God prepares a place for her in one corner or other; it is impossible that the Catholic Church should die in any members or branches of it; God will have some to know his name; and if it cannot have particular meetings and congregations, God will have it subsist in some particulars; but a particular Church, a local Church, as it is taken for a company of people in such a place; any such Church may fail and die and come to nothing; you see it here in the Church of Sardis, at this time it had only a name to live, but was dead; and what did remain, they were but the last throws as it were; they did go out at last, they were ready to die.

Now that any particular Church in the whole world may die, and cease to be a Church, may be proved out of many places of Scripture:

Christ speaking of the Jews (that had as great privileges as any people upon the earth) he tells them, that they might not only cease to be a Church, but should cease to be a Church; as you may see, Mat. 21:43. The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, &c. here he tells them, that he will quite and clean depart from them, and take away all signs and marks of a true Church of God from among them; so the Apostle speaks of the Church of Corinth, he tells them they may come to be no Church, and that he doth greatly fear that such an evil shall come upon them, 2 Cor. 11:3, he doth not speak to the particular persons that were truly converted, for they were members of the Catholic Church, but he speaks to the particular Church of Corinth; they did warp and decline; though many particular members should be preserved, yet he supposeth that particular Church might fail; so he tells the Galatians, that he did much fear them; you observe days and years, I am afraid lest I have bestowed my labor in vain; so likewise he gives the Church of Rome to understand, though it were an excellent Church at that time; for he saith, their faith was spoken of abroad, and they were beloved of God; yet he tells them they have need to take heed, that they do not lose their Crown; that they do not suffer Satan, or the world, or any other means to draw them away from their profession; as goodly a Church as themselves had come to warp and decline and come to nothing, Rom. 11:20,21,22. As who should say, Thou hast no privilege of immortality, of being an immortal Church, that thou shouldst ever be a Church, that Gods Gospel and Ordinances, and his name should ever be within thy dwellings; you have no such prerogative; take heed therefore you walk worthy the Gospel, take heed you grow not high-minded and secure; it may be your case as well as any other; so the Church of Israel, the Ten Tribes, they were a Church, but in the end they came to be no Church, they provoked God to give them over, Hos. 1:9, it is a parabolical kind of speech, that the Prophet should marry an whore, and have a son, and call his

name, &c. and that was one degree of removing; and the second should be called, &c. which was the utter renouncing of his people.

Now there are four several marks and notes infallible of a true Church; and there is no particular Church but had them once, and my lose them everyone.

The first is, the sincere preaching of the Gospel is an infallible and inseparable mark of a true Church of God; wheresoever there is the true Church in any Parish or Kingdom, there must be a sincere Preaching of the Word of God; therefore a Church is described by the Preaching of the Word and Oracles of God, Rom. 3:2, that is, they were a Church of God, the Oracles of God were among them, and were to be heard, opened and declared among them; so Psal. 147:19. He showeth his word unto Jacob, and his: statutes unto Israel; that is, he makes it a Church, he explains his word, and makes it known there, so Acts 14:23, it is said that Paul and Barnabas went up and down and ordained Elders in every Church; if there were a Church, there must be Elders in it; there must be Elders, Pastors and Ministers, that may not only preach the Word, but open it aright; for the Scripture may be in an Antichristian Church, but if they in their preaching make the Scriptures doctrines of Devils, and expound them in that fashion, they are no Church; but the Elders must speak the word of God as the word of God, at least in the fundamentals; now there is no Parish or Kingdom can be said to be a Church of God, that have not true Ministers able to preach the word of God soundly, to teach the Doctrine of faith and repentance, so as people may believe and turn from their sins to God; and this is a grand mark of all other where the voice of Christ sounds, it is a sign he hath a Church there; now I say this sincere preaching of the word of God, it is not tied to any place; there is no place but may be deprived of it, if they do not walk worthy of it; it is free, and hath all the whole wide

world before it; the Lord hath not limited his Gospel to any Town or Kingdom; he may send it where he please, and continue it as long as he list, and may remove it when he thinks fit; therefore when the Corinthians were something saucy and impudent, and bore themselves upon this, that they had the word and Gospel of Christ, 1 Cor. 14:36, saith the Apostle, What? Came the word of God out from you? &c. As who should say, be humble, down with your pride, receive instruction; as the word of God is come to you, so you are not the only men in the world that the word can come to; the word may be taken from you if you take not heed; therefore receive instruction by the word, and give way to it; for the word of God may go any whether else, and you may be deprived of it if you take not heed. Rev. 6:2. Christ had his word on horse-back; now if any Kingdom or Parish, or Congregation do not give him good entertainment, he is ready to go away; and the sincere preaching of the word is the spiritual rain; now if any people grow unfruitful, and bring not forth the blessed fruit of the doctrine of life, God threatens to take away this rain; as it was with the Church of Judah, Isa. 5:6, he speaks here of his vineyard, the Church he had in Judah and Jerusalem, and he finds fault with their barrenness and unfruitfulness: when he looked they should bring forth grapes, they brought forth wild grapes; nothing but covetousness and security, and all manner of uncleanness, and they did not bring forth fruit answerable to the means of grace vouchsafed; therefore the Lord threatens to command the clouds that they shall rain no more upon his vineyard; thus you see the sincere preaching of the Gospel, any particular Church may lose and be deprived of; there is no place or Congregation that hath a lease of the Gospel, but it may lose it again, and be left in blindness, and sit in the region and shadow of death; now when a Parish or Kingdom is come to this, to be deprived of the sincere preaching of the word, it ceaseth wholly to be a Church of God. I do not deny but God may have some members of his Catholic

Church there, for they may subsist without Congregations, though very poorly, and under a great deal of affliction; but there is no National Church, no particular Church, no Parish-Church; that Parish is not a Church of God; there may be some particular members of the Catholic Church there, but there cannot be any particular Church of God there; that Congregation is a Congregation without God; and that Kingdom is a Kingdom without God; as you may see, 2 Chron. 15:3, when as a Kingdom without a preaching Priest, &c. He doth not here mean by a preaching Priest, one that barely did preach; but he means by a preaching Priest, true sincere preaching, at least in fundamentals; now when Israel were without this teaching Priest, they were without God at that time, and therefore was no true Church; for Christ is ever among the candlesticks, as you may see in the Revelation; there is no Church but Christ dwells there in his Ordinances more or less; now when people are deprived of the sincere preaching of the word, God goeth away together with his Gospel from that Nation; and they are a people without God, unless God be pleased to look upon them again; they are a Congregation of undone people, and not a Congregation of blessed people as the Church of God is, so far forth as the judgment of man can judge; where the Gospel is gone in the sincere preaching of it, they are an undone people. Prov. 29:18. Where there is no vision, the people perish: Now there is no Nation or Parish, but may be deprived of the preaching of the word, if they walk not worthy of it; therefore may cease to be a Church.

Secondly, Another inseparable mark of the true Church is this, a true and sincere use of the Sacraments, at least in the substance of them; you shall find a particular Church is described by this, to have the right administration of the Sacraments; as the Church of Judah is called circumcision, Rom. 3:1, the meaning is, what profit hath the Church of Judah above other people? And he calls them by that

name, because that was a Sacrament of the Covenant of grace which God established among them; and so it is under the Gospel; the Churches under the Gospel are defined by the Sacraments; as the Apostle speaks, Phil. 3:3, we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit; As who should say, they brag that they are the people of God, and have the seals of the covenant, as circumcision, and the like; but we are the people of God, for we worship God in the spirit? Now any Church may lose the right use of the Sacraments; the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was almost left out of the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. 11:20, saith he, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper: They met together, and had a Table spread, and bread and wine, and had a form of consecration; yet they were come to this pass, that they did not receive the Sacrament. So the Church of Rome hath lost this inseparable mark of a Church of God, they have lost the Sacrament; for the ordination of God is quite changed in the main essentials of it, and they are made the badges of an Harlot, rather than of a true Wife; They withhold the cup from the people, and administer the Sacrament in one kind only, whereas Christ commanded it to be in both kinds; again, they deliver it in an unknown tongue, whereas Christ commanded it to be delivered in a known tongue; again, they turn it into Idolatry, to adore the host, to adore the elements; so how many Churches are there up and down, that yield to the Church of Rome, that have quite and clean lost the right use of the Sacrament, nay, lost the Doctrine of the Sacraments? For this is seen, as long as the word of God continues sound in the fundamentals, the Sacraments continue in the doctrine of them; but the Church may lose the Doctrine of the Sacraments, and the right use of them.

Thirdly, Another inseparable mark of a true Church, is a sincere profession of the word of God, and true Christian Religion, either in truth and uprightness of heart, or else so far as man can judge; for though the preaching of the Word come to a place, yet it doth not

follow presently that there is a Church of God; for suppose a Minister come to a place where they are all Pagans, this doth not make a Church; as when Paul came among the Athenians and begun his Sermon, they were all Pagans and Infidels, they were not a Church presently, as soon as ever he begun his Sermon, but when divers of them embraced the word, either sincerely, or else to see to, as far as Paul and others could judge, then they were a Church; there must be a congregation of people that do profess the pure Religion, and make it appear (at least to the judgment of man) that they are godly in Christ Jesus; this is an inseparable mark of a true Church, as we may see 1 Cor. 14 33, you shall see there that the Church is called a congregation of Saints, a Church of Saints; for saith he, as in all Churches of the Saints; that is all particular Churches, they are Churches of Saints; not as if every one of them were Saints before God, but they were either Saints before God or men; so Gal. 1:22. I was unknown to the Churches of Judea, which were in Christ; mark it, all particular Churches, are Churches that are in Christ; the members of those Churches are in Christ, either truly, or before men; now I say, this mark may perish from any particular Church; there is no Church that is a Church of Saints, but may become a Church of Devils, and a Synagogue of Satan, all wicked, and dissolute, and ungodly. Jer. 29:2. Jeremiah was weary of his life, he would count it a great blessing of God, if he would open a place to him to be apart, that he might not be among them, he was even tired, and his life was uncomfortable; they were so wicked and abominable, and so far off from being a Church of God, he did rather wish himself in a wilderness then there; so it may be with any particular Church, if they look not to the word of God, and the Ordinances of God, and good order and Government, they may come to lose this essential and inseparable mark of a true Church of God.

Fourthly, Another mark (though I cannot call it inseparable, because it may be severed) is true discipline, and the right use of the censures of the Church; when there is true discipline according to the Institution of Christ in his Church, this is a mark of the Church of God. Now a Church of God may lose this, and be stripped stark naked of true discipline, to have no public reproof, no excommunication of those that are profane; nay, these censures may be perverted and corrupted, so as to use them against Christ, and not for Christ; to excommunicate, not drunkards, and adulterers, and profane people, but those that are sincere and godly, and lead an honest and pure life; it was so with Judea, John 9:22. These words spake his parents, &c. Here you see discipline was out of this Church, and so far out that it was quite perverted; and such as should be counted the only members of the Congregation, they threw them out; if any confessed Christ to be the Redeemer of the world, which was a necessary truth, they threw them out of the Church; so that we see the censures may be quite gone. Now 'tis true, this is not an inseparable mark of the Church of God, it is not a sign of the esse of the Church, but it is a sign of the been esse, the well-being of a Church: A Church of God, 'tis true, may be without discipline; as the Church of Pergamos, the Spirit saith, it was a true Church, and commends this Church; yet (saith he) I have a few things against thee; what were those? Namely, that they wanted discipline, that they did not throw out wicked and rotten members, and such as were erroneous in doctrine and manners; this Church was guilty of suffering this; if they had thrown them out, God would never have charged them with it; the Church cannot hinder but there will be wicked and ungodly men, but as long as they throw them out of the congregation, not to have communion with them, the Church hath washed her hands; but it seems this Church had not washed her hands of this. So the Church of Thyatira, Rev. 2:18, the Spirit of God calls it a true Church, yet ver. 20, he tells them plainly, it was a

grievous offense to God that they had not discipline in the Church; Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, &c. Thou hast suffered this, and let her alone, and dost even countenance her, and art guilty of all her errors; for thou didst not throw her out, and discard her from being an outward member of the Church; so that we see the Church may be without discipline in the being of it; yet I make this a mark of the Church of God, because though a Church may be without this, yet it is mightily defaced, and wants its beauty: And again, it is a Church that cannot continue; for when they do not reprove and rebuke offenders, and deal severely with them directly, they will infect the whole body, and it must needs weaken and decline, till at last it comes to nothing; therefore I make this a sign of a true Church. Thus we see there be four notes of a true Church, which it may have, and afterwards come to be no Church.

Now in the next place I will show you there be several notes of a false Church; and the Church that once had those true notes, may have none but false notes.

As first Antiquity. You shall have some Churches, as the Church of Rome, they brag of Antiquity, they have Antiquity for their prayers for the dead, and Purgatory, and the like, and they show 5, 6, or 700, years for these things; and none but a company of upstart fellows, as Luther, and Calvin, and Perkins, did ever condemn these things. This is a false mark; and a Church that hath this mark, may be a Synagogue of Satan, and not a Church of God: For, as a Divine saith, no Church can be sound because of Antiquity, unless it hath been from the beginning; as Christ, when the Jews pleaded Antiquity, he saith, It was not so from the beginning. All Antiquity is nothing, unless it be from the first beginning, when God's Institution and first ordering was; a lie will be a lie, notwithstanding its Antiquity; and so

a whore, the elder she is, the impudenter she is; and Errors and Heresies in process of time grow to be more infectious, they take deeper root. Now if they were once new, what if there were a thousand years upon such a Doctrine, and such a manner of Administration of the Sacrament, what is this to the purpose, if there were a time when this was a novelty and a new device? As the Apostle saith, 2 Thes. 2:7. The Mystery of iniquity worketh. Therefore no marvel it is grown ancient, no wonder it is come to be gray-headed; this is nothing, we are not to pick our Religion by years, but by Scripture; let a thing be never so old, if we cannot prove it by Scripture, this is nothing; if the Church have no other mark to plead that they are the Church of God, but Antiquity, that is a poor plea; as Paul thought before his conversion, I am of the Church; He was exceeding zealous for the traditions of his Fathers, Gal. 1:14. This is a poor thing; Religion may be a vain Religion for all this. 1 Pet. 1:18. If any people come to be redeemed by Christ, Christ comes to redeem them from such Religion as this; the drunkard may show Antiquity for his drunkenness, and the adulterer may show Antiquity for his uncleanness, &c. But he is a true Christian that can show the Scripture for his title; and that is a true Church that maintains for matters of Faith, and walks for matters of manners, according to the Scriptures. Now if a Church hath no better mark then Antiquity, it is a false Church.

Another mark of a false Church is universality; when they have no other mark to show, but that the most are of their side, they can show the greatest bulk; if you go and count, there is most of their number a great deal; this is a sure mark of a false Church; yet the Church of Rome makes use of this mark; for they confute our marks of a true Church, and will have multitudes to be their mark; and by this we may see they are Antichrist, Rev. 13:12, so Rev. 13:8. All that dwell upon the earth, whose names were not written in the book of

the Lamb, worshipped the beast; the reprobate are the greatest part of the world; now here he saith, all that dwell upon the earth almost shall worship the Beast; if this were the mark of a true Church, Christ had miscounted himself when he counted his flock a little flock. Luke 12:32. Fear not little flock, &c. And again, he saith, Strive to enter in at the straight gate, &c. He describes a true Church by the fewness, and not by the universality of it; therefore what a madness is this to make universality a note of a true Church?

