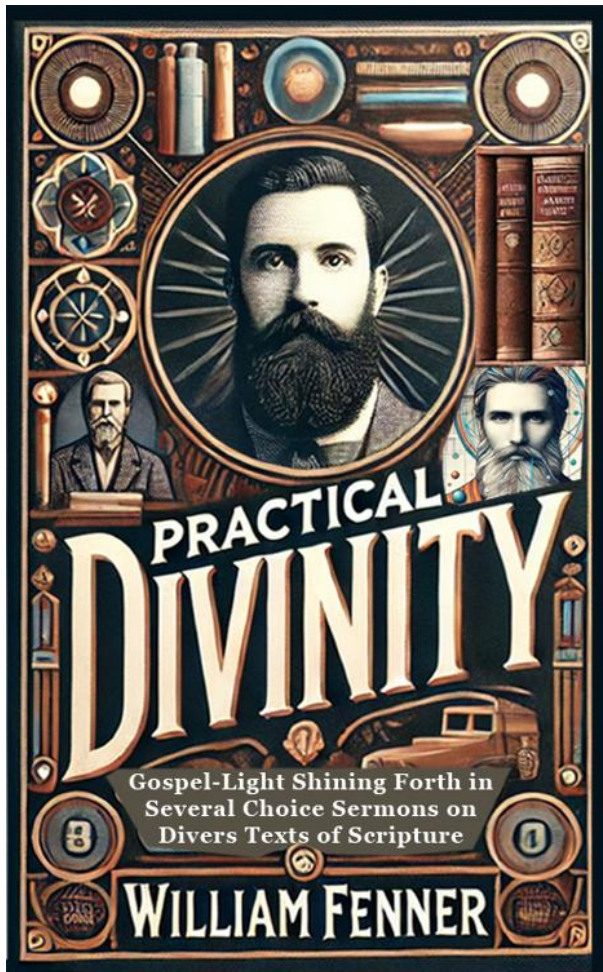




PRACTICAL DIVINITY

Gospel-Light Shining Forth in
Several Choice Sermons on
Divers Texts of Scripture

WILLIAM FENNER



PRACTICAL DIVINITY

OR, GOSPEL-LIGHT SHINING FORTH IN SEVERAL CHOICE
SERMONS ON DIVERS TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

WILLIAM FENNER

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Editor's Note – During the EEBO-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 sincere apologies in advance where such errors occur. As the Puritan Edward Leigh once said "If thou findest faults and Errata in the book, let love cover them, for to err (as the Satirist saith) is the sad privilege of mortality, and he (of all men) erreth most, who challengeth a privilege from error." Also, the symbol <H&G>, when included, signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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PREF. CHRISTIAN READER.

The Author of the Sermons now in thy hand, was known unto many, (and to myself in part) for a man of an absolute composition and temper to make a Minister of the Gospel, in respect of two sovereign ingredients; light and heat, eminency of knowledge in the things of God, together with strength and fervency of zeal for the managing of this knowledge to the best advantage for the glory of God. So that that crown of honor which our Savior himself set upon the head of John the Baptist, would very well, without any anointing of flattery, have fitted his: He was a burning and a shining light. And though his sense and mine do not walk together thorough every particular touched in the Sermons following; yet do I judge the perusal of them, a worthy recompense for any man's time and labor that shall be bestowed thereon.

The God of peace give us in his time union of judgments in the Truth: and in the meantime union of affections in that which is good. If we really and cordially love peace and not our own minds and wills, thorough a mistake instead of it, most certain it is, that we will not suffer it to be taken from us

by the hand of any difference in judgment whatsoever. I do but keep thy heart and spirit from better company in the Sermons following by my Epistle. But that which hinders thee in this behalf shall be immediately taken out of the way, after the speaking of this one word: Read, understand, and consider: and thy soul shall prosper, and the grace of God in Christ shall be thy portion.

Coleman-street London. Feb. 5, 1646.

Thine in the service of Truth and Peace,

John Goodwin.

SERM. I. THE MISERY OF EARTHLY THOUGHTS.

I SA. 55:7.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, &c.

I Have heretofore begun the Doctrine of the Thoughts of men; Now I desire to finish it. Whence we had this Point: that those whose minds run habitually on earthly things, are yet in the state of misery.

First, Because a man is in the state of misery till he hath repented: Now, until a man have forsaken his old thoughts, that man hath not repented. Oh Jerusalem, wash thy heart, Jer. 4:14. A man must not only rid himself of vain thoughts, but he must wash his heart clean, with this Emphasis, That he may be saved: No salvation without this. How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?