Thirdly, Another is succession of Pastors from the Apostles times to this very day; this they make a mark of a true Church; O say they we can show succession down from Peter here at Rome, even to this day: The Protestants are not able to show this; this is a poor mark; Caiphas that condemned Christ, could show succession from Aaron; so a Church may be a Church that renounceth Christ, and is an Antichristian Church, and yet may show succession; and other Churches, as Alexandria and others can show succession as well as Rome; so that succession of Pastors is nothing, unless they can show succession of Doctrine.

Fourthly, Unity, They make that to be a mark of the true Church; and this is a false mark too; others say they, have not unity among them, but we have unity; thus you may as well prove the Devils in Hell to be a Church, for there is unity; as our Savior saith, If Satan be divided against Satan, how can his Kingdom stand? So Acts 4:27, you may see what an unity was there, they were all of one knot and one mind; there was a marvelous great unity among them all to condemn Christ; the Church must be proved to be a true Church, before unity can be brought to be any sign of it; for the more unity is in a wicked way, the more hellish is the conspiracy.

Fifthly, Miracles is a note of a false Church; now the Papists say, We can show miracles for our Religion; where can you show miracles? Christ saith, we may know Antichrist and his adherents by this, Mat. 24:24, there shall arise false Christ's, &c. False Christ's and such as make although they were Christians, and the people of God, and come to you in the name of the Lord, and they may show you signs and wonders to make you believe them; but they are the Devils signs, and they shall be very strong to delude the world; so 2 Thes. 2:9, the Apostle shows us that the coming of Antichrist shall be after this manner; therefore no marvel that they plead signs and wonders, and apparitions of the dead, from their doctrine of the Mass and Purgatory, and prayers for the dead, &c. this is an argument that their Church is Antichristian; that which is a true Church according to the Scripture, needs no new miracles; therefore Calvin and Luther that propounded nothing but the truth of the Scripture, they need bring no miracles to confirm it if indeed they had brought any new doctrines of their own heads, they had need to have brought miracles to confirm them; but when they brought nothing but what they could prove out of the Scripture, Scripture-miracles were enough to prove this.

Sixthly, Another mark is pomp and stateliness: a Church may come to have no other mark but this, that it is a goodly and stately Church, a pompous kind of serving God; things are set out pompously, this is rather an argument of an Antichristian Church; for the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abominable in the sight of God.

Lastly, They make outward prosperity and happiness to be a mark of the true Church of God; but this is rather a mark of a Synagogue of Satan, For all that live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3:12. And if any man will be my Disciple (saith Christ) let him

take up his cross and follow me. I say the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world; therefore prosperity and felicity is not a sign of a Church of God; thus we see that a Church that was once a true Church of God, may come to be no true Church; they may lose all the true notes of a Church of God, and have no other notes, but such as prove it to be no true Church, but rather a Church of Infidels and unbelievers.

The first reason is, because the Church of God is Catholic, that is, it is not tied and pent up in any place, God may carry it where he will, he may set up his Church in what Country, and Town, and Family he will, and choose what particular person in the whole world he will; God is not tied to any; therefore when the Jews bore themselves upon this, that they were the Church, and God's Ordinances and Oracles were appropriated to them, they came at the first hour of the day, at the first hand; but if the Gentiles were a Church, it was but at the second hand, they came but at the eleventh hour; he takes up a parable, Mat. 20, and saith, they that are last, shall be first, &c. and he gives a reason, shall I not do what I will with mine own? So God may do with his Ordinances, and gifts and graces of his spirit; he may bestow them where he will, he may give his Gospel to a Kingdom, and take it away at his pleasure; and he may stay as long as he will, and be gone when he will.

Secondly, God doth not need any place, any people; though a place be never so glorious and stately, and though it be never so admirable a Church, God doth not need that Nation, but if it grow malapert, and stiff and stubborn against him, the Lord will make them know he hath no need of them, and cares not for them; as the Jews, when they bore themselves upon this that they were the people of God, and had Abraham for their father, and were barren and fruitless and dissolute in their lives, you may see how John the Baptist answers their foolish conceit, think not with yourselves, we have Abraham to our father,

&c. Mat. 3:9, he hath no need of you; you are the children of Abraham, but know God can cast you into Hell for all you are the children of Abraham, and can make Heathens and Infidels children of Abraham; so when the Jews boasted, Mal. 1, that God had chosen them, he hated Esau, and loved Jacob, and they grew to be insolent and disobedient to God, and polluted his holy Temple, and despised his name; see what God saith, I will accept none of these things at your hands, I will gather me a people among the Heathens, Mal. 1:13. As who should say, I want not people, I can go among the Heathen, and there have my worship regarded which you have slighted and neglected.

Thirdly, There is no particular Church in the world hath a promise always to be a Church, but if they grow careless and secure and unprofitable under the means, the Lord will be gone; he hath made no such promise to continue with them forever; 'tis true, there is never a godly soul, never a member of the Church but God hath promised he will never leave him, 2 Tim. 2:19, and Mat. 28:20, he saith so of his own people, he will never leave them, but the good things he hath begun in them, he will perfect them in the day of Christ; nay, though all particular Churches should be destroyed, God will have a care of these particular Saints of his Catholic Church, that not any limb of it shall cease; but for particular Churches God hath made no such promises, but upon condition, Rom. 11:22, if a Parish or Kingdom continue in the fear of God's name, and regard his commandments, and be fruitful under his Ordinances, and thankful for his goodness, then he will stay; but otherwise saith he, thou shalt be broken off, though thou be the famousest Church in the world.

This may confound the Church of Rome, who promise to themselves they shall never be unchurched; though they have been unchurched many years, yet they brag they are the only Church in the world;

Bellarmino brags that St. Peters chair shall never go from Rome; and no wonder, for the spirit of God foretold it, Rev. 17. I sit as Queen and shall never be a Widow, I shall be a Wife, a Spouse forever, I shall see no sorrow; you see how secure she is, just the child of her proud mother Babylon, Isa. 47:8. So 'tis with the Church of Rome, I am, and none else; I am; she calls herself the Roman Catholic Church, as if there were no Church but Rome; all the Nations of the world, if they will be a Church, must be members of that Church, as it was said of Rome in Augustus time, If Jupiter should come down from Heaven, there is no Country for him to come into but Rome; look into this or that country, Rome hath to do there; so Rome, notwithstanding her Apostasy, is grown to that height of pride and security, as if she were, and none but she. O poor deluded company, there is scarce any true note of a Church of Christ among them, and yet they make themselves to be the only Church.

This may be an Item for all the particular Churches in the whole world, for England, Denmark, France, wheresoever is any. Here you see the Church of Sardis had but a name to live, and was dead; there was nothing but remainders in her, and they were ready to die and come to nothing. But what speak I of the Church of Sardis? Where are all the famous Churches of Asia, of Pergamos and Thyatira? &c. What is become of those famous Churches? Are they not turned into a wilderness, and to worship Mahomet and Idols, and are even grown as bad as Heathens? But what need I speak of these? Look upon the Church of the Jews, that were the principal people of God; no Church like that; Israel is my first borne; there was never any Church under the Gospel that was his only Church; but Judea was his only one, his pleasant Plant; nay they were the Fathers of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, Rom. 9, yet notwithstanding that Church was cut off. When the holy City proved a Harlot; when these people grew to be weary of God and his Ordinances, and grew to be

loose, and would not be ruled by God and his Word, the Lord gave them a Bill of Divorcement, and sent them away; therefore let us be warned by them; it is a fearful thing when God for Idolatry shall cast off Churches, and yet we not tremble, but live under security and hardness of heart, and take not warning by it. Jer. 3:8. God saith, Yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but played the harlot. When God cast off the ten Tribes, Judah saw this, and heard of this, and could not choose but understand this, and yet she did not fear for all this: So when this Parish, or any other Parish shall hear of any Parish that is unchurched and unministered, and God hath taken away his presence from among them, and there shall be no sign of his gracious presence anymore, the Gospel is gone from such a place, and we hear of it, and yet do not fear, but are as secure as ever, as unfruitful under the means as ever, and do not stir up ourselves to be more obedient to God and his Ordinances, but go on to play the harlot, and go a whoring from God from day today; nay we are even ready to promise ourselves peace for all this; this is a fearful thing. Mark what the Lord saith, Jer. 7:11,12,13,14,15. He speaks there of Jerusalem: So when God hath poured out his plagues and punishments upon other Parishes, and other places, and hath taken away his Ark, and the glory is departed from them, and they are left in the shadow of death, and we see it, and yet tremble not at it, God calls upon us from day today to amend our lives, that we might find mercy with him; God tells us, as he hath done to other Parishes in the Kingdom, so he will do to us; the Lord will lay us desolate and waste as other parts of the land are; and certainly the Lord's wrath and vengeance is hard at our heels if we do not speedily repent; who knows how soon God may deprive us of his Word and Ordinances? For I have not found thy works perfect before God.

If we take these words in sunder, they contain these five Propositions.

First, That the covenant of grace requires works.

Secondly, That these works should be perfect.

Thirdly, That they should not only be perfect in the sight of men, for that is nothing; but perfect in the sight of God, before God.

Fourthly, That the Lord Jesus searcheth whither they be so or no.

Fifthly, Upon due search he finds it out many times, not only in particular persons, but in particular Churches, as we see here in the Church of Sardis, that their works are not so.

For the first of these, That the second Covenant requires works, we see here that the Lord Jesus looks for works in the Church of Sardis that were in covenant with him; 'tis true, there is this difference between the two Covenants; the first covenant requires works as the condition of it; He that doth them, shall live in them, Gal. 3:12. The doers of the Law shall be blessed, Rom. 2:13. Therefore it is called the covenant of works, and that in two senses.

First, In that works are the condition of it.

Secondly, In that it is left unto man; God gives only a power not to sin, if so be that man will; but he doth not give the will. Now the second covenant is not a covenant of works; the condition of it is not works, but the condition of it is faith; The just shall live by faith, Rom. 1:17. Therefore it is called a covenant of grace, and that in two respects opposite to the former; not only in regard that these works are done by another, and so nothing is required of the party justified, but only faith for his justification; but also because though the covenant of grace require works, yet God doth not expect a man

should do anything of himself, but it is by grace; we are saved by grace through faith, and not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. I say the second covenant is a covenant of grace, and yet it requires works.

And works are here necessary. First by necessity of presence; for though faith be the condition, yet it is such a faith as hath necessarily good works together present with it; as the Apostle speaks, Faith if it have not works is dead, Jam. 2:17. Good works they are inseparably joined together with true faith; for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also; not as though works were the essential form of true faith; but the nature of faith, if it be true, is such as doth necessarily cause good works to accompany with it.

They are necessary by necessity of inseparable effects; good works are not only present together with faith, but they are so present, as that they do flow from faith. God hath required such a faith in the covenant of grace, as doth produce good works; they are not only inseparable from faith, but thus inseparable, that true faith must needs produce them; He that hath this hope, purifies himself as he is pure, 1 John 3:3. That is, He that hath this faith, he sets down faith by the effect hope, and sets it down by another effect, it must needs purify, it makes that man purify himself as Christ is pure. So Christ having exhorted them to believe, having raised up their minds to believe the things that are above, Lay up your treasure in Heaven, Mat. 6:20, in the next verse he shows this will have the effect of all manner of good works; For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also; it will draw up your hearts, and make you heavenly-minded, and make you seek the things that are above; where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. So likewise we may see Heb. 11, thorough the whole chapter, what abundance of effects are set down of true saving faith: By faith Abel offered sacrifice to God. By faith Noah being warned of God, obeyed God, and did the things

that God commanded, verse 7. And so by faith Abraham when he was called, yielded to God. So by faith believers wrought righteousness, and did wonderful things, subdued Kingdoms, &c. They were able to work wonderful effects; so that when a man hath not works, when he doth not obey God through the power of faith, he hath not faith itself

Thirdly, Good works are necessary by necessity of signs; they are not only to be in a Believer as effects, but as proofs of his faith; for a man must justify his faith by his works; they are signs and proofs whereby he may know whether his faith be true, and of the right stamp or no; for if a man's faith be a lively faith, a faith that doth justify, though in the act of justification it be alone, yet in existency it is not alone, but it hath good works together with it, as signs and marks of the same; as 1 John 1:6. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. Hereby we may know that we are deceived; we may think we have faith, and so fellowship together with him; yet if we walk in darkness, we may know we lie; for this could not be if we had fellowship with God. So 1 John 2:4. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar. If a man should once think that he knows God with the knowledge of faith, and yet keeps not the commandments of God, by this very thing he may know that he is a liar. Hereby shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another, saith Christ; and as it is a sign to others, so it is a sign to a man's own self; Hereby we know that we are passed from death to life, if we love the Brethren. He sets down one good work instead of all other; if we bring forth the works of new obedience, and if our hearts be purged of God, if we bring forth the fruits of holiness, this is a sign we have faith; for faith makes a man to choose God for his God, and raises a man up to see him to be the chiefest good of all and to see all happiness in him, and a supply of all the good we need in him, and so it makes a man to love God, and by love to do the works of God.

Fourthly, Good works are necessary also by necessity of commandment, not only to be effects and signs of faith, but they are also such things as are commanded of God; God hath commanded good works, that we should walk in all holiness of conversation, to be holy as he is holy, that we should be holy in our carriages and behavior, Tit. 3:8. The same God that commands us to believe, commands us to maintain good works, as we may see there; we see that Ministers are to urge people, and maintain it against all gainsayers, that there is a necessity of good works, and that the Lord will have us to go on in them; for faith through the Object of it, as it justifies, is the promise of God in Christ for forgiveness of sins; yet faith in itself looks upon the whole word of God, and looks whatsoever it seeth joined together by that, it joins together of itself; as the Promises and Commandments are bound together by an inviolable knot, so faith joins them together; it cannot take the promises of God, but it must take the commandments of God also; faith looks upon God, and as it seeth him to be gracious, whereby it comes to have faith to rely upon him, so also it seeth him to be holy, a God that is severe against sin, and hateth unrighteousness; so that it is necessary that works be together with faith, for the commandment and nature of God require it.

Fifthly, They are necessary also by necessity of end; for God hath ordained his people to this end, that they should bring forth good works. Eph. 2:10. We are his workmanship created in Christ to good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them. We are created in Christ Jesus, not only that we should be saved, but that we should bring forth good works. Now good works are necessary by necessity of end in divers respects.

First to this end, To glorify God in the world; Let your light so shine before men, &c. Matth. 5:16. So 1 Pet. 2:12, the Apostle saith, Having

our conversation honest amongst the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, &c. For when a Christian that professeth he believes in God and Jesus Christ, is plentiful in all manner of good works, this stops the mouth of all gainsayers: You know Piety and Religion is hated in the world, the Gospel finds opposition among men. Now when those that are Professors are loose and licentious in their lives, this opens their mouths against the truth; but when our lives and conversations hold forth Jesus Christ, as we take up the profession of his holy name, so they are agreeable to his will, they are just, and holy, and righteous, and good; this makes men think in their conscience this is of God; this stops their mouths that they cannot rail at the Gospel.

Secondly, They are necessary to do good to others, and convert others, as the Apostle instanceth in women that believe, if they be zealous of good works, if they be chaste, and humble, and meek, and discreet; by this means they may be instruments to convert their husbands that believe not, 1 Pet. 3. The Lord looks that his people, all that believe in him, should be fruitful in good works, that they may win and gain others to the faith.

Thirdly, Another end is to purify ourselves; for it is virtue that must throw out vice; we are all borne by nature filthy and unclean, and full of noisome lusts, and the way to expel these is by the contrary virtues, 1 Pet. 1:22. Seeing you have purified your souls by obeying the truth.

Fourthly, Another end is to qualify us for Heaven; we cannot be qualified for the Kingdom of heaven unless we be holy and godly in Christ Jesus, except we have our conversations honest as becometh Saints; for though it be faith that entitles a man to the Kingdom of Heaven, and gives a man right to the Kingdom of God; yet holiness

and conformity to the mind of God, and the image of God, is that which doth fit and qualify a man for to enter into the Kingdom of God; as Christ saith, Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Though it be true, we are saved by grace, and so good works have no causality, no proper efficiency in our salvation; yet notwithstanding they are a cause sine qua non, without them there can be no salvation; we cannot enter into God's Kingdom, except we be humble, and meek, and lowly; except we fear God, and be according to his mind in all things in some measure, we cannot enter into his Kingdom. Mat. 5:8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. A man cannot be admitted to the Beatifical Vision of God, except he be pure in heart; and he cannot enjoy the Kingdom of grace neither here unless he be pure in heart, Rev. 21:27. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 13. It is impossible we should enter into God's Kingdom by having actual possession of it, except we be holy and fitted for it, as the Apostle saith, Col. 1:12. It is impossible that drunkards, and unclean persons should have society with the blessed Trinity, with the eternal God, with the Spirit of holiness, to dwell with them for evermore; we must be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.

Fifthly, To proportion our Reward; for though we are saved only by grace, yet God doth proportion our reward, according to the multitude, and zeal, and fervency of our good works; for God's Covenant is a remunerating Covenant; for mercy doth not consist only in the pardoning of a man, but also in the sanctifying of a man, and the inclining of a man's heart to new obedience, that there may be remuneration; for though God doth not reward people for their works, yet according to their works he doth. 2 Cor. 9:6. He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, &c. Though a man be a Believer, and a godly man, if he be sparing in his godliness, he shall

fare accordingly, and if he be abundant in the work of the Lord, he shall reap abundantly; for as there are differences and degrees of torments to the wicked, so there be degrees in the Kingdom of God, and in glory, and the Lord doth reward his people according to their works.

Lastly, Good works are necessary by necessity of thankfulness; it is necessary that we having received the forgiveness of our sins, and God being pleased to be our God, and to deliver us from the wrath to come, and the power of Satan, that we should be thankful for these mercies; as David saith, Psal. 118:19. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and be thankful, Col. 1:15. When David had considered what the Lord had done for his soul, saith he, what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? As soon as ever God hath been good to a man to open his eyes, to let him see his damned estate and condition, and to let him have hope, and comfort, and encouragement in him, concerning deliverance from it, and bestowing upon him his heavenly Kingdom and glory, it cannot be but the soul must be thankful; what shall I do unto the Lord for all his benefits? You know there is nothing that we can do back again for these benefits, except we will praise and glorify him, by living unto him and not unto ourselves; therefore when the Psalmist had reckoned up the benefits of God to Israel, Psal. 105:46, he concludes that they may keep his statutes and observe his Laws.

First, Here we see how horribly the Papists wrong us when they say we do not teach people good works, and therefore nickname us, and call us Solifidians, whereas we maintain a necessity of them, and as great a necessity of them as they; only we beat down the merit of them, that no man may think to be saved by works; as a reverend Divine Mr. Carter said, we teach people holiness and righteousness, and good works, as if there were no way to be saved but by good

works; and again, we teach that there must be as much hanging upon the grace of God, as if we could show no more to be saved then the vilest drunkard or adulterer; all our righteousness is as a menstruous cloth, and it is God's mercy that any of us have an heart to do good; you see how the world runs after their hearts lusts, and every man is of this disposition; and it is God's grace and mercy to incline any man's heart to walk in that way that tends to his heavenly Kingdom: and if God should not be infinitely gracious to pardon us for our best doings, they would rise up in judgment against us; God might condemn us for all our prayers and performances.

Secondly, This teacheth Ministers how to preach to people, to call upon them that they have an operative faith, not only to believe, but to have a faith that may be fruitful, and make their lives not to barren in obedience; and to be abundant in the works of the Lord and to serve him, and fear him, and glorify him in the world; as the Apostle having showed how Christ gave himself for us, to purchase to himself a people zealous of good works, saith he, these things speak, Tit. 2:14,15. We must speak these things, and rebuke our hearers with all authority; rebuke evil workers, and tell them they turn the grace of Christ into wantonness, they trample the blood of the Covenant under their feet, and kick at the spirit of grace, and misconstrue the meaning of the Covenant of God in Christ, and rend themselves off that they cannot enter into life; for no man without holiness shall see God: Ministers should tell people plainly, and affirm constantly, that unless they bring forth good fruit they shall be cast into the fire; and that without holiness they cannot have license and dispensation to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; for God is an holy God, and our faith is an holy faith, and the promises are made to none but those that lead an holy and a godly life; we must preach these things, and reprove with all Authority, and let people know that are loose

Christians, and Hell-hounds, that if they do not depart from iniquity, they shall see God as a Judge to condemn them for evermore.

Thirdly, This confutes all the graceless conceits of men, that think to be saved by Christ, and yet walk not after Christ; they cast not away from them the works of darkness, nor renounce their wicked ways, and yet hope to be saved by Christ; this is a cursed and blasphemous hope, whereby a man blasphemeth God, 1 Joh. 3:6, whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him; if a man live in his sins still (that is the meaning of it) and walks not after the spirit, but after the flesh, that man hath not seen him, neither ever known him; he doth not know Jesus Christ otherwise then the Devils know him, otherwise then Hell-hounds and reprobates may know him; for the second Covenant is as holy as the first, and rather more holy, and before God hath done, it shall bring a man to a nearer communion with God, and a nearer likeness; it will raise the powers and faculties of the soul, so as I believe Adam in innocence never attained unto so much participation of God, as God by degrees will bring a man unto by the Covenant of grace; therefore no man can look to be saved by Christ except he mean to be ruled by Christ, and to have him for his Lord and Master, and to obey him in all things; if a man should lie sick in his bed of a burning fever, and should say he were well, would you believe him, so if we see a man that is burning in lust, wallowing in sinful courses, that hath a carnal and a worldly heart, unmortified and unsubdued to God, if he should say that he were in Christ, and hoped to be saved by him, believe him not; all the world cannot save this man; for the Lord Jesus Christ hath this very name Jesus, not only because he shall save his people from hell, but also from their sins, and make them fruitful in all the works of God.

Fourthly, To exhort that we would consider of this, the Gospel doth call for works as well and as strongly, yea, and more strongly than

the Law, and there be necessary uses of holiness and obedience and all manner of pious works under the Gospel; as the Apostle saith, Tit. 3:4, let us maintain good works for necessary uses, &c. We are barren trees; whatsoever we are, we are barren and dead Christians, and have no life of God in us, if we bring not forth good works; for good works are necessary for many uses.

First, They are for signs, to show us what estate and condition we are in; we may know what estate and condition we are in by our carriage and conversation; whither it be earthly or heavenly, holy or profane, so is our condition either happy or damned.

First, They are signs of a man's election, 2 Tim. 1:20, this is a sign and a badge, and a token whereby we may know that we are vessels of honor, if we be sanctified and made meet for our masters use, and furnished and prepared for every good work; if we do not deny all ungodly lusts, and live righteously and soberly in this present world, we have rather badges and tokens of reprobation than election; we cannot say that God hath appointed us to attain salvation by Jesus Christ, but have rather marks of hell and destruction upon us; and what is the reason that men that profess Christ, do so much question their election? No wonder when we are so scanty in our holiness and obedience to God, and so backward to do good; there is no inkling of God's everlasting favor breaking out, whereas if we were plentiful in good works, it would break forth as the Sun out of a cloud.

Secondly, They are signs of effectual calling, Jude 1, if a man be called of God, he is sanctified also and kept in an holy course; preserved in Christ. 2 Pet. 1:3, you are an holy Nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the virtues of him that hath called you, 1 Pet. 2:9, so that we may be sure that we yet abide in darkness, and are under the power of sin and Satan; if we have not given over our

sinful courses, and conformed ourselves to the Gospel of God, we were never called according to God's purpose, but lie under the wrath of Heaven to this day; it is holiness and righteousness that is a sign of our effectual calling.

Thirdly, They are signs of justification also; as the Apostle showeth, but you are washed, &c. 1 Cor. 6:11, you see if we be justified, we are also sanctified; so 1 Joh. 1:7, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, &c. We have not one drop of the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our souls by God's eternal spirit through faith, unless we walk in the light, and bring forth the works of the light.

Fourthly, They are signs of adoption, John 8:39. If you were Abraham's children, you would bring forth the works of Abraham; so if we were God's children, we would do the works of God, the will of God: The Apostle having spoken of the adoption of Saints, behold what love the Father hath showed to us, &c. presently he tells us that holiness and righteousness follows from hence; he that hath this hope purifieth himself, as he is pure. So Rom 8:14. As many are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God; this is an infallible sign, if we be the sons of God, we are led by the spirit of God; so that we have no mark that we are the children of God, but rather of the Devil, unless we walk in pureness of conversation from day today.

Fifthly, They are the marks of our love to God, as Christ saith, if you love me, keep my commandments, John 14:15, we love not God except we keep his commandments; as ever you would be able to say in truth you love me, keep my commandments; look that you yield not to the corruptions of the world, look that you renounce the Devil and all his works; I will conclude you love me not at all, if you keep not my commandments; and he that loves not Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha, saith the Apostle.

Secondly, Consider this, that the reason why we cannot pray better is because we are no more abundant in good works; not only because we want faith, but because we want good works; for certainly this is a great help to prayer, a great support to the soul, a great encouragement to go to the Throne of grace, and a great sign that God means to hear a man when God hath given him an heart to fear him, and love him, and make conscience of his ways; as the Apostle saith, 1 John 3:22. Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do the things pleasing in his sight: As who should say, when we go to God, and entreat him to be merciful to us, and entreat such and such favors that we stand in need of; we know that we shall receive them, because we keep his commandments. These are admirable supports to hold up the hands to the Throne of grace, and to make us importunate in prayer, and confident, because we know God hath poured forth his gracious good will and pleasure into our hearts, and hath given us a mark he loves us, and bears us good will indeed. Why can we pray no better, our hands are weak and our knees feeble; there is no power in our supplications to the Almighty, the spirit of grace is departed from us; why the spirit of holiness is gone; there is the reason of it, when people are loose and do not mortify their lusts, when they are not abundant in following God, in fearing God, and serving God, and obeying the commandments of God, they cannot have confidence at the Throne of grace.

Thirdly, Consider this would be a great cheering and rejoicing in the evil day; whatsoever afflictions come upon us in this world, if we can carry letters testimonial in our own conscience, that we do serve God with a pure conscience in this world; as Paul saith, 2 Cor. 1:12. God knows what evil may befall us before we are a little older, what temptations may await us, what distresses and calamities may fall upon us; happy are we if we have the testimony of a good conscience,

that we walk in the ways of God, and fear him, and love those things that are beloved of God; if we love his children, his Ordinances, his glory, and are tender of it; a good conscience tender of the commandments of God and his ways, is the best comfort a man can have in the world, setting aside his faith in God; and this is an evidence of his faith too; how can we tell what may be? May be the best of us may come to David's pass; you know how he was put to it once in the time of his misery and affliction he was fain to look if he could see an honest life and conversation, whither he had pleased God: saith he, I communed with my spirit, and made diligent search, Psal. 77:6. How have I pleased God, and followed God? What manner of life have I led? He ransacked all his life and conversation, and would be glad to see he had done the things pleasing to God; it would be more comfort then if all the Angels in heaven had spoken comfort; so temptations or afflictions may be upon us, that we would be glad to see signs and tokens of God's favor in sanctifying our hearts, and making us to be obedient to his will, and tremble at his word; and if we cannot see these things, woe unto us, 1 Tim 6:19, charge them that be rich in the world, that they be not high-minded, &c. So we do not know what times may come, we had need lay a good foundation for comfort against the time to come, and charge rich men that they be rich in good works; charge all Christians, all that desire to stand in the evil day, to be rich in good works, and abound in them, and lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.

Lastly, Consider that your want of obedience and good works is the cause of all God's temporal judgments, why God doth stop the bottles of Heaven, and turns the Earth into dust, and parcheth our Corn; we see God hath begun the plague among us in the principal place of the Kingdom; wherefore is all this? See what the Prophet saith, Jer. 3:3, therefore have the showers been withholden, because you have been

wicked; thou hast an whores forehead, and refuseth to be ashamed; thy carelessness and barrenness under the means of grace, thy impenitency and hardness of heart, these have caused the showers to be withholden, and have made God to deny the former and latter rain.

The second point is this, As the Covenant of grace requires works, so it requires perfect works; he tells the Church of Sardis that he looks for works, and perfect works, but cannot find them; so that the second Covenant requires perfect works.

But you will say, how can that be? Paul himself that was as forward a man, and had as perfect works as any man, yet he confesseth he was not perfect, Phil. 3:12, so likewise here we know but in part, 1 Cor. 13:10, perfection is not yet come; in the world to come it may come. Heb 12, there we read of the spirits of just and perfect men; then men are made perfect, but they are not perfect in this life.

I answer, 'tis true, therefore there is a double perfection. First, A perfection of degrees, to be perfectly perfect, and so no man can be perfect by any perfection inherent; indeed the Covenant of works requires this perfection, but the Covenant of grace doth not; indeed when we come to glory, there shall be this perfection, but not in this life; in this life the Lord only subdues our sins, but casts them not into the bottom of the Sea till the life to come; therefore this perfection cannot be looked for upon earth.

Therefore secondly, There is another perfection, and that is a perfection by way of sincerity and uprightness. Job. 1:1. Job was a perfect and upright man. Now this perfection differs from the other five ways; the perfection God requires in the Gospel from that in the Law.

First, The Law stands upon performances, as well as the will and desire: and a man is not perfect, unless he perform all as well as desire to do it; But now the perfection of the Gospel is without these performances, indeed that man labors for as many performances as he can, but it may be only by desires, Rom. 7:18. Paul was perfect by Evangelical Perfection, he was upright before God, yet he could not reach performances; no, he had a will to be good, he did unfeignedly desire to be godly, and serve God in everything unfeignedly, endeavoring after godly courses, yet could not attain to that which he did desire. So it was with Nehemiah, and all the good people of God, Neh. 1:11. O Lord, I beseech thee let thine ear be attentive to the prayers of thy servants who desire to fear thy name. He could hardly say that he did perform it, but he did desire it; he could hardly say he did love, and obey God, and do his will, but this he would say, he did desire to do it, and unfeignedly desire it; as Solomon saith, Prov. 21:21. He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life. He doth not say, he that reacheth it, he cannot reach it may be, but he that followeth after it shall have life; it is a sign that he hath the life of justification, and that he shall have the life of glory.

Secondly, The perfection of the Law it stands upon quantities as well as upon qualities and truth; it is not satisfied though a man be never so truly holy and religious, unless man hath quantities, and is so much holy: But now the perfection of the Gospel, indeed it will have as much quantity as a man can, but yet it will stand with truth; though a man hath not that quantity of humiliation and self-denial, and power against sin, yet if he have it in truth, he is Evangelically perfect in some measure, he is sincere and upright before God; as Solomon saith of his Father, 1 Kings 13:6. My Father had great mercy according as he walked before thee in truth. He doth not say he walked before thee in legal perfection, he was perfectly righteous; but he was truly righteous, he was humble in truth, and godly in truth,

and zealous in truth; he had none of all these things to the utmost, yet he walked before thee in truth. So Josh. 24:14. Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth. He doth not say, serve him as if you should do everything he commands; but do it in truth and sincerity. Now sincerity is, when there is no commandment but a man sets himself to do it; there is no sin but he labors to avoid it, and there is no right manner, but he sets himself to do it in the right manner to his power; this is the perfection of the Gospel.