2. As a man is in the state of misery, till he have repented, so also till he is in Christ. Now when a man is led by his own vain thoughts, his thoughts being not sanctified; so long that man is not in Christ; if he were in Christ,

Christ would sanctify his thoughts. I, but may some man say, He hath wronged me, ergo, I will think thus and thus. Nay, but Christ casteth down the strong holds, and if thou wilt not yield, Christ will cast thee off; but if thou belong to Christ, he will cast all down before thee.

3. That man is in the state of misery, that doth not love God, that walks not with God in his thoughts. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. Matth. 22:37. So I do, says one, and yet I think on my vanities too: And thus carnal men think they love God. But if thou love God with all thy heart, thou lovest him with all that is in thy heart; for what is a man's heart, but the purposes of his heart? Now if a man give not over vain purposes, he loves not God with all his heart.

4. That man that cannot forsake sin, is in the state of misery, and can never enter into life; (see the Text) the wicked must forsake his ways. A man must deny his own words, and speak according to God's own warrant: the actions of men's lives are the ways of their thoughts; the Tongue must not only forsake his way, but the Heart his way also; else a man is a wicked man, Prov. 13:26. He is wicked whose thoughts are not sanctified. But what will men say? Shall we be condemned for a thought? Words are small sins, and thoughts are less: Must a man then so strictly look to his thoughts? I will make it plain, that for a man to be vain-thoughted, is a grievous sin.

1. Because if the sin of vain thoughts be pardoned, it will ask abundance of mercy.

Mark the Text, Abundantly pardon: No repentance, no mercy, without abundance; ergo, it is not so small as the world takes it to be.

2. Thoughts are the sins of the highest part of a man; for they are the sins of the heart; and surely the sins of the chiefest part are greater than any other. A King counts it not much for a Rogue to steal by the ways side, but

for a Knight or a Nobleman it is a foul matter: So the Lord would not have the lordly part to sin against him; He would not have the long, much less the heart, that is the Kingly part of a man, to transgress. And this is the reason why Deborah calls them great thoughts of heart, Judg. 5:15. Sins in thought, are great sins: the Heart is the lady, the mistress, or highest part of a man; and He that hath made us, looks that we should serve him with the Master-part; That must be afforded him.

3. Because thoughts are breaches or every Commandment; Other sins are but against one, but all the Commandments condemn vain thoughts. The first Commandment saith, Thou shalt have no other God's but me; But thou settest an Image up in thy heart, when thou thinkest of thy pleasures, &c. So, Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day: Now if thou think thine own thoughts that day, thou breakest this commandment; and so of all the rest: The sin of thought is therefore a heinous sin.

4. Because they are the strength of a man's heart and soul, the first-born of original corruption. A man by nature is a child of wrath, a soul and a body of death. Now what doth the heart first break out in? It first shows itself in its thoughts; and if it be the first-borne, it must needs be the strength: as Jacob said to Reuben his first-born, he was his strength; and therefore all Lordship lies in the heart; A man may more easily part with all other sins then with this, because the bent of the heart runs this way; the heart will part with any sin, rather than with his pernicious thoughts.

5. Because they are the dearest acts of men. We count a man preferred, when he is preferred to the thoughts of a man, Gen 40:14. Think on me, saith Joseph to Pharaoh's Butler: I count it thanks enough, if thou preferred me to thy thoughts. We prize that most, which we think most on; That which a man scorns, he scorns to bestow his thoughts on; but that which a

man sets his heart on, that is his dearling. Now that anything should be dear to a man, save God, this is a horrible sin; when a man makes his Dogs his dearling, his Whore his dearling, &c. For look what thou most thinkest on, that is thy dearling: Why? Because thou dandlest it in thy heart; therefore it is a horrible sin for a man not to set his heart upon God.

[*Obj.*] But can a man live without thoughts? Doth Grace call us to leave thinking? Then a man must cease to be.