Thirdly, The perfection of the Law stands upon full measure; whether a man have power or no, that is nothing to the purpose; the law will have all holiness and righteousness, whether a man hath power or no: But now the perfection of the Gospel by way of sincerity, it looks at what measure God hath given and bestowed, and no more but what God hath given and enabled a man to do; as you may see the Lord doth not require the gain of ten talents, when he gave but five, nor the gain of five when he gave but two; the widows two mites were accepted, and taken for a good and sincere gift, because she gave all that she had, Luke 21:4, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 8:12. If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that a man hath not. The law will have perfection whether a man hath power or no, or else it will damn a man; but in the Gospel a man may say as Peter to the lame man, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, that give I thee. Lord, such a memory, and such parts and gifts have I not, but such as I have, that give I thee; according to that measure of knowledge I have, according to that grace I have, I will give it thee: If a man can say thus, he is accepted, not according to that he hath not, but according to that he hath; as it was in the law of Moses, Levite. 5:6,7. A trespass-offering should be a lamb or a kid; but if a man were not able to give that, then two turtle doves, or two young pigeons; if he be not able to give that, let him give two or three handfuls of fine flower,

Levite. 5:11. So Levite. 14:20. Let him give according as he can get, he shall be accepted according to that. This is the perfection of the Gospel; according to the help and assistance God gives a man, and according to the means God affords a man, it shall be accepted.

Fourthly, The perfection of the law admits of no failings; if a man fails, no matter though it be out of infirmity, the law condemns him, the law requires perfection without failings; but the perfection of the Gospel, by way of sincerity admits of failings; as the best gold hath his allowances, so it is with a true Christian; he may be sincere and upright, though he hath a thousand failings; as it is said of David, 1 Kings 15:5. He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord in all things, but only in the matter of Uriah. That indeed would not stand with sincerity, his sincerity was quite in a swoon then: that could not stand with sincerity; if he had gone on to sin in that fashion, he could not have been sincere; but in all other things he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. You will say he had a thousand failings, yet saith the Text, they all stood with sincerity; he numbered the people, and God was mightily angry with him, and you know how unjust he was in the matter of Zibah and Mephibosheth; you know how he told a lie to Abimelech, and was the occasion of the death of the Priests of the Lord; you know how he counterfeited himself mad, and he had horrible disorders in his family, and had lost the power of control over his children; were not these horrible failings? And what a company of Wives and Concubines had he? Yet all these stood with sincerity, because they were either done out of ignorance, or want of due consideration sometimes, or through human frailty and infirmity, or through violence of temptation, contrary to his constant course, and intendment and purpose; they might all stand with sincerity and an upright heart according to the perfection of the Gospel.

Fifthly, The perfection of the Law makes nothing of repentance; if you break the commandments of God, if you shed tears of blood, and repent your heart out, what cares the law? The law will have perfect obedience, or else to hell you shall. But now in the perfection of the Gospel, repentance is a great matter; nay, if a man be never so vile and wretched, if yet he humble himself before God, and be unfeignedly sorry for sinning against God, this is a great matter; this man is an upright man, that is unfeignedly humbled and abased before God; The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart thou shalt not despise. This is the voice of the Gospel. So Ezek. 18:21. If the wicked will turn from all his sins, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live he shall not die. As it is Job 23:27,28. He looked upon men, and if any said I have sinned, he will deliver his soul from going down into the pit. In the Gospel a man is an upright man, if he come before the throne of grace with shame and confusion of face for all his sins, with unfeigned sorrow that he hath broken God's Covenant; if he hath never so many failings, if he set himself to please God, and when he fails, he repents, and humbles himself before God, this man hath the perfection of the Gospel. Thus we see the meaning of the words, Perfect before God.

The point of Doctrine is this, That every man is to labor to be perfect, that is the thing that God will require, and inquire after at the last day, whether we be upright. You see this, 1 Cor. 5:7,8, and so likewise in other places of Scripture.

The first Reason is from the nature of God, with whom we have to do, he is upright; therefore it concerns us to labor to be like him; he himself is an upright God, and there is no unrighteousness in him, his ways are perfect, and his judgments are truth; therefore if a man be not perfect, he cannot be like him, Mat. 5:48. Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. we know his spirit is the spirit of truth,

himself is the God of truth, his Son is the way, the truth, and the life, he is the faithful witness; and as God is upright, so he looks that his servants should show what Master they serve, that they may make it appear that their Master is an upright Master, Psalm 92, ult. to show forth that the Lord is upright; This is our duty; God is upright, and Christ is upright; and therefore we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. 2:21,22.

Secondly, God hath commanded us to be sincere; though he remit from the first Covenant of absolute and perfect righteousness and holiness without sin, yet he will have his people truly fearing him, and hating sin, universal in obedience, that they shall be from the bottom of their hearts followers of him; therefore this stung David to the heart when he committed sin: O thought he, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, Psal. 51:6. As who should say, thou lookest into the heart, thou requirest truth of thy servants; O what a false heart have I had in this business! God hath many worshippers in this world, such as they are; but God cares for none, but such as deal faithfully in his Covenant; as Christ speaks, John 4:24.

Thirdly, God knows our hearts; therefore though we serve him, and do duties to him; though we call upon his name, hear his Word, come to his Table, observe his Sabbaths, keep his Ordinances; yet if we do not do these things in truth, his eyes are ever upon our bosoms, he casts his eyes upon the secrets of men; if our hearts be rotten, and proud, and vain, and loose, and filthy; if our hearts be not of a right frame, all is nothing; if there be any way of wickedness in us, if there be any secret sins, or cursed corruptions that we favor ourselves in; if there be any false way we secretly haunt, the Lord shall search it out, for he knows the secrets of our hearts; therefore it becomes us to be upright; as he saith of Ephraim, Hos. 5:3. I know Ephraim, he is not hid from us. So if we preach never so zealously, and do not according

to our preaching, the Lord knows us; so if we hear never so zealously, and do not practice what we hear, he knows it; therefore it concerns us to be upright.

Fourthly, Because the Lord will let down the Covenant no lower. Now God hath been pleased to moderate the first Covenant, which it was impossible for us to keep, and hath brought it down to the Covenant of faith, to believe, and to be sincere in all our ways; this God requires, and will let it down no lower. Isa. 63:8, the Lord saith there, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; and so he was their Savior. So he requires his people should be children that should not lie, and be base-hearted, and deal deceitfully and crookedly in his Covenant; he was their Savior, so they would be children that would not lie. So Eph. 6:24. Grace be with all them that love Christ in sincerity. There is no man is under the Covenant of grace, unless he be sincere in all the will of God in Jesus Christ: There are two things the Covenant of grace gives; the one is the forgiveness of sins; the other is a sincere heart; if a man hath not these two, he is yet in his sins; as we may see, Psal. 32:2. Blessed is the man, &c.

Fifthly, The Examples of all the Saints in all Ages; all the people of God that ever were upright, to begin with Noah, Gen. 6:9. The text saith, he was a just and perfect man in his generation. You know it was in a corrupt time, all the Earth had corrupted their ways; no question a man that was religious in those days, he could not choose but be scorned and derided; but what cared he? He would be a just man, and was perfect in his generation; though it were a devilish generation, yet he was an upright man, and would not do as the world did, but he would draw near to God, and walk with him from day today. So it is said of Job, Job. 1:2. That he was an upright and perfect man; though Job lived in a blind corner out of the Church, and setting aside 304, generally the whole Country were Heathens

and Pagans, and he was as an Owl in the Desert; yet he would not do as the world did, but keep himself to God. So Luke 1:6. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, &c. You know the times were then very bad, and all the devotion that went for currant, was nothing but to be zealous of human inventions and traditions, and worshipping God after the imaginations of men; this was the holiness of the world, yet the Text saith this man and his wife would be righteous before God, and walked in all the Ordinances of God blameless; not in the Ordinances of the Scribes and Pharisees, but they were righteous before God, and walked in all the Ordinances of God blameless.

Then this may serve to reprove these days, and times, and places of ours where we live; where are hardly any upright people? We may say of them as the Prophet Micah said of his time, Micah 7:2. The good man is perished off the earth. As who should say, we had a great company of godly and holy people, religious Ministers, painful in their places, and abundance of private Christians, faithful before the Lord; but now there is hardly an upright man; there are so many drunkards and adulterers, so many unclean persons, so many covetous; there are so many mockers and enemies to sincerity, so many complementors with God, so many ignorant, nay willingly ignorant, though they live under the means of knowledge, so many that have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, so many that are come to the birth, but have no strength to bring forth, they will never come to be godly indeed; there are so many that are dead-hearted, and never were quickened by Jesus Christ, nor endued with the life of the spirit of grace, that we may say as Solomon saith, A faithful man who shall find? Prov. 20:6. Many fathers we have among us, but a faithful father who shall find, that doth discharge his duty towards his children? Many Masters we may find; but who carries himself towards his servants as he ought to do? So we have

many in place of Authority, that might stand for God, and hinder sin, and do some good in their places; but a faithful man who shall find, but here one, and there one, rare birds, and they are the offscouring of the world, and are hated; and mocked, and persecuted? So we have a great many that have gotten a great deal of light, God hath awakened their consciences, and made them see their miserable condition; but a faithful man that doth discharge a good conscience in that place wherein he is, that carries himself uprightly under the means of grace, under the Word, under the preaching of it, under God's Ordinances, such a man where shall we find? As David saith, Psalm 12:1. Help Lord, &c. He had occasion, through the persecution of Saul, to travel thorough the most of the Towns of Israel, and all were so loose and licentious, and carnal, and worldly, and serving the times, and pleasing and humoring the Court; he saw the Country so empty of goodness, that he prayeth Help Lord, &c. and as the Lord saith: Isa. 1:21. How is the faithful City become an Harlot? &c. So we may say, How is the faithful City become an harlot? A faithful Town, that hath had the Word sincerely taught, that hath had many walking sincerely in obedience according to the Word in some measure, and hath set up the power of the Word in their Families; but what is become of them? There was judgement and righteousness; but now where is it? There was truth, and truth could have abode, but now it can have no admittance: But how may we complain that our faithful Country is become a harlot? I do not speak of Papists, and Turks, and Pagans, but of the Church of God; the faithful are diminished from among the sons of men.

Secondly, This may serve to humble the best of all God's children, it may serve to ashame us before God, to think what a deal of corruption is in our hearts; if David might complain of himself, how much more may we? Lord, saith he, thou dost require truth in the inward parts, Psal. 51:6. As who should say, Lord how far am I from

it? Who would ever have thought that David's heart should so play fast and loose, that ever he should so abase Uriah his faithful servant, that ever he should so abuse Bathsheba that good woman, and bring her to sin? If David himself may thus complain; how much more may we complain and loath ourselves for the deal of rottenness that is in our hearts! O what windings and fetches are there! Austin himself saith, I can hardly tell when to believe my own heart; so I say, what a company of windings, and turnings, and tricks, and starting-holes are there in the hearts of God's people? Sometimes we are ready to think we have the good we have not; and what evasions have we to put off any good duty, if we have not a mind to do it? What put offs, what tricks to slip our neck out of the collar if we do not like it? What a company of deceits are in the heart? So what a company of slights to do evil? Such a company of blinding's, and besotting's, and carnal reasons; and foolish arguments, as if we did well in doing it, whereas it is but the falseness of our hearts? As Mr. Hearn saith, It is better for a man to be delivered up to the Devil, then to his own heart. We read of a man delivered up to Satan, as Paul saith, and yet we read that that man was brought home again; but we never read of any man brought home that was delivered up to the corruptions of his own heart; therefore if God hath made us see the falseness of our own hearts, and made us humble ourselves before him for it, and made us to endeavor more and more after sincerity; what a mercy of God is this? But the people of God have cause to complain of the falseness of their hearts.

Thirdly, Is it so that we must be upright, then let this serve to exhort us that we would be upright more and more; for this is that which the Lord doth look for and especially look for: What though we should do things never so good for the matter; yet if we do them not with an upright heart, all is nothing, though the children of Judah fasted, and that for 70 years together, four times in a year they sought the Lord

extraordinarily; yet because they did not seek him thoroughly, he did not count it, sincerely done, Zach. 7:4,5. As who should say, You did not fast unto me. Doubtless they themselves thought they were very religious; what not only to do the duties of religion, but to do extraordinary duties, no question they thought this was very much; yet everyone were cast off, because their hearts were not upright before him. Amaziah, the Text saith, did those things that were good in the eyes of the Lord; yet the Text makes this exception against him, that it was not with an upright heart, 2 Chron. 25:2.

Consider first, That God delights only in an upright heart, Prov. 11:20. They that are of a froward heart are an abomination to the Lord; but those that are upright in their ways are his delight. Upright Prayer, and upright hearing of the Word, and upright Preaching of it, upright walking in a man's Family, and upright carriage in a man's conversation, when a man carries himself uprightly in all his ways, this man is a delight to God, as he saith, Isa. 66:2. I can look over heaven and earth, but at him will I look that trembleth at my Word. The prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. 15:8. When a man can make faithful pleas to the throne of grace for mercy, faithful pleas that God would pardon him, faithful pleas that God would enable him, and accept him, and he doth not make these pleas falsely, but his own heart can say, there is no sin, but he sets himself against it, and there is no commandment but he sets himself to obey it; but the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to him, he cannot abide it; let them pray a thousand prayers, God abhors their prayers, if they have not upright hearts. So 1 Chron. 29:17, see what David saith; as who should say, Lord, thou hast pleasure in uprightness; and then certainly thou hast some pleasure in me; for with an upright heart, and in the sincerity of my soul have I sought thee. Now on the contrary, if a man be not upright before God, if a man have a loose conversation, and he be not sincere, the Lord abhors that man.

Secondly, Consider that this is the total sum of all that God requires in the Covenant of grace, that they should be upright and faithful in his Covenant; as when he made his Covenant with Abraham, Gen. 17:1, he saith, Walk before me, and be upright. This is that God requires, and he would be an Almighty God unto him, and bless him, and do him good to all generations, 1 Sam. 12:24. It is the saying of Samuel to the people, Only fear the Lord, and walk before him with an upright heart. As who should say, this is the only thing, and God requires no more; if God had required more, he might lawfully have done it; if he had required the fulfilling of the Law to the utmost rigor, he might have done it; but this is the only thing that God doth stand upon, that we should be upright before him; he doth not look that we should be Angels upon earth, but that we should be sincere, and not go a whoring from him wittingly and willingly.

Thirdly, Consider, The least faith, the least grace and goodness, if it be with uprightness, is better than all the goodly performances of the whole world; God liked more of the poor woman's two mites, then of all the abundance that the Scribes and Pharisees cast into the Treasury; And he that gives a cup of cold water to a Prophet, in the name of a Prophet, shall not lose his reward: Therefore you shall see many poor beggarly things, over those things that other men have done, have been accepted; whereas the building of Hospitals and Colleges have been rejected; though a man have but a little knowledge, as many of the Martyrs hardly knew how many Sacraments there were; yet having uprightness, died at stake; so if a man have but a little faith with sincerity, it shall pass, when a thousand presumptuous fools shall go to hell.