[*Ans.*] *Non tollit, sed attollit naturam*; it takes them not away, but it takes them up. He doth not say, Let the wicked forsake thoughts, but his thoughts; let him set them on other matters. When God calls men unto him, he is so far from taking away men's thoughts, as that he will rather increase them. If thou be a new creature, thou must have more thoughts; Thou art full of thoughts, now; but then thou wilt be fuller. Psal. 119:59. When David turned to God, his heart thought upon his ways; the word in the original is, He thought on his ways on both sides. The curious work of the Sanctuary was wrought on both sides; Common works are wrought only on one side, but on the other side are full of ends and shreds. So the Prophet looks on his way on both sides; he strives to walk curiously, precisely, and accurately to turn himself to God's testimonies. Ergo, God calls not to forsake thoughts but our thoughts; it is a hard duty for men to forsake their own thoughts. I will make it appear thus:

First, Because it is a hard thing to reform one's self; one thing may reform another; but here is the difficulty, for a thing to reform itself: it is an easy matter for a man's heart to reform his tongue, but it is hard for the heart to reform itself, in correcting its own thoughts: it is hard for a man to deny himself. A hell-hound may reform his tongue; but here is the difficulty, for his heart to reform itself, for thoughts are the heart, Phil. 3:19, who mind

earthly things; thoughts of earthly things are called the mind; a man's thoughts and his mind are all one, so that if it reform thoughts it must reform itself.

2. It is hard to reform thoughts, because they are partial acts; if they were full acts, a man might reform them, rather than being partial acts: my reason is, because they are in every action he doth; thoughts run on all men's actions; if thoughts were alone, men might mend them: but they busy themselves about all actions; if a man pray, thoughts run along with him in prayer, nay men pray with twisted thoughts, so that before he comes to an end of his prayer, he shall have abundance of glancing's on other things. See it in old Eli, 1 Sam. 1. Hanna was praying; Old Eli, saith the Text, thought she had been drunken. Either he was, or should have been praying also; yet you see he had wandering thoughts to mark the lips of his neighbors. So, as John was preaching, Matth. 3, there came a thought into his hearers hearts, that they were the seed of Abraham. What did make them think so? John spake of no such matter; but he said, Every tree that brings not forth good fruit, &c. They had, it seems, by-thoughts in the duty of hearing: therefore seeing thoughts do thus twist themselves about men's actions, hence it is that they are so hard to be rooted out.

3. It is hard for men to forsake their own thought, because they are in men's hearts, Their inward thoughts, Psal. 49:11. Every man hath two kind of thoughts, inward, and outward; explicit, and implicit; implicit thoughts are those that never show themselves in the heart, but at some desperate attempt; Explicit, are those which are in the heart every day: as in Psal. 49:11. They think their Houses shall continue forever. Would you think that men should have such thoughts [as] their outward thoughts were, they were mortal; We see (saith the Text) that men die, &c. and yet they think

inwardly that they shall live forever. Now according to these inward thoughts men act; and hence it is that men neglect repentance, and other holy duties, as if God would never call them to an account; they have not these thoughts above-board, but they are inward, and these spoil the heart, and these are the causes why men cannot forsake their own thoughts. Epiphanius speaks of a fig-tree which grew in a wall, &c. Bad thoughts will be always seizing on a man till he dies, and then all his thoughts perish. But so long as a man is alive in old Adam, these thoughts are rooted in the bottom of the soul, which hinder good duties; and this is the cause why vanity of mind sprouts up.

Examine yourselves then; for it is one of the best ways for a man to try his estate by, even to examine his thoughts. If a man would see whether the sea be salt, he need not drink all the water that is in it; one drop will serve his turn. So a man may see whether he be a child of God, or of the Devil, even by his thoughts. I will make it appear by these Reasons:

First, because men's thoughts are the free acts of their hearts. Many times you speak not as you would, you do not as you would, but a man thinks always as he will. Favor of Great men, and desire to please them, makes men do many times what they would not; but thoughts are free. I may say so, and so, but I will think what list: Ergo, if thou wilt judge a man, judge him by that he does freely, and not by that which he does by compulsion. But now thy thoughts are free, they are thine own act; nothing can force thy thoughts but thyself: ergo, in them thy heart shows itself whether it be carnal or spiritual.

When Peter denied his Master, could a man have judged him by that, then he might have judged him an Apostate: but that was his passion; he discovered what his fear was, not what his heart was; For if a man might

have but looked into Peters heart, (though it was a fearful sin, and without God's mercy might have damned him) Yet there you might have heard him say, Oh it is my Master! Oh that I had never come hither! It is my Master and Savior, I have none but he. It was for fear of his life, that he denied him: For, Prov. 23:7. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. A covetous Usurer may make a rich feast, and say with his tongue, Sir, you are welcome; he must give good words, the shame of the world and speech of people will make him do it; yet his thoughts it may be are not towards thee. Sory thyself, how go thy thoughts? At home or abroad? Are thy thoughts on heaven or heavenly things, or are they below? Sure I am, if a man's thoughts were on heavenly things, then his heart would be there also; for as a man thinks, so is he, Prov. 23:7.

2. As they are the freest acts, so they are the immediate acts of the heart. Can a man judge of the fountain by the water that runs seven miles off, as well as by that which runs immediately from it? The water seven miles off, may have tincture from the soil, and so it may be bad there, though good at the fountains head; ergo, judge of the fountain by the water which comes immediately from it. Now, thoughts come immediately from the heart, nothing is between them and the heart, and out of the heart (saith our Savior) proceed evil thoughts, &c. Mark 7:21. Other sins come from the heart too, but it is at the second, third, or fourth hand; abundance of circumstances come between them and the act; as in the act of murder, it may be there were base words offered, yea and blows too, &c. but thoughts come immediately from the heart: Ergo, if thy thoughts be proud, carnal, &c. so art thou; if thy thoughts carry thee away in the cares of this life, so is thy heart, &c.

3. Thoughts, they are the continued acts of the heart, a man is always doing them. Can a man judge of a Usurer, and say he is liberal, because he makes one great feast unto his neighbors? No; but he may say it is a Usurer's feast, a great feast.

By what a man doth always, by that judge him: Thou art not always praying, &c. or in good company; but thou art always thinking good or evil thoughts: thy thoughts are continued acts of thy heart. Can a man judge a horse for stumbling once in a long journey? At such a place he went well, and at such a time, and always; yet perhaps once in a year he may stumble: Can you, or will you judge him by that? No, rather judge him by that which he is always doing. Thou art always thinking; now that is thy God which thou art always thinking on: If on riches, then that is thy god; or whatsoever it be, then that is thy god.

Examine then thy heart by thy thoughts; for out of the abundance of thy heart thy mouth speaketh: yea, for one word, there is abundance of thoughts; for one good duty, there is abundance of thoughts; ergo if thou wilt examine thy heart, examine thy thoughts.

4. Thoughts are the Univocal acts of the heart, such as wherein the heart shows its own nature. As for example: the Univocal act of Light is, to lighten the room: but now you cannot judge of the Light by the heat, so well as you may by the shining. So an ill savor must be judged of by the stinking, which is the univocal act of it: It causeth abundance of other effects, but this is the proper act whereby it shows itself. So the thoughts of men are the univocal acts of their hearts, therefore in Scripture called the way of the heart: just as the heart is, so are the thoughts: if the heart be proud, so are the thoughts: just according to the nature of the heart, so are the thoughts.

5. They are the swiftest acts of the heart. If I judge of a Scholar, I will judge him by that which he doth ex tempore: if a fool study, he may speak to purpose; but look what a man doth by his own inclination, that a man discovers himself to be; Thoughts are the extempore acts of the heart; if thy heart be heavenly, it will scatter out heavenly meditations; if carnal, then thy thoughts are carnal: thoughts are as the visions in the night, ergo we use this proverb, his thoughts are gone a suitering. If then they be the swiftest acts of men's hearts, then are they most fit to express the nature of the heart.

6. Thoughts are the peculiar acts of the heart, peculiar to God only: the world may see what thy outward life is, but thy thoughts God only sees; neither Angel, Devil, nor Man can see them: and as they are peculiar to God's eye, so he most regards what men's thoughts are; and therefore the best way for a man to judge himself, is, to judge himself that way which God doth, even by his thoughts. The Lord knows the thoughts of man, Psal. 94:11. Examine yourselves in this then, concerning your thoughts, whether they be metamorphosed or no: A man may say, he hath good thoughts of God; but let him examine himself whether it be so or no.

7. Thoughts are the conscional acts of the heart; they are the greatest accusers, or excusers of the heart: they are Consciences Nose, as we may so speak: True it is, the words of the tongue, and the actions of the hands, are all in the light and sight of the conscience; but the nearer a thing is unto the conscience, the more able it is to judge of the conscience: And therefore Saint Paul puts the accusing, or excusing, especially on the thoughts, Rom. 2:15.

We grant, a wicked man may have good thoughts, but they are thoughts descending, not ascending; they are cast into the heart by God, not raised out of the heart. Moses thought in his heart to visit his brethren, Act. 7:23.

Good thoughts grow out of the heart of the godly, they come from the bottom of it: a wicked man may have good thoughts cast into his mind, but he will fling them out again.

Secondly, we grant wicked men may have good thoughts; but examine whether they be close with the heart or no; all the proper thoughts of a man are the possessions of the heart, Job 17:11. They take hold of the heart, and they are at home in the heart. Here then examine thy heart, whether the thoughts of God close with thy heart: Doth repentance close with thy heart? Dost thou think of death, and do the thoughts thereof make thee die daily? Or dost thou think of death, and dost thou not love to be holden with that thought? Dost thou think of hell, and wilt thou not be holden with that thought of hell, but thy thoughts are on thy pleasures? So then, if thy thoughts close not with thy heart, it is nothing to the purpose.