Fourthly, Consider, God will wink at manifold and grievous faults, so there be sincerity and uprightness. Asa his faults were horrible faults, 1 Kings 15:14, yet his heart was perfect: What a company of faults

had he? What a horrible failing was this that he should cast the very Prophet of God into prison that reprov'd him? Now God answers, he had his failings, and horrible ones; yet he was a good man, for his heart was upright before me. Asa was not himself in that business; Asa was not Asa then; his heart was upright with the Lord. So good Jehoshaphat, a man that was grievously besmeared with corruptions and infirmities, and those no small ones; how fearfully did he marry his daughters into a most devilish Family, as if he had no fear of God before his eyes? He married them to the house of Ahab, and another time he helped the enemies of the Lord, and loved them that hated the Lord; I know not how he was hooked in to join with Ahab, and go up to Ramoth-Gilead; and when he had done this, and had humbled himself for this, he did it again, 2 Kings 3:7. And the Reformation he wrought was not thorough, as it ought to have been; yet saith the Text, 2 Chro. 19:3. There are good things in thee; because he was upright, the Lord was pleased to accept him; nay, I will tell you more, look upon the people at the Passover in the days of Hezekiah, what a company of people came to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and came horribly unprepared? The Text saith, they were not prepared according to the Law of Moses, which was a grievous thing; yet the Text saith, the Lord heard the prayers of Hezekiah for them, because they prepared their hearts to seek the Lord; they did endeavor to grieve and be ashamed for their failings and want of preparation; now on the other side, what goodly men doth God reject, not being upright and sincere? As Jehu, what a glorious King was he? I warrant all the good people of Judah and Israel blessed God that ever he sat upon the Throne; what to root out Baal, and to destroy all the Idolatrous Priests, and to be zealous in it? Come and see my zeal for the Lord; these were admirable things; yet the Lord doth discharge him, and would have none of him, because he was not upright: Look upon the Scribes and Pharisees, the nonesuches, and mirrors of their times; that was a Proverb in Israel, that if but two men in the world

should go to Heaven, the one should be a Scribe, and the other Pharisee; they were thought to be the holiest men in the world; yet when the Lord saw this was not with an upright heart, he denounceth woe upon woe against them.

Fifthly, Consider, That if we be upright, it will help us to profit by all God's Ordinances; take the preaching of the word; Micah 2:7, the Prophet brings in the Lord speaking thus, that the word shall do such people good; is there any man in the world that walks uprightly, that my word doth not do good unto, that it doth not comfort his heart, and quicken his soul to obedience? Is it not a light unto his feet, and a Lantern to his paths; so that an upright man, when he comes to the Ordinances of God, he shall be the better for it; when he goes to prayer, he shall be the better for it; when he comes to the Sacrament, he shall be the better for it; all the Ordinances of God shall do him good; whereas if a man have a false heart, the word hardens him, prayer deadens him; if he come to the Sacrament, it is not for the better, but for the worse; if he be reprov'd for his sins, if he have not a sincere heart, he is so much the worse, it will do him no good, it will make his heart rise up against those that reprove him, and hardens his heart so much the more.

Sixthly, Consider that if we be upright, what a deal of comfort this will be to our hearts; there is no comfort in the world comparable to the comfort of one that hath walked uprightly; as Hezekiah when he had received the sentence of death, what did comfort him? Did all his wealth, and greatness and renown comfort him? No, but remember Lord how I have walked before thee with an upright heart; mark what he saith, he doth not say, Remember Lord how I have reformed the Church, and purged the Temple, and thrown out all the abominations in the Land, and purified the Passover, and set the Ordinances of God in his house in due order's no, none of all these

comforted his heart, but look what he did he did with an upright heart; as who should say, I might have done all these things, but if it had not been with an upright heart, it had been nothing; that which I did I did from my heart, with a fear of thy command; I sought thee in it, and no by-ends; all my care was to approve myself before thee; now Lord, remember this; remember the infinite goodness and promises that thou hast made to those that are upright before thee. Nay, if thou hast an upright heart, whatsoever troubles come upon the earth, or upon thine own soul, if thou beest cast into prison, or made to fly from one Country to another, I tell thee, in the midst of all thy afflictions and troubles, if thou hast an upright heart, thou shalt have peace and comfort, Psal. 97:11, in the midst of darkness, in the midst of afflictions there is some light, some cranny, some hold, some comfort for the righteous; on the other side, if a man be not upright, what a woeful case is this man in; nay, though a man be upright, yet if he do not apprehend himself to be so, what a lamentable case is he in? He can have no comfort; all the skillful Physicians in Gilead can hardly fasten comfort upon that man; tell him of all his reformations and prayers, and good duties he hath performed; O saith he, all this is but hypocrisy, I am so dead and dull, God hath not all my heart; tell him of his good desires and purposes, and endeavors, he is afraid he is not right; tell him of God's promises to pardon him, he saith, I am not sincere, I am not upright.

Lastly, If we be upright, we shall be blessed ourselves, and not only ourselves but our very posterity shall be blessed; as the Prophet David saith, Psal. 112:2 His seed shall be mighty upon the earth; he speaks of the upright, not only himself shall be blessed, but he layeth up a blessing for the generation that shall come out of his loins; so Prov. 20:7, his very children are blessed after him; if thou set thyself to serve God uprightly with all thy heart though thou canst not leave thy children any great outward matters, yet thou shalt leave them a

blessing from Heaven; thy children shall fare the better for it; if we would know what shall become of our children, and would fain provide for them, let us be upright, and that is the way to lay up a blessing in store for our children; now on the other side, if a man be not upright, he is so far from treasuring up mercy for his children, that he rather treasures up wrath both for them and his own soul; nay, though a man hath been never such a convert to outward appearance, never so strangely reformed, that all the Country admires at it; as it was the case of Simon Magus, he was a Conjuror, yet this man was converted very much to see too, he was wonderfully reformed, and gave over his Conjuring, and embraced the Gospel, and would follow the Saints, and joined himself to Peter, and to Philip also, when he came to Town; yet having not an upright heart, the Text saith, he had no Lot nor portion in Jesus Christ, nor in the Covenant of grace and mercy, but was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

The fourth Use is for examination, To examine ourselves whither we be upright or no; and this is a very necessary Use, because those that are not sincere, are most subject to think they are sincere; and they that are sincere indeed, are most afraid they are not sincere.

Therefore first, Consider, A sincere man is universal in regard of all the commandments of God, he doth set himself in all his ways, to obey God in all his statutes; as we may see, Psal. 119:6. This is an upright man, that hath respect to all God's commandments; but a false-hearted man, maybe he will do something, he will pick and choose, and take what he likes of the commandments of God; some things he will do, others he will not do; he cannot be gotten to stoop to all God's holy will, he will never yield to that; maybe he will not commit adultery, but then he will drink horribly; maybe he will not swear, but then he will lie; if he be good in one thing, he will not be

good in another; if he be diligent in his particular calling, he will be negligent in his general calling; he will not be holy and strict, and one that doth walk in God's holy Laws; a true upright man doth not deal with the commandments of God as the swine doth with the peascods, that will squeeze them, and then leave the rest; but an upright man digests all the commandments of God.

Secondly, An upright man, he is universal in all graces, he is a man of all graces; for why is God said to be the God of all grace? But in respect that his people have all graces in them, and he is the Author of all; 2 Cor. 8:7, the Apostle saith, therefore as you abound in every grace, &c. As who should say, if you be sincere, for so it is in the next verse, &c. you do not show yourselves to be sincere in your love to God and his Church, unless you abound in this grace and that grace, and all the graces of God's holy spirit; so that a man must have all graces that is upright; there must be none wanting; he must have the whole image of God, he must have the whole new clothing, he must be a new creature, he must be endued with all the cluster of graces, Eph. 5:9. And as the Apostle speaks, 2 Pet. 1:5,6,7, you may see there how all graces are concatenated and linked together, that if a man have one he must have all; suppose a man should have faith, if he should not add to his faith virtue, what would his faith do him good? He is never the nearer, his faith cannot save him, he must add to it virtue; and when a man hath faith, if he have not knowledge, what is zeal without knowledge? The Apostle preacheth the doctrine of reprobation against the Jews for their zeal, when they had not knowledge; a man cannot be really virtuous, unless he hath knowledge, and doth it with wisdom and discretion; now if a man had faith, and all other virtues, and were not temperate, he were a very beast; and if a man had all these, and had not patience, a man cannot possess his soul; though a man hath faith, yet without patience he cannot inherit the promises; so that you see an upright

man is one that hath all graces; so that a man that hath not all the graces of God's spirit, if he want one, he hath never a one of them; and thus it is with every man that is not right, though he may have admirable qualities and endowments of God's blessed spirit, yet if he have not all, he is not upright; but now an upright man hath all the graces of God's spirit; 'tis true, some of God's children are more eminent in one grace, and some in another, but every child of God hath all the graces of God's spirit; if a man want one, he cannot have another.

Thirdly, An upright man is universal in regard of place, he is not only good among good company, but good also among bad company; he is good out of the Church, as well as in the Church; and good at home, as well as in the streets, among such and such; he is good abroad, as well as in his own Town; as you may see, Psalm 16:8. I have always set God before mine eyes; an upright man wheresoever he is, he sets God before his eyes, that he may not provoke him, nor offend him; The upright dwell in his presence, Psalm 140:13, you will say, may be they go an hundred miles off, but wheresoever they go they dwell in his presence, and this makes him good in all places, now a rotten-hearted man, maybe he will be good in the Church, but leaves his Religion at the Church door; maybe he will be good abroad, but he will neglect his own family; or if he be honest and well ordered while he is in his own Parish, yet let him go abroad a far off into another Town where nobody knows him, may be there he will fly out; you shall see many a professor, that joins himself to the people of God at home, and will be drunk abroad; these are false and unsound hearts, that are not good in all places; if they be godly openly, they are not so secretly; thus it is with wicked and ungodly men, if they come among good people, they will not for shame drink nor swill nor swear, nor speak against goodness; but if they be among wicked people, they will side with them, and may be gird at the Saints of God, and give

them back blows; just as it is with water, put it into a Tub, it will have the shape of a Tub, put it into a Beaker, it will have the shape of a Beaker; it still fashions itself according to the vessel into which it is put; but an upright man is like a solid thing that keeps its own figure, he is the same in all places.

Fourthly, An upright man is universal in regard of time, he is good at all times, Psal. 106:3. Blessed is he that keeps judgment and righteousness at all times; not as though a child of God may not fall fearfully many times, but it is against the absolute bent of his heart, and care and study of his soul; a Divine sets it out by a spring between a couple of hills, it will always run, it will either run thorough those lets that stop it, or else it will run over those lets; it cannot cease running if it be a living spring; so a godly sincere heart is good at all times; now an unsound Christian, that never had the true grace of life in his heart, he will not be good at all times, he will be good by fits and turns; when he is smitten at a Sermon, when he is under the rod, under a cross, then he will fall soul with his sins, and when conscience is up, then he will be good; as a Windmill goeth as long as the wind fills the sails; but if the wind be down, the grist may lie long enough till the wind blow again; but a true Christian is like a good boat-man, if the wind blow he may go the better, but if the wind be down he will go too, nay, he will labor so much the more; he will go though it be against wind and tide; so it is with an upright man, he is good at all times, not only when he is well, but also when he is sick; he is good in prosperity, and good in adversity; good when his conscience is up, and good when his conscience is not so stirring; though he wants some helps, and drives so much the more heavily, yet he strives and will be good; but an ungodly heart, maybe he may be good sometimes, but it will not hold; as it is said of Sigismund the Emperor, when he was sick, then he would be good and godly, and thought of repentance, and sent for a Confessor, and would repent,

and asked him Have I not repented? Yes saith he, if it hold; but a wicked man's repentance will not hold; let God but pluck out the arrow, he will return to his old bias again, and he is never the nearer, nay, maybe he is worse than he was before.

Fifthly, An upright man is universal in regard of parts; as Christ speaks of his Spouse, Thou art all fair my love, Cant. 4:7. She was all fair in all parts, and there was no spot in her; he doth not deny but there was failings and weaknesses, but no such soul spots as upon wicked men; so a godly man is all fair; his understanding that is teachable, and made to savor of the truth, and capable to be guided and informed by the spirit of God; you know there is rebellion in the understandings of men, carnal reasons, and strong holds, and haughty and proud principles of reasoning; if they are convinced of a sin, they will not leave it, they have reasonings for that sin; and if they have never such convictions for a duty, there is rebellion in the understanding to put off this; but an upright heart, his understanding is good in some measure, he is unfeignedly willing to be instructed of God; whatsoever course he takes, tell him out of the word of God that it is not good, though his life depends upon it, it shall go, he dares not stand out against God; but a wicked heart hath not a teachable understanding, it is still under its stubbornness and stoutness, and reasoning against God; and things he doth not like, he will not see; when there is any sin he would not leave, or any duty he would not do, as Christ saith, Mat. 13:15, he shuts his eyes, and will not see. What wicked man that lives under the Gospel of God, but may see his courses are naught, but he will not see it? How many sins do ungodly men keep? There is light enough, and reason enough against their sins, but they have sturdy minds, and will not be convinced of it.

Again, An upright man his heart is converted and made godly, his will is made pliable to be led by God, and guided by God's blessed spirit; the stone is taken out of it; there may be much hardness, but the stone is gone, the heart of stone is gone, and he hath an heart of flesh given unto him, to be sensible of God, and sensible of his word, and sensible of the light that shines in his face; and his heart being converted, he is moved by an inward principle, and so moves the more willingly, and the more freely; as David saith, 1 Chron. 28:9. He hath a willing heart. But now a carnal heart, and a heart that is not turned to God, the stone is not taken out, a man rebels to this day; if he be moved to goodness, it is not by an inward principle, but by education or goodness of nature; or by the stings of conscience that overpower his heart; or by reason of a great light that breaks in and overawes his heart: Therefore a naughty heart, be he never so good and fair-carriaged, may be his conscience sometimes makes him forbear more then he would, and makes him do more good then he would; but a godly heart is willing to do what good he can, nay he would do more good then he can do, nay he never can do so much as he would, he is ashamed of all his works; look what he doth, he doth it with a willing heart.

Again. A godly heart is good in his memory, as David saith, Psalm 119:16. I will never forget thy precepts. His memory is turned to good things, and made to remember good things; he hideth the word of God in his heart, that he may not sin against him: But a carnal heart forgets to be good, and zealous, and please God, and obey God; his memory is not washed and sanctified in any measure.

Again, A good man is good in his thoughts; he doth not only purge the outside of the platter, but the inside also; he labors to have his thoughts set upon things above; he labors that vain thoughts may not

lodge in him; nay his main care is within doors, in his own bosom, to have his thoughts upright towards God.

So again, he is good in his affections, he doth hunger and thirst after righteousness, he doth desire the things that are most excellent he doth delight in God and his presence; he mourns for his sins, and mourns that he can mourn no more; he hath all his affections in some measure rightly seated and qualified; he is good all over, as the Apostle Paul saith, 1 Thes. 5:23. The Good of peace sanctify you throughout. As who should say, This is sincerity, and I pray God give it you, that you may not deceive your own souls, but that your whole spirit and body, and soul, and whole man may be true in the eyes of the Lord: But now a carnal heart is not thus; though he be like a whited Sepulcher, he doth seem outwardly to be a good man, and a man cannot check him; if a man should say, such a one is rotten, he should be thought to be censorious and uncharitable; yet in his inward parts he is naught; if a man be not upright, he doth not look to his thoughts, but can let them be vain and unfruitful, and can let his affections run at random; he is not affected with God, he doth not mourn for his sins, he doth not delight in good things, his affections are not set upon things that are above.