Thirdly, there may be good thoughts in thy heart, but tis questionable whether good thoughts, or no; if they come out of due season, it is nothing to the purpose: If a Printer print never so well, and make never so good letters; yet if he place one word where another should stand, he mars all: So, good thoughts, if they be seasonable, and in their proper place, they are the effects of the Spirit; but if out of season, they may be the thoughts of Reprobates: As if thou be at Prayer, and then to be thinking of a Sermon, is nothing to the purpose. They must be seasonable, and bring forth fruit in due season, Psal. 1:3. When thou art at prayer, thou must have thy thoughts suitable to prayer; for if thy thoughts be never so good, yet if they be not seasonable and suitable to the action thou hast in hand, they are not actions of grace; grace cannot away with them.

Fourthly, thou hast good thoughts in thy heart, but the question is whether they be counseled thoughts, such as thou hast determined to think on.

Thoughts are called the counsels of a man's heart, 1 Cor. 4:5, it may be thou mayest stumble on a good thought now and then, it may be when thou art swearing, thou wilt say God forgive me; when thou hast been drinking all the day, it may be a good thought steps in and cries God mercy, but thou goest not to school to learn the art of meditation, or the science of holy thinking, or to say with David, O God my heart is fixed.

Now, if that sin in thought be so great a sin, this should teach us what a horrible sin it is to sin in deed, therefore thoughts are the smallest sins, and the Psalmist makes it an argument of God's quick-sighted power to see thoughts, thou seest my thoughts afar off; you will say that man is quick sighted that can see a pins head a 100 miles off: even so God sees thoughts; if a pins point can stab a man, then a sword can much more. Now if thoughts be so heinous and capital a sin, how fearful a sin is it to commit sin in deed? For thee to swear, to lie, to commit adultery, to keep wicked company, to mock at God's people, to live in covetousness, &c. this is to commit in deed; if small sins be so damnable, what then are the greatest? If the cockatrice in the egg be such poison, what will it be when it is hatched? Sins in thought are imperfect, but outward actions are perfect.

It is a wicked distinction to say that some sins are *Contra legem* or *Praeter legem*; for, all sins are against the Law, as Saint James saith, when lust is conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished it bringeth forth death; thou that art a drunkard, thy sin is finished; thou art a true sinner in deed, if thou livest in the execution of any outward sin.

Again, sins in thought are simple sins; but sins in deed are compounded; sin in thought is part of sin, but when it is indeed, it may be the cause of a 1000 sins: for a man to think too much of his belly is a sin; but for a man to be drunken, this is abundance of sins; for it is an abuse of God's creatures, a

spending of his substance, a weakening of his parts, a scandal to others, &c. Sin in deed is a sin with an addition; sin in deed is an impudent sin; see Isa. 65:2,3. &c. that man is impudent with a witness that will commit sin in deed, for he is neither ashamed of God's nor man's presence; if any man be a desperate sinner, this is he.

[*Obj.*] But it may be objected, how then can thoughts, be said to be such sins, even sins of the highest part of a man?

[*Sol.*] I answer, a Thief or Rogue hath burnt a man's dwelling house, yet he may proceed further and burn his stable too; a 1000 pound and a shilling are more than a 1000 pound; Sins in thought are included within sins in deed. The soul's part of sin is the greatest part of sin; Now thoughts are the soul's part of sin; yet sins in deed must needs be worse in regard of the progress of sin, and also because thoughts are included in them; thoughts and deeds, are more than thoughts alone.

I exhort and desire you therefore to consider.

1. First, what great reason you have to set your thought on God. God himself merited this duty at your hands, God hath taken a number of thoughts for us. Innumerable are thy thoughts O God to us ward. Psal. 40:5, the Lord thinks on us from the Cradle to the Cross; If the Lord should have intermitted his thoughts of thee, thou couldst not subsist; when thou wast up, the Lord thought how to feed thee; when thou wast in bed, he thought how to preserve thee; he doth not use to think of thee at one time and not at another, but he thinks on thee when thou art sick, and when thou art in health, asleep or awake; the Devil else would seize on thee. I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks on me, saith the Psalmist, Psal. 40:17. And Nehemiah saith, O Lord think on me; shall we call to God to think on us?

Then surely it is our duty to think on him, yea and he may call to us for that duty.

2. Secondly, consider with yourselves what thoughts they are which God calls for; my son, saith he, give me thy heart. Prov. 23:26 He would fain have thy heart, he lets thee labor with thy hands for thy living, and he lets thee have thy feet to walk and the rest of thy members for thy several uses, but the Lord requires thy heart, and therefore give him the thoughts of thy heart; for if thy neighbor come to thee for fire, thou canst not give him fire, if thou take away the heat thereof; so give the Lord thy heart, and the thoughts of it will follow.

The Devil calls for thy heart also; ergo reason as Joseph did when he was tempted, how can I do this and sin against my God? My Master hath delivered into my hands all that he hath, thee only excepted, and shall I take thee? How can I do this? So the Lord hath withholden nothing from thee, but thy heart; my son (saith he) give me thy heart, yet wilt thou deny it him with the thoughts thereof.

Tell me you that are rich, would it be any disparagement unto you to be God's servants, to set your thoughts on God? True it is the greater men of this world think it some disparagement to think on these things. But I tell thee thou that art a Gentleman, if thou have grace, it makes thee more than a Gentleman; grace takes not away men's honor and riches; but if he be a Knight, it makes him more than a Knight; And as Paul said to Philemon, receive him now a servant and more than a servant; he was a servant when he was carnal, but now being a Christian he is more than a servant; if you have grace, it is an addition to your riches, riches and more than riches; ergo give your hearts to God, and it will be the better for you.

Thirdly, the Lord hath made thy thoughts thy Jewels, thy thoughts are precious, the Lord keepeth them under lock and key, he will not let any see them; if all men should observe a man and look into him, yet they cannot see his thoughts; no; God hath locked them up and made them thy Jewel; wilt thou then cast them into the mire? Wilt thou preferred Haukes and Hounds in thy thoughts before God? Canst thou sit at dinner and not once think of God, but always on base pelf? Why thy thoughts are thy Jewels.

Again, A man that is wise, will be wary what companions he keep: your thoughts are your only companions; you never go out nor in, but your thoughts go along with you: and for this cause Solomon would have us place the word of God in our thoughts, Prov. 6:22. See Psal. 139:15,16, when I am awake I am present with thee.

Men will be careful what meat they eat, because such meat as they eat such is their blood; and as their blood is, so is their body; now as the body feeds on meat, so doth the soul on thoughts; if we look not to our thoughts, they will be subject to abundance of corruptions; a man must give an account of every idle word he speaks, and thoughts are the intrinsical words of the heart: now if men must give an account of every idle word, then of every idle thought also.

Let this then teach all and every one of us in the fear of God to consider our thoughts, else our end will be destruction.

SERM. II. OF SELF-DENIAL.

L UKE 9:23.

And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

This Text contains the first action performed of every Christian, viz. to deny himself; concerning which you may here see,

First the grounds of it.

Secondly the reasons of it.

Thirdly, the occasion of it.

Fourthly, the parts of it.

Fifthly and lastly, the necessity of it.

I intend to handle these words as they are in relation to the context.

First, the grounds of this truth, viz. that every man must deny himself. And it is here expressed to be twofold, viz. the contrariety that is between Christ and a man's self; me, and himself, these two terms are contradictory

one to the other; if any man will come after me, let him deny himself; these two cannot stand together.

Secondly. The contrariety that is between self and self; if a man be in Christ he hath two selves; he hath a self in himself, and a self out of himself; the self in himself is old Adam; the other in Christ, which is the new man; there is self-denying and self-denied; if a man will find himself, he must lose himself. Paul must not be found in Paul having his own righteousness, but he must find himself in Christ; for salvation belongeth unto the Lord, Psal. 3:8. And ergo let him deny himself.

Secondly, you may see the reason of it, which is threefold.

First, Christ's own example, ver. 22, the son of man must suffer, must be rejected, Christ himself denies himself; he might have commanded himself, he might have demanded credit, honor, or riches, &c. he might have done thus; yet though he had no wicked self, but good self, yet he denied himself; and therefore if we will go after Christ, we must do to.

Secondly, here is Christ's merit, he hath merited this duty; Christ did not humble himself for himself, but he did it for us, and therefore we may well deny ourselves for him. This is included in this word And. And if I have done this for you, I would have you do the like for me.

Thirdly, here is Christ's command too; let him deny himself; Christ enjoins this to all that will come after him, let him deny himself.

Now fellows the occasion, and that is threefold.

First, Peters offense; when Christ had told Peter and the rest of his Apostles how that he must suffer; Peter was offended saying, Master, favor thyself; even like a servant that out of love to himself would be loath his Master should be troubled, because then he thinks himself shall be troubled also; oh saith Christ, art thou offended at this? I tell thee, neither thou nor

any other can come after me unless you deny yourselves. If any man will come after me, &c.