Sixthly, An upright man is universal in regard of cases and conditions, if he be under any kind of temptation whatsoever, as we may see, James 1:12. It is nothing for a man to be godly, and meek, and patient, and virtuous, when he is not tempted; the Devil himself is good when he is pleased, as we say: This is godliness and uprightness, when a man resists temptations, when a man doth watch and pray, and is careful that he may not enter into temptations; when a man is careful of all the objects, and beginnings, and occasions of sin; when a man fights against the temptations of the flesh, and wars against the suggestions of Satan, and puts on all

the armor of God, to withstand the fiery darts of the Devil; though he be tempted to be proud, and wrathful, and impatient, yet he will not; 'tis true, now and then he may be overcome against his principles, and care, and labor, but that is as a dagger to his heart. This is his course and practice to fight against temptations; nay take him in the desperate cases, yet a godly man is sincere; take him when he is most afraid that he is not sincere, when he cries out, how dastardly am I for God? How dead in good duties? How full of unbelief? What a vile heart have I? How filthy and untoward? Take him in these desperate lists, he is not without sincerity; and in this case he doth one of these two things; either he walks according to the measure of grace given unto him, or else according to the condition wherein he is; 'tis true, the conditions God's people are in, are sometimes better, and sometimes worse; sometimes horrible distempers are up, and sometimes they are down; but when they are never so up, he doth as a man in that case may do; as a man when he is bound hand and foot, what can he do? If he roll himself upon the ground, that is all he can do; and this he will do, as you may see what David saith, Psalm 119:40. It seems he felt himself marvelously dead, and dull, and wonderfully inobedient, and he could not get hold of God's commandments to do them as he ought; yet he rowls himself, and thrusts himself forward to do them; he longed for God's commandments, he longed for the spirit of grace to assist him and quicken his heart. Now a naughty heart is not good in all cases; nay there are but a few cases wherein he is good at all.

Again, Take an upright man in the lowest ebb, he doth question his sincerity, and he cannot quiet himself, because he thinks he hath it not; but this is certain, a man that hath most sincerity, doth most suspect the want of it; that man is most eager, and most questions himself; as David, was not he an upright man? Yet no man did suspect himself more, Psalm 119:80, as who should say, Lord I am

afraid I shall be ashamed in the end, I am afraid my heart is not sound towards thee; and directly sometimes, I am horribly afraid I shall be confounded in the end: Now good Lord let me be found in thy statutes, that I may not be confounded. So it was with Christ's Disciples, when he said one of them should betray him; though eleven of his Disciples were privy to themselves that they had not the least thought to betray him, yet eleven of the Disciples did suspect themselves, I may be the man that he means; though they were privy to themselves for the present they had no such thought, nay it was against the love and principles they had in them; they did love him, and fear him, and believe in him to be the Savior of the world, and they durst not do it, yet they suspected themselves, Master, is it I? As who should say, I have a base corrupt heart, and it maybe I for all the goodness that is in me and the love I bear to thee; they were all more unquiet then Judas that was the man: indeed when all questioned it, he would question it also for company.

Seventhly, an upright man is universal in regard of relations. Consider him with good people, and the Saints of God. O how he loves them! He honors them that fear the Lord, Psal. 15:4. Though they be never so poor and vile, yet he honors them that fear the Lord; as Elisha saith, he would not have spoken, but only for Jehoshaphat; so an upright man he honors the Saints of God. All my delight is in the Saints, saith David, Psal. 16, Psal. 119:63. Nay an upright man is faithful with the Saints; as it is said of good Judah, she was faithful with the Saints, Hos. 11:12. So an upright man is faithful with the Saints, his heart closeth with them, they are his bosom friends, and the beloved of his soul: But one that is not sound, though he take himself to be a Christian, and one of God's servants, yet he cares not for the people of God; may be he cares for those that seem to be religious; but if a man be religious indeed, he cares not for him, he is

too nice and precise for him, and he is false to the Saints, and will show them some slippery trick in the end.

Now again, Consider an upright man with the wicked; he carries himself uprightly towards them, he will not be acquainted with them, nor all one with them, lest he should countenance their wicked ways; as the Psalmist speaks, He despiseth them that are wicked, Psal. 15:4. Let a vile man be never so brave, and excellent, and noble, and high in preferment; yet if he be a wicked man, in the eyes of a godly man he is despised; I do not mean for his person; he gives him the honor due to his place, as he ought to do, a child to his Father, a servant to his Master, &c. as Paul, Acts 22:1. Though they persecuted him, he gave them their due; but he abhors their courses and practices, as Solomon saith, A wicked man is an abomination to the just. Now an unsound heart, though he join himself to the people of God, yet he cannot close with the Saints of God, but abhors them, and counts them vile.

Again, Consider an upright man with his friends; he is true to them, especially to their souls. Consider him with his enemies; he doth not yield them railing for railing, he dares not hate them that hate him, but blesseth them that curse him, and prays for them that despitefully use him. Consider him in his Family; he sets himself to walk uprightly in the midst of his house; if he be a Master, he labors to be a servant to Christ; and if he be a servant, he labors to be the Lord's Freeman, and to be a profitable servant to his Master; if he hath Superiors, he gives them the reverence due unto them; and if he deal with inferiors, he makes himself equal with those of low degree. Thus an upright man is good in all relations.

Lastly, An upright man is good in all the manners and circumstances of his actions; he is careful to do, not only for matter what God

commands him, but for the manner as God commands him; though he doth what God commands, yet if he doth not find the love of God setting him a work, he is not contented; he must do it in a right manner, constantly, duly, faithfully, and to a right end, to the glory of God; he is not content to pray and hear, but he must pray and hear in a right manner, or else he is not content. Now if thou hast these signs and tokens of an upright heart, blessed be God, thou mayst take all the comforts spoken of before concerning an upright heart, and mayst take all the promises of God to thyself that are made to an upright heart; may be men may call thee hypocrite, and say all manner of evil of thee; but either they are such as do not know thee, or if they do, they are some vile wretches, they have not the fear of God before their eyes; may be the Devil will accuse thee, and cast in all accusations against thee before God; but what of all that? God himself said Job was an upright man, and yet the Devil accused him for a hypocrite; therefore care not for the Devils accusations; may be thine own conscience may accuse thee; but if thou labor to humble thyself for thy failings, and stir up the gift of God that is in thee, if thou unfeignedly desire and endeavor to please God, and serve him, no matter though thy conscience accuse thee. 1 Cor. 4:3. Paul saith, I cannot be my own Judge, but God shall judge me. 'It is true, conscience is a judge, but it is subordinate, and must be guided and ruled by the Word of God; as the clock is the judge of the day, but it must be ruled by the Sun; David's conscience was his judge, I have cleansed my hands in vain, but the clock lied; so thy conscience may lie, and accuse thee falsely, and speak things against thee that are not so; but if thy conscience hath things against thee indeed and in truth, that thou art guilty of such and such sins and failings, yet it doth not follow but thou mayst be sincere; therefore believe not conscience, when thou hast the Word of God on thy side; nay, may be God himself will seem to accuse thee, and to be thine enemy, and discountenance thee, and will not own thee for one of his children;

when thou comest before him, he will seem to dash thee under his feet, and give thee no countenance, but look upon thee as an enemy; yet be not dismayed, if thou hast these things in thee in any measure; the Lord doth this, that he may do thee good in thy latter end; he doth it that he may humble thee, and try thee, whether thou wilt live by faith or by sense, and whether thou darest trust him; but if thou hast not these signs of uprightness, thou art in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, and thou canst have no true comfort to thine own soul.

The next point is, That as we must be perfect, so we must be perfect before God; I have not found thy works perfect before God. As who should say, I looked thou shouldst be perfect before him, and I have not found it so. Well then for the meaning of the word perfect before God; that is, so as God may approve and allow of them. Now a man's works may be perfect so as God may approve of them two ways.

First, So as God may approve of them in his strict Justice; and so no man's works can be perfect. Psal. 143:2. Enter not into judgment, &c. No man living can be justified before God. So Rom. 3:20. By the deeds of the Law shall no man be justified before him. This therefore is not the meaning.

Secondly, To be perfect before God, so as God shall approve of us in his mercy in Jesus Christ for his own faithful people; as it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke 1:5. This is the meaning of the place.

Now if you would know what it is to be perfect before God, it is this in one word: when a man is for matter and for manner right in the eyes of God; not only right in the eyes of men, to be approved of men, but right in the eyes of God, to be approved of God; for matter, when a man doth those things that God commands him; and for manner, when he doth them as God commands him, out of faith in God, and

love to God, and fear of God; when a man doth it with all his heart, soul, and strength, when a man doth it constantly, and frequently, and livelily in some measure, this is to be upright before God; you may see both these set down in one verse, Deut. 6:25. Here is the matter, If ye observe to do his commandments; and then here is the manner, right in the eyes of the Lord as he hath commanded. If we do thus, then we are upright before God. Now if either of these be wanting, we are not upright before God; if we do not for matter what God hath commanded; if we lie, or swear, or be covetous, or proud, or worldly, these things are of the Devil, and not of God; we do the things of the Devil, and not the things of God.

Again, If a man should bow the knee to Baal, and do the inventions of men, this is not to be upright before God; but if we do the things that God doth not bid us, God will say as he did, Matth. 15:9. If we do for the matter the things that God hath commanded, yet if the manner be wanting, if we do them not as God hath commanded, if we do them not with faith, and love to God, with conscience, and fervency, and quickening, all is nothing; as it is said of Amaziah, he did those things that were right in the eyes of the Lord, but the Lord cared not for it, 2 Chron. 25:2, it was not with an upright heart; Therefore when both these concur, this is to be upright before God.

First, Because God hath so commanded, thou shalt have no other gods before me; that is, I will have thee sincere before me; As who should say, thou mayst vow and swear, and protest thou dost love God, and fear God; but if it be not so indeed, thou hast a false heart; if thou hast carnal ends, if thou lovest the world more than God, and thou lovest thy lusts more than him, if it be so, woe unto thee; God will have thee upright before him. As God saith to Abraham, Gen. 17:1. Walk before me, and be upright; As who should say, Abraham, if there be any way of wickedness in thee, thou art not for me; look

thou be perfect before me; if thou dost acknowledge that I am God Almighty, and I am able to help thee, and succor thee in all estates, then be upright before me; when a man sins, it is for something he sins; now, what is there that is good but we may have it in God? God is Almighty, and therefore he would have us upright before him; and if we be not upright, he is Almighty and can crush us and destroy us forever; so that we should not only be upright before men, but before God.

Secondly, As the Law is so, so is the Gospel; if a man hath not faith in Christ Jesus, that man is no true Christian; howsoever he may hope to be saved by Christ, yet if he be not upright before God in all his ways and commandments in some measure, in studying and endeavoring to keep himself unspotted of the world in all things, he hath not faith, he doth not believe in Jesus Christ, Psal. 116:9,10, as David saith, I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living; how comes David to speak that? O, I believed, therefore I have spoken; if a man believe in God, it will make him walk well not only before men, but before God who is privy to all his thoughts and affections; privy to what he doth both at home, and abroad; privy to what he doth alone, and in company, in his shop, and in the market; unless he be upright before him that knows all things, he is not a believer; though Simon Magus were baptized, and did partake of Christian Religion, and had some kind of faith, and joined himself to Philip and the Church, as a member of the Church, and gave over his witchcraft and wicked courses, yet when Peter saw his heart was not right before God, mark what he saith, Acts 8:21. God hath sworn an oath, that whomsoever he delivers from sin, from Satan, from Hell, from the wrath to come, they shall be holy and righteous before him. Luke 1:73. God will not be forsworn; if thou dost hope to be saved by Jesus Christ, and prayest, and howlest, and criest in thy afflictions from the bottom of thy heart, with all thy eagerness to be saved by

Jesus Christ, God hath sworn an oath thou shalt not be saved by him, unless thou wilt walk in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of thy life, and be conformable to his will in all things; so that you see the Gospel requires it, that we should be thus.

Again, This is the end of the redemption of the world by Christ, that they should not only be upright, but upright before God; as Paul tells the Colossians, chap. 1. To present you holy and unblameable in his sight; not only to present you holy and unblameable before men; for if a man in his outward carriage be civil, and honest and fair, this is to be holy and unblameable before men; but if a man be holy and unblameable before God, he must have a pure conscience, and his ends must be right; this is the end why Christ redeemed his people, to purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

And as it is in the end of redemption, so it is the end of election; whomsoever God doth elect to eternal life, he doth elect to this end, not only to be holy before men, but before God. As the Apostle saith, Eph. 1:4, he hath chosen us to be holy before him, not only to be holy before men (though those that are not holy before men, cannot be holy before God) but it is not enough for us to be holy before men, but before the piercing eye of the all-seeing God; that he may see who knoweth our hearts, that we do unfeignedly desire to serve his name, and walk before him in the shunning of all sin, and in the practicing of all good things; so that we have not an argument of our election, unless we be upright before him.

Fourthly, Because the Lord will search us out; certainly though we be upright before men, if we be not upright before God he will search us out; it is not our profession shall bear us out, if we have an unbelieving heart, to depart from the living God; if we have a mind to live in any one sin, and to allow ourselves in any one wicked way,

God will find us out. Neh. 9:8, he speaks there of Abraham; what a comfort was it to Abraham's heart that God found his heart upright before him? God will search us, and put us upon the trial, and bring something or other, that if we be not upright, though we be affected, and pray, and be Protestants, and seem to be godly, and seem to hold our godliness and uprightness, yet if we be not sound at the core, God will have something or other that shall discover us, and it shall appear what we are; nay, God doth of purpose bring in heresies, that those that are approved may be manifest, 1 Cor. 11:19.

Lastly, It is God only that doth esteem of the worth of things; holiness is nothing, but that which is holiness in God's esteem; and Religion is nothing, but that which is Religion in God's esteem; Religion is a divine thing, and no man hath the judgment of it but God; it is God only that hath invented Religion, and framed it to us, and it is he only that can tell the worth of it, and approve of it; and unless we fear his name, and hate all sin, and be upright before him, all is nothing. As the Apostle saith, 1 Pet. 3:4, concerning meekness in women, in the esteem of God it is of high price; may be a beautiful woman, of rare parts and great gifts, this woman is of high esteem with some men; but a woman of an humble and meek spirit, she is a mockery in the eyes of the world, but in God's sight it is of great price: so for a man to be outwardly Religious, this man is very devout and religious in the fight of men, but it is the broken heart, and the contrite spirit, one that is holy inwardly as well as outwardly, that is upright as Paul saith, 2 Cor. 5:9, all our care and labor is that we may be accepted of him; it is no matter what the world say of a religious man, and a devout man; all our care is to be accepted of him, that he may account us upright, for we must appear before him.

This condemns the ceremonious devotion that many content themselves with, especially the Church of Rome; they are so

religious, and whatsoever they do, they think it is with such devotion; therefore they have ceremonies for everything; they have ceremonies to show that we must be strangers and Pilgrims upon earth, therefore they have Pilgrimages to such and such places; other ceremonies they have to show that we must take up the Cross of Christ, and follow him; they will have a ceremony to show that they believe that Christ was offered for a sacrifice; and a ceremony to show that they believe he was God and man, and so mix Wine and water together; the one shall signify that they believe he was God, and the other that he was man; again, they will have other ceremonies, to show that they believe the departure of the Saints, therefore they bring in a catalogue of the Virgin Mary, and of the Saints; again, they have another ceremony to show that they honor the Lord's prayer; another ceremony they have to show that they believe the resurrection of the dead; another ceremony to show that they should not be ashamed of the Christian faith; and they are so devout and think themselves the only Saints in the world, so that they account a man that is godly indeed, according as God would have a man to be, that makes conscience of the word, that is careful to please God, and fearful to offend him, and scruples everything that is not according to the word, this man is worse than a drunkard, or an hell-hound in their account; they are counted the vilest hypocrites and dissemblers that can be; what an horrible thing is this! Men love a life such a Religion as this; this shakes no Corn, this breaks no bones, what care men for this. Mat. 15:8, there is an excellent place for this; you know we are bound to be pure, and always pure; now the Jews to show this, they would never eat nor drink but they would wash their hands, to show that they must be pure; which was as good, and as clean, and as handsome a ceremony as ever was in the Church of Rome; and would you think that Christ should ever find fault with such ceremonies? They took on because they neglected this, Why do thy Disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders, by eating with unwashed

hands? Now Christ was so far from bidding his Disciples yield to this, that he calls the Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for it, and tells them they made the commandment of God of no effect through their traditions; if this were to be devout and religious, the vilest drunkard may be religious, for they may perform this as well as any other, therefore this is nothing.