2. Secondly, as Peter was offended, so also were the rest of the Apostles. They were very sorry, Matth. 17:22, they thought to have gotten credit in the world, and riches and worldly preferment, and now it grieved them to hear that they must have a suffering kind of trade of it; ergo Christ said not only to Peter, but to them all, if any man, &c.

3. Thirdly, like as his Apostles, so likewise he did foresee that all the world will be offended at this; for many would fain have Christ and their self-will too; but Christ gives a watch-word beforehand, if any man will, &c.

4. Fourthly, the parts of it. The whole duty is this, Let him deny himself. Chrysostom on the text saith, not only deny himself, but in the original deny away himself; not only deny credit, &c. but abhor it; if it cannot be had but with the loss of Christ, we must not only barely deny self-respects, but abhor them and trample them under our feet.

The parts of this duty are two.

First, let him take up his cross.

Secondly, let him deny himself and follow me.

The first is opposed to self-favoring, the second to self-doing.

First, let him take up his cross, let him not favor himself; he must be content to part with self-means and maintenance, and self ends too; he must be content to part with all these; he that will come after me, must lose many good friends, and many a good bit and sweet morsel to the flesh; he that will come after me, must not stand upon these terms; suppose a cross of disgrace, come, take it up and wear it as thy crown, nay thou must be

willing to take a cross before it is offered, and when thou hast it, thou must be willing to bear it.

Secondly, he must follow me too; one's self will do as one's self would have him; that is true; but you must follow me, not yourself; look to me, and frame your selves to walk in my steps, take up my cross, &c.

Lastly, here is the necessity of it. It is absolute true a man may go to hell if he be so minded, he may follow himself to hell; but if a man tender his salvation, then here is an hypothetical necessity, a necessity with an if.

First, if he mean to come after me, he must take up his cross and deny himself.

Secondly, if a man would save his life, he must lose it: if he will lose it, he shall save it. If a man will keep his old relation, he may; but if he will find credit and life in heaven, he must deny all self-respects.

Thirdly, if a man will gain himself, let him deny himself. But what say some, how shall we live then? How then shall I hold up my head? These men would fain have the gain of the world, but what is a man profited, if he win the world and lose his soul? &c. ver. 25, if you stand upon these terms, if you can baulk a commandment for self-respects, you may lose your souls; but if you will save your souls, thus you must do. Again the text saith, if a man be ashamed of me and of my word, of him shall the son of man be ashamed; ergo if ever you look that the son of man should not be ashamed of you, deny yourselves.

Now for the Exposition.

Deny himself; there is the difficulty. A man cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. 2:13, for *affirmare & negare* are contradictions; ergo somewhat must be meant by one's self: yet by one's self is not meant the Devil, as Micarius would have it; for since man hath sinned, saith he, the Devil is got into him,

and is as near unto him as himself, he is another self within his own self, another heart within his own heart: ergo, if he will come after Christ, he must forsake the Devil; though this be true, yet this is not the meaning of the text.

But first, a man's corrupt will, wit, reason, and all a man's corrupt self must be put off. Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, &c. Eph. 4:22, which is a man's self. Viz. thou must lay aside the man that thou art, thou must not be the same man if thou wilt follow Christ, thou must be a new self in Christ.

2. Here is not only meant a man's corrupt will, wit, reason, and affections, but also all men's lusts and corruptions, all sins that cleave so close as if they were himself, as fornication, uncleanness, evil concupiscence, &c. mortify therefore your earthly members, Col. 3:5, the Apostle accounts a man's lusts to as close to him as his members; for until a man be brought home to Christ, he and his sins are all one, he must deny himself, viz. all his lusts.

3. Thirdly, By self is not only meant a man's corrupt self as sin and iniquity: but also a man's good self in some respects; not only sins, but also Father, Mother, Children, Friends, &c. yea, life itself, all, if they be hindrances to him from Christ, so far he must deny all these, nay grace itself; for a man may make a God of grace, or of prayer, &c. a man I say must deny all these so far as they are stumbling's and offenses in his way to hinder him from Christ.

But oh says one, my father will disinherit me, I must humor him, he cannot endure a Puritan; If I must live as you would have me, I shall never have foot of his land; so the servant says, I have a profane master and he will turn me out of doors if I be so precise; yea, but what says Christ? If you

will come after me, you must deny Father and Mother and all; better it were that thy Father disinherit thee than that Christ should reject thee; therefore you must deny all and take up his cross and make it thine own.