Again, This may serve to condemn carnal Protestants, who give God now and then the hearing of a Sermon, and frequent the Sacrament, and do the outward things of Religion, but never come to worship God in spirit and in truth; let me tell you all this Religion is nothing at all; suppose a man comes to Church only, and lives in his lusts, what then? Who required this at your hands to tread in my courts? Isa. 1:12. Who? Why God requires it; 'tis true, but not without uprightness; to be proud still, and worldly still, he requires you to come into his courts, but not in this manner; so likewise for preaching, it is an ordinance of God, but if a man will preach, and doth not lead an holy and mortified life, and is not zealous for God and against sin, and to hold forth a blessed pattern of uprightness, God had as live have that man's room as his company, Psal. 50:16. What hast thou to do to take my word into thy mouth, and hatest to be reformed? As who should say, what makest thou here? It is fitter for thee to be in an Alehouse then in a Pulpit; so God hath commanded prayer, but if a man pray not in spirit and in truth, and is not an holy man, his prayers are nothing. Prov. 15:8. The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to God; As who should say, if you prayed with an upright heart, your sacrifice would be a delight to God; but seeing you are not upright, all your prayers and sacrifices are abominable in the sight of God.

For humiliation to humble us; how should we be ashamed, there is no uprightness among us? The most of us are not upright before

men, much less before God.

For exhortation, that we would strive and labor to be upright, and upright before him; that we would cry out with the Prophet David, O let my heart be upright before thee, that I may not be ashamed; if we find listlessness and backwardness for God, if we find our hearts side with the ungodly, let us know we are wicked people, and cannot be of God; therefore let us labor to be upright before God.

SERMON XXIII

I have not found thy works perfect before God. - REVEL. 3:2.

The point of Doctrine is this, that the Lord will search whither those that seem to be upright be so or no; finding presupposeth searching; I have not found thy works perfect. Now for the meaning of this searching, we must know that God's searching and man's searching do much differ, and they differ in five respects.

First, Mans searching may be without finding; though a man search all that ever he can, yet may be he cannot find out the matter how it stands; Laban searched in Jacob's tent, and Leahs tent, and the two maids tent, and in Rachel's tent for his images, and when he had done all he could not tell where they were; but now when God searcheth men, he is sure to find men out; O Lord thou searchest me out, saith David, Psal. 139:1. This is the reason why men that are sly and subtle, they care not much though they be sifted by men, especially if there be none to witness against them; you shall have them swear and swagger they were never guilty of such a thing, because they are confident it shall never come to light; but if God searcheth, he will be sure to find.

Secondly, Mans searching hath ever ignorance foregoing, though after search may be he comes to know, yet before searching he knows not; Job, 29:16, the case I knew not, I searched out; he searched because he knew not; but God as after searching he is sure to know and find out, so he knows before all searching; as the Church saith, if we be false in thy covenant, shall not God find us out? For thou knowest the very thoughts of the heart and the reins, Psal. 44:21, you see God searcheth because he doth know, man because he doth not.

Thirdly, Mans searching is properly so called; but when searching is spoken of God, it is after the manner of men; God doth rather act a kind of searching, then search indeed; as he doth act a coming down, whereas properly he doth not come down, for he is everywhere; and so he acts a kind of ignorance, as if he knew not, and yet he knows all things; as he speaks to Abraham concerning Sodom, Gen. 18:21. I will go down now; there is an horrible noise, what horrible sinners these Sodomites be; I will go down now, and see whither it be altogether according to the cry that is come up unto me; if not, I will know: He speaks after the manner of men; he need not come down, for he is present everywhere, and cannot move from one place to another; and whereas he saith, if not, I will know; these things are improperly spoken after the manner of men.

Fourthly, It is man's duty to search if he know not any particular passage of his life, whither it be warrantable or no; so Magistrates ought to search matters before they determine sentence, otherwise they may judge unrighteous judgment; now God searcheth not as though he had any need of searching, but to tell us our duty, to give us a good example; this phrase is given to him, to show us what we should do; as when there was an horrible attempt in the old world among the Builders of Babel, they would build a Tower whose top should reach up unto Heaven. Now the Text saith, The Lord came down to see the Tower and the City that was built; not as if he came down, so as taking this phrase unto himself; but to show what our duty, and Magistrates duty is; to search before they pass sentence, and to see whether reports given out be true or no.

Fifthly, Mans searching is for himself, that things may appear to himself; but when God searcheth, it is not that it may appear unto him, but to the world, that it may be manifest abroad, that a man's self and other; may see it; it is spoken only in regard of the nature of

the thing; some things are manifest, and some secret. Now God is said to search, when he makes other things that in their own nature are hidden to men, when God brings them abroad, and unveils them, and unmasks them, and openly reveals them. 1 Cor. 4:5. Judge not before the time, till the Lord comes, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness. He searcheth them not for himself, but to make them manifest; he saw them before, but they were not manifest abroad; they were under the hatches, nobody could tell whether they were so or no Now God is said to search to bring them abroad.

Now God is said to search five manner of ways.

First, By his own Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:10. So saith David, Whither shall I fly from thy Spirit? If I go up into heaven, thou art there, &c. If thou shouldst go into the Alehouse, or any bad place, God is there a spectator; though the Devil only, and such as are his Imps, are there keeping company with thee, yet God is there beholding thee; though we should dig never so deep, God can trace us, and find us out; though we should be never so closely and cleverly wicked, God can dive into us what we are; Come in thou wife of Jeroboam, saith the Prophet, why dissemblest thou thyself to be another? The Spirit of God revealed it. When Gehesai wiped his lips, O thy servant went no whither; Did not my spirit go with thee, saith Elisha, when the man returned? He shows how the Spirit of God, which he calls his spirit, because it dwelt in him, did reveal his wretchedness.

Secondly, As the Lord searcheth by his own Spirit, so also by the spirit of man; as for example, by the spirit of the Magistrate, he doth search out sly offenders; when Solomon had said, The King doth scatter the wicked, Prov. 20:27, in the next words he answers an Objection, How shall he find out whether such a man be wicked or no? A man may be brought before a Magistrate, and yet have all the

hands in the Parish for his good behavior: Now how shall the Magistrate find it out? Saith he, The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord; that is, as Tremellius expounds it, the Lord helps the Magistrate to find out these fellows, though they be never so subtle; and how doth he help him? By the Magistrates own wit and wisdom; it is the candle of the Lord, the Lord gives him light to sift things, and bring things to light; and though wicked and ungodly men hang together, though they swear and combine themselves hand in hand together, yet if a Magistrate be an able man, and gifted of the Lord, the Lord hath set a candle in that man's mind, to light him how to discover them: As when the two Harlots came before Solomon, the spirit of Solomon was the candle of the Lord that lighted him to discover which was the mother of the child.

Thirdly, God doth search a man by the conscience in a man himself; sometimes you shall have a child of God much afraid that he is not sincere, and calls all into question; anon the Lord discovers he is sincere, and reveals he is upright; how doth he do it? By his own conscience; as the case was David's; one time he concluded all was naught, and he had nothing of God in him, and God was gone quite away, and had shut up his mercy for evermore; at last God revealed David to himself, and that by his own conscience; My own spirit searched, saith he, Psal. 77:6, and then he saw that it was but his infirmity; his own spirit and conscience, the Lord stirred it up to make diligent search, and David perceived himself to be as he was; so on the contrary a wicked man may seem to have good hopes to be godly, and to have an honest and sincere heart, and be a good Christian, and he professeth himself to be so; and if anyone should charge him with the contrary, he would say they were uncharitable. Now this is a secret. Now the Lord searcheth him out by his own conscience; thus it was with Pharaoh; he thought he did well in not letting the children of Israel go, nay he thought Moses was

unreasonable to demand such a thing; what, to let six hundred thousand of his servants to go out of his Kingdom at once! There was no equity he should let them go. Now the Lord discovered this was nothing but the wretchedness of his own heart, and made his conscience cry out, The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Rightly doth he call for it at my hands, and rightly doth he punish me for not doing of it, and I am a wicked man, and have done it out of the wickedness of my heart.

Fourthly, The Lord searcheth men out by his Word; he doth thereby discover men to be what they are, Heb. 4:12. The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, &c. and is a searcher and discernor of the thoughts and intentions of the hearts; the Word of God doth search and discover men; though they be never so secretly covered, yet notwithstanding the Word of the Lord finds them out; as you may see it discovered the woman of Samaria; it made her give over all her wrangling and disputing the case with Christ; it made her cry out at the last, O come and see a man that hath told me all that ever I have done, John 4:29. So the Apostle when he would exhort the Corinthians to expound the word in a known tongue, he gives this reason; O saith he, if you do thus, it will discover people; if a man should come in, he will be judged by you, and the thoughts of his heart will be made manifest, 1 Cor. 14:24. The Word of God is a divine thing, and it is a plain sign that it is the word of an all-searching God; for it can meet with men's thoughts, and men's secrets. When King Ahasuerus said, What shall be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honor? What man living could tell what Haman thought at that time? Yet the Word of God revealed the thought of his heart, Est. 6:6. When David was dancing before the Ark, and Michal looked out at the window, what man could tell what she thought in her heart? Yet the Word of God sets it down, She despised him in her heart, 2 Sam. 6:16. When Felix was talking

privately with St. Paul friendly and kindly, what man or Angel could imagine what Felix thought at that time? Yet the Word of the Lord lays it open, He thought to have a bribe: You will say, who could tell that 'tis true? Men know not people's hearts; yet many times the Word meets with them, insomuch that they are ready to say sometimes, who told the Minister of me? Certainly he hath some blab, how should he come to know this, and speak of this in the Pulpit? The Word of God meets with them.

Fifthly, the Lord searcheth men by his providence; though men carry it out never so handsomely and fairly, and can go in the dark, and under the hatches for a long time; yet the providence of God will have a time to find them out, as Job speaks, Job 12:22. He discovereth the deep things out of darkness, &c. That is, he doth it many times by his providence, he reveals things that are otherwise secret and unknown, and lie hid, yet he brings them out; men may blear the world, and deceive their own souls, but the providence of God in the end will search out all secret things, and make them as manifest as things done on the house top; it is a strange thing to see how many, that have boiled in their hearts against the Saints and Ministers of God, and they have carried it out slyly and fairly, yet God hath discovered their malice and spite, and their venomous speeches, and the envy they have borne against the people of God: What strange things hath the Lord discovered? When men have concluded no eye should see it, I hope nobody shall know it; yet the providence of God comes to find it out either first or last. Now the providence of God discovers men's works that are in secret divers ways.

First, By letting his people to suspect men; 'tis true, we ought not to give way to an humor of suspicion, for it is directly against charity; for charity thinketh no ill; therefore we should take heed of suspicion

without just cause of suspicion; for hereby we may wrong persons, as the Disciples, though Paul was a true Convert, yet they suspected he was not, and so wronged him: It is a dangerous thing to suspect any man without infallible ground; yet many times the providence of God doth discover men by this means, as you may see an example in those false-hearted ones Ezra 4, they would come and build with Zerubbabel and Jehoshua; they made as if they did intend the promotion of the Church and Commonwealth. Now verse 3, they suspected them. Now when they saw that they were shy of them, they displayed themselves, and laid themselves open, and turned to the contrary side, and did them all the mischief they could.

Secondly, by letting of good people to injure and wrong them; this is very true, that the children of God should wrong nobody, especially none that are Christians, that we may have any hope they are godly; if a child of God should wrong any man in the least degree, he is guilty of all the mischief that shall follow after; therefore we should be marvelous careful that we wrong no man in thought, word, or deed; but yet it will be so long as we dwell here in the flesh; wrongs will be committed by good people sometimes against their wills, sometimes by corruptions rising in their hearts contrary to their minds and principles they go upon. Now when these wrongs fall upon those that are not sound, this discovers them; for their venom and madness falls not only upon them, but upon all Professors; these are your Professors, and precise fellows! Nay let but the children of God be indiscreet, this by the providence of God doth divers times discover men; as Saul a great hypocrite, indeed he had many admirable things in him, he had admirable Government; and though he were not a man that truly loved holiness, yet he did abundance of good things, and he hoped he was right. Now the Lord discovered him by this, by letting him have some indiscretion showed towards him; as the women in the Song, Saul hath slain his thousands, and

David his ten thousands; it was indiscreetly spoken of them; though it were true, they ought not to have made such a Song of it; though no question the women meant well in what they did, and were honest and well-minded people; yet through their indiscretion Saul stomachs David, and grows to be a persecutor; From this time forward be eyed David.

Thirdly, By guiding of his Ministers to home-preaching; this discovers people what they are; if they be godly and upright, when the word of God meets with any corruption of theirs, then it shows they are of God; for then they fall down before God, and acknowledge their sin, and repent of it, and part with it, and loath it, and cry to Heaven for the pardon of it, and labor to have it rooted out of their souls and consciences, and so they are discovered to be sound; but when this meets with an unsound heart, and comes to display his secret lusts, and vile courses, not being able to stoop to this, it shows what it is; as when Christ preached something sharply, John 6:55,60. O say they, It is hard hard saying, who can bear it? And from that time many of his Disciples forsook him. It fares with God's Church in this case, as with Ishbosheth; Abner seemed to be his dear friend, and stuck close to him; yet when Ishbosheth told him of his faults, of his whoredom, and lying with his Fathers Concubines, then he was mad, and was not able to brook him; presently he falls off from Ishbosheth, because of this away he goes, and turns his enemy: So it fares with the Saints of God, many seem to be their dear friends, and keep close to them, and join with them; but when they are dealt withal about things amiss in them, they discover what they are, they do not like such men, they care not how little they come in their company, they fall off, and so are made manifest what they are.

Fourthly, By their own lusts and corruptions; for you shall have men many times hear the Word, and being wrought upon in their

consciences by the Word, or by God's judgments, that startles them, they give over their sins upon this, and reform, and will have good orders in their Families, and take up good duties; and not having a sound, but a false heart, a covetous heart, in the end this worldliness, or any other lust that is unmortified, the Lord doth use it as an instrument to discover that all these Reformations of theirs were never sound; in the end they come to count this a burden, and such a burden as they are not able to bear, and so grow to be something weary of their strict courses, and give over by degrees not to be so careful in their Families to pray morning and evening, and sometimes omit it, and not to be so forward for God and goodness; and at the last they come to show plainly that there was never any soundness in them; thus the Lord doth many times lead them forth among evil doers, Psa. 125:5, and so such as have kept company among good doers, are discovered to be evil doers, thus Demas was discovered; for a time he followed St. Paul, but having a worldly heart, the Lord discovered him by it in the end, it made him weary of Paul's company, and he fell to embrace this present world, 2 Tim. 4:10.

Lastly, By the times, by persecutions that arise against the Church of God; and this knocks off all that were but mere hang-byes; it knocks them off from the good course they seemed to follow before, and they follow the contrary; as Christ notes, Matth. 13:20,21. They that received the seed into stony ground, when persecution arose, they fell off. When persecution and trouble did arise, they were offended; this discovered them; as if there be any rift or unsound place in the house, a sharp tempest will discover it, and show where is a flaw in the building; so if there be a flaw in a man's faith or profession; if a man be not right towards God, the times will discover this.

The Reasons of this are, First, because it is God's Prerogative thus to do, because the perfection of men's works; though men may give a guess at it, yet it is a secret. Now it is God's Prerogative Royal to reveal secrets, Jer. 17:10. I the Lord search the heart, &c. The heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it? 'It is true, but I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins. So you see God takes it to himself as his own Prerogative Royal, to search men out what they are: And indeed the Lord sometimes in Scripture is described by this very thing, the searching of the heart. Rom. 8:27. He that searcheth the heart. Who is that? The Apostle doth not tell us who it is, but you may guess who it is by the Epithet he gives him. So that God, I say, is known by this, and will be known by this, by searching men's hearts, and discovering what men are, and aim at, and intend; what men hate, and what they love; what things they do, and how they do them.

Secondly, As this is God's Prerogative Royal, so of all things in the world he will bring that which is secret out, whether men be sincere or no. Men make a show, O they are baptized, and come to Church, and take pains in their places and callings; and what can you allege against me? Now of all things in the world, God will discover this, if men be not as they seem to be; if men have malice in their hearts, and pride; if they seek the world, and be ambitious, and seek to please men, and make as if they would please God; if they be false-hearted, God will discover this; he will discover all things, but specially Hypocrisy; if any will be Adulterers, and will not be known to be such; if any will be proud, or scoffers of Religion, and will not be known to be such, God will bring this to light; as Job saith, If you secretly accept persons, God will surely reprove you, Job 13:10. God will bring all the world, and all their doings to light; but of all things, if men have secret haunts, and back-doors to do evil; if men have devices and colors to put off their actions, if men can daub up wretched and filthy cases as if they were good; if men will go about in

this fashion to daub with untempered mortar, such sins and sinners as these, God will lay before him, as Moses saith, Psal. 90:8. As who should say, thou layest all our sins before us; but if we have any secret sins, thou layest them upon a rock in the open Sun, the Lord especially aims at them; there be many persons in the world, that are godly and honest, and yet are covered by the scoffs and reproaches of the world, as if they had no good, nor did any good; and there are others again that are bolstered up in the world, as if they were good men, and better than those that keep such a putter. Now the Lord, as he will bring everything abroad, so specially this.

Thirdly, Because it is for the glory of God to search men out; as Solomon saith of a King, Prov. 25:2. It is the glory of a King to search out a matter; as when the two Harlots were brought before Solomon concerning the child whose it was, there was no way in the world to know it, there was nothing but their own asseverations; the one said it was hers, and the other said it was hers; the one affirmed, the other denied it before the King; now we shall see what a glory it was to Solomon to search out who was the mother of the child; the Text saith, all Israel feared King Solomon because of this thing, 1 Kings 3:28. They trembled before him, they saw he could search out secrets and hidden things, therefore they durst not do wickedness in secret for fear he should find them out; so it is the glory of God to search out secret matters and bring them on the stage; if a man be upright, and this man is spalled and spit upon, and born down in the world, if the Lord should not search it out, what a dishonor would it be to God? And if a man should go for a good Christian, and is not, and God should not find them out, what a dishonor would it be to him? It is the glory of God to search out secret matters.

Fourthly, It is for the truth of God; he hath said he will search everyone out, as you may see Job 34:22. So he hath said, He that

hideth his sins shall not prosper, Prov. 28:13. So he hath said, He that walketh uprightly walketh surely, but he that perverteth his ways shall be known. If God hath said thus, certainly it concerns his truth to see it made good; and therefore he must search them out.

Fifthly, This is for the Justice of God, that God should search out everyone what he is, and what his works be, how should God judge the world else? Therefore when God said he would judge Judah, and punish them because they had forgotten him; he gives this as the reason of it; Therefore saith he, I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear. So when God means to glorify his Saints, and bestow the Kingdom of Heaven upon them, therefore he will discover their honesty, and lay open their godly courses, and reward them for all the taunts and vile reproaches of the wicked.

The first Use may serve to reprove most men generally; we do not consider that God will search us; what a company of pleas are there to do evil? What a company of put offs to do good duties? If men can but find any starting hole, glad are they; and if they can but find any silly pretense, then they are made, then a man can never get them to do that which is good. When Moses was loath to go to Pharaoh, what abundance of pretenses had he to put it off? O, saith he, I am unworthy, who am I that I should go before Pharaoh? And another time, I am not eloquent. He made as if it had been his modesty, he was not fit for the office; he did not consider that he was to deal with God, that could search him out; Moses, saith he, go before Pharaoh, for they are dead that sought thy life. As if he had said, I know thy thoughts, thou hast killed a man in Egypt, and thou art afraid that Pharaoh will kill thee; but that Pharaoh is dead, therefore go. So when a man is unwilling to do a duty, he will have a thousand excuses; bid men have prayers in their Family, they will say they are not book-learned, and cannot pray; and how prove you it to be a

duty? Anything God bids them do, they are willing to do; if you show them but a place of Scripture for it, they make this the reason; but this is hypocrisy, the reason is, they care not for God, nor for the Family; they care not whether they be saved or damned; they care not that the fear of God may be in their children and servants, they care not for this; but they will not believe this is the cause. Again, bid another be diligent in his Office, alas what shall a man do? I shall do no good, he is a peaceable man, and he seeth all the Parish bandy themselves together; if he saw there were any hope of doing good, he would do it; as if he had a very good heart to do what God would have him, in the end God discovers his hypocrisy, it was because he cared not for God, he did not hate sin, he had no zeal to God's glory, he is a lover of men more than God, he loves his own ease more than holiness, or piety, or good order; therefore let us know what a dangerous thing it is for a man to dally and double with God, when we do not consider that God will search our hearts; the Lord knows whether thou art loath to have such a thing to be a duty, or whether thou dost secretly desire it may not be imposed upon thee; the Lord knows it, therefore do not put off God in this fashion, for God will search thee out; it is but a folly for us not to consider that God will search us out; as Solomon saith, Prov. 10:18. He that covereth hatred with lying lips, is a fool; that is, if a man do bear secret malice against a man, do not love a man, and is not in sincere charity with him, may be the man covers it with lying lips, O 'tis not for this reason and that reason, God forbid I should hate him, whereas indeed he doth not love him; saith Solomon, this man is a fool; as who should say, God will find him, and discover him; therefore what a folly is it not to lay this to heart.

The second Use is to bid us take heed how we hide our sins from others, or from ourselves.

First, From others, you shall have children, so they can hide their faults from their parents, that is all they care for; and so servants, if they can but hide their faults from their Masters and Mistresses, they care not how bad they be, or how false; so it is with many, you shall have many a man his own bosom knows what an hard heart he hath, what a dead heart, how careless he is of God, how that he hath no delight in good duties; yet if he can but cover it from the Saints, that when he comes to pray before them, he may carry it off something handsomely, this is all he cares for, or look after; what an horrible thing is this, that people should have no more consideration that God will search us out? We had as good that all the world should know it, as that God should know it; if we do iniquity, and be careless of his commandments; if we do evil, though never so secretly, it were better all the world should know it then God; now God will search it out. Jer. 23:24. Prov. 5:21. Therefore we should ever take heed that we may not have this humor in us, to venture to do evil, so we can hide it from men; for what though no man knows it? Yet we shall find that God knows it, and will bring it to light one day.

Secondly, We should take heed how we hide our sins from ourselves; this is fearful, and in some sense a great deal more fearful then the other; for many times when a man hides his sins from others, he knows them himself; but when a man hath a deceitful heart, that he hides them from his own eyes, how can he repent? A man cannot repent without the sight of his sins; yet, as a Divine saith, men desire to hide their sins from God, and from others, but most of all from themselves: Now what a madness is this, though a man do hide his sins from himself, he cannot hide them from God, God will search it out; though a man hath never so many colors for his sins, he will not believe it is a sin; alas poor creature, God will find thee out; as a pluralist, he will think it lawful to have two livings, but what dost thou get by hiding it from thyself, God will find it out; so for jesting,

they think it is lawful to do it; Elisha jested; and did not Aristotle account it a virtue? And the like; I deny not but men may have jesting if it be convenient, but when men are excessive in this, and have no meetings without jesting, and will stand for it, God will find them out; so men that will not believe that a man should be so strict and precise, God forbid that none should be saved but such; thus they hide it from themselves; but when they have done all they cannot hide it from God; but God will discover them at the last day, may be in this world: so a man that was never converted, nor never had faith, he thinks he is converted and hath faith, and is religious, and a good Christian. Thus he hides his woeful and vile estate from his own eyes; but canst thou hide it from God? Assure thyself God will search thee out.

Thirdly, This may be for comfort to good people. First, It may be a comfort against others that shall judge them. Secondly, against themselves.

First, Against others that judge them; may be others are harsh towards them, and think all manner of evil of them, and may be speak it too. Now this is a great comfort, that God will search them out; as they be true and upright, and as they do from the bottom of their hearts set themselves to please God, so they shall not be judged by men's conceits, but by the Lord; this is that which comforted Paul against the censures of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 4:3,4. I count it a small matter to be judged by you, 'tis the Lord that judgeth me. As who should say, I shall not stand or fall at your sentence what you think of me; no, the Lord judgeth me; this is a great comfort. So this comforted Peter when Christ put that triple query to him, Simon thou son of Jonah, lovest thou me? As who should say, thou sayst thou lovest me, but how can I think it? Hast thou not denied me thrice? Therefore I ask thee thrice dost thou love me; what saith he

now? Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. This was his comfort, that God that searcheth the heart knew it was his weakness, and he loved him unfeignedly; as who should say, men may judge me to be a wretch and an Apostate, and that I love my life and my liberty more than thee; they may justly judge thus; but thou knowest how I have grieved for it, and have been ashamed of it, and it hath been as a dagger to my heart; Thou knowest all things, and thou knows that I love thee.

Secondly, This may be a comfort against their own selves; as a man's Conscience many times may have shrewd things against the people of God, for the conscience by nature is legal and by nature a man is borne under the Covenant of works, and conscience is apt to be very strict and severe against the children of God, and to have shrewd things against them, that they can hardly tell how to answer. Now what a comfort is this to them, though their consciences be unquiet many time sunk; to think that God will search them out, they shall not be judged by their consciences altogether, but the Lord shall judge them! As Paul did not only set down a comfort against the censures of the Corinth, but against his own conscience, I am not my own judge. Many times conscience may be abused and cry out, there is nothing good, nothing sounds no true good in my soul. Now a man should say, I must not judge myself, but the Lord must judge me and search me out; so that this is a great comfort to the people of God, that God will search every man.

Thirdly, This may stir us up to be able to stand out God's search, when he shall come and search.

First, That we may be able to stand when offenses come. When offenses come, the Lord searcheth whether people love themselves, or love his commandments, and love his servants; there be such

horrible offenses sometimes, that if he do not love God indeed, he will stumble; the commandments of God, and his pure worship and service may be so derided and opposed, a man may be offended at it that professed it before, if he love it not indeed, therefore Matt. 18:10, our Savior saith, woe to the World, because of offenses. As if he had said, when offenses shall come, they shall discover thousands in the world to be naught: woe to the world when they come, for these be searching things: therefore let us labor when offenses come, that we may not be offended, as Christ saith Matth. 11:5. Blessed is the man that is not offended in me. That man is a blessed man, that when all offenses arise, nothing can make him offended at Jesus Christ: This doth plainly show that a man hath the grace of God in him, when nothing can offend him, not the means of Christ in the world in his members, not the cross that doth accompany Religion, not the multitudes of evil men, not persecutions, reviling's, nick-names, poverty, and disgrace, nothing in the world can offend him, but he will love God, and fear him, and keep close to his commandments; this is a sign we shall stand when God searcheth us.

Again, Let us be able to stand out against afflictions and persecutions; these search men: as it is said of Joseph, when he was laid in prison because he would not yield to his Mistress, the Text saith. The word of the Lord tried him, Psal. 105. If he had not been sincere, when he saw how the times went, he would have been afraid, and yielded to the temptation; but the Word of the Lord tried him, and he was found to be sincere and godly indeed. So when God afflicted Job, Job 10, he saith, Thou searchest for my sins. When God afflicts us, or persecutes us, or suffers any evil to fall upon us, then he searcheth us, and then if we be hypocrites, and have only a form of godliness, and are not sound at the bottom, then God will find it out, it will appear; when crosses and afflictions come, it will lay a man open; therefore let us be able to stand in afflictions to be dead to the

world and worldly things, to be able to deny our lives and livings, and forgo all the world rather than any of God's commandments, that when we come to be tried, we may be found to have faith more precious than gold.

Thirdly, Labor to stand in time of difficult commandments; sometimes God calls a man to difficult commandments, that he cannot do except he cut off his right hand, and pull out his right eye, except he will lose his life, except he will be driven up and down like a vagrant Traitor, and cast into prison; sometimes may be God puts a man upon commandments that he must lose all that he hath if he doth them. Now know, God comes to search whether we love him best, whether we will rather obey him or the world, whether we love profits, or credit, or anything more than him. So when the young man in the Gospel made as if he were well-minded to enter into eternal life, he was an observer of the commandments of God: Now when Christ would search him, he doth it with a difficult commandment; the man was rich, and he bids him go and sell and give it to the poor; this was a very difficult commandment, and this discovered him to be a very wretch, he was not able to do it, nay he went away sorrowful; this commandment could not sink down into his heart: It is so many times, the Lord puts a man upon difficult commandments; such commandments, that if he do them, the world will think him mad; such commandments, that if he do them, he must part with his living, and all that he hath. Now if we be not able to do this, we shall be discovered not to be good.

Lastly, Let us be able to stand out against judgment, for then God searcheth people most of all; there may be something left after all the other searching's; a man hath stood out persecutions, and yet hath turned Apostate; but when the pangs of death, and the day of Judgment comes, nothing shall be hid then; therefore let us labor to

stand then, when the King of terrors shall appear before us; nay, when the Judge of quick and dead shall stand before us.

The last Use is for exhortation. Will God search us out? Then we should search ourselves what our works are, whether good or evil; as the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. 13:5. Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith.

First, Consider, we can never repent of what is amiss in ourselves, or in our works, except we search ourselves. Let us search ourselves, and turn unto the Lord. If there be hypocrisy or hollow-heartedness in us, if we do not search it out, we cannot bewail it, and shake it off.

Secondly, Consider it is a character and mark of the child of God that he doth desire, and is one that doth search himself; nay, he doth not only use all the means he can to do it, but he doth cry and groan to God to help him, as David saith, Psalm 139:23. Search me, O Lord, &c. As who should say, Lord, help me to search my heart, I have looked into it, and turned it topsy turvy, and I cannot find but I am upright, but I fear myself still; O help me; if there be any way of wickedness in me, show it me. A child of God is one that doth indeed desire to know himself, and to know the worst of himself.

Thirdly, Consider, if we do not search ourselves, it will be the worse for us, for God will search us; and if we do search ourselves, we shall scape well when he comes to search us; but if we neglect this duty, what saith Job, Chap. 13:10. So I may say, Is it good that God should search us out? Is it good for us to leave all this work to him? To neglect our own souls, to lay aside our lives, and consciences, and bosoms, and never to ransack them from day today, never to inquire into our own bosoms, that we may reform ourselves, but leave all to God to search us? Do you think this will do well, saith Job? Then when afflictions, and death, and judgment shall come, that then God

should search you, and lay before you your works; therefore as you desire when God shall search you, you may be found upright, be careful to search yourselves.

FINIS.

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