And so I come to the words Let him deny himself; because justification is after regeneration, it is necessary to show what self-seeking is, before you understand what self-denial is.

By self-seeking, I mean a man that hath a head lust whereby he is self-conceited of himself.

There are five things in self-seeking.

For first, self is a head lust.

Secondly, it's a lust of self-conceit.

Thirdly, of self-will.

Fourthly, of self-wit.

Fifthly, of self-confidence.

1. Self is a head lust, it is the main lust that keeps men from coming unto Christ; all seek their own, not that which is Jesus Christ's, Phil. 2:21. What is the reason? Why because they seek self, they follow their own thoughts; and because they are ruled by their own selves, therefore they are not ruled by Christ.

That it is a head lust, I prove it by five arguments.

1. Because it is the leading lust to all lusts; no lust in the world but self leads the dance; why is man proud, but because self would get credit? Why is a man covetous, but because self would have means and maintenance? Why is a man revengeful, but because self will not put up wrongs? Christ bids us of all lusts to take heed of self, Luk. 21:34. Christ knowing what a deceitful thing self is, he bids us have a care of self-beguiling; Take heed to yourselves (saith he) for if you do not, self will bring you into many

noisome lusts, as surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, &c. and so that day will come upon us unawares.

2. Self is the cause of all other lusts of the heart; it is the plotter and the ruler of all, it is the master of Arts; it was self that found out all lusts. Self found out pride, security and covetousness, and all other noisome lusts; self is loath to take the pains that God would have it, and therefore self sets his wits on the tainters, and hence it is that Solomon saith God made man upright, but he (viz. self) hath found many inventions, Eccl. 7:21. Man was upright, and God was the cause; He became wicked, how? Why self found out many inventions. Self is the inventor of all, and when self cannot get means enough by that way which God hath allowed, then self seeks out for credit, wealth, pleasure, &c. then it devises ways of itself to get reputation, so that self is the cause of lust.

3. Self is an in-lust, it runs along through all the lusts of the flesh, there is in every lust of the flesh an ounce of self. There would be no security in man but that self would fain live at ease. So that as David said unto the woman of Tekoah, hath not Joab a hand in all this? So may I say, hath not self a hand in all this? Aquinas saith it is called self out of an inordinate love that a man bears to himself and to those things which seem good to man's self: A man hath not only lust to pride, pleasure, &c. but a man looks also to things for self, either for some profit for self, or credit for self; self is always an in-lust. See it in the wicked Steward, Luk. 16, he said within himself, &c. he was to be turned out of his stewardship. Now, what did he? He said to himself, or within himself; what said he? Why, he said to beg he was ashamed, and dig he could not; self was too lazy to work, and too proud to beg, and so he brought his masters two hundred pounds to fifty; and what was his reason for it? Why, saith he, that they may receive me into

their houses, ver. 2. &c. and it is said, the Lord commended the unjust Steward, not as if he had commended the sin, but as if he should say, I commend his wit.

4. It is a make lust; a man would never break out into lust if it were not for self. Doeg had a lust of confidence in his riches, Psal. 52:7, and this made Esau comfort himself against Jacob; he had a murdering lust to comfort himself, Gen. 27:42. The Jews had a lust of formality to pray, to hear, to bring offerings, to observe all the new Moons, and Ordinances of God, ye they had no delight in these things; no, their mind was on their imaginations, they loathed the word of God; why then would they do this? Why self was the cause, and they thought thereby to stay themselves upon God, Isa. 48:2. And for this cause many amongst us come to Church; this is a damnable lust.

Haman would not have vaunted of being invited to the Queens banquet, but that the Queen invited none but himself with the King; he would not have been so willing to answer to Ahasuerus's question, but for himself; whom doth the King delight to honor more than myself thought he; self makes a man covetous, injurious, and full of wrongs, &c.

5. As it is a make lust, so it is a requesting lust; Other lusts are with some men out of date; many reprobates cannot abide drunkenness, nor pride, nor usury; these sins are out of date; why, doth not a man love a miser? Why, because self is not the better for him; he cannot get so much as a dinner by him; many other sins may be out of date also with men: but self is never out of date, it is always in request, and so long as men do well unto themselves they shall be praised, saith the Psalmist. Psal. 49:18, he hath none to make much of himself but himself. Every man for himself and God for us all, saith self. But sometime self is out of love; but how? Why he will do no

good but unto himself; this, men cannot abide; this they say is self out of his wits; but self with the wisdom of the flesh is always in request, viz. when men will be kind to others that they may be kind to them again; this self the world loves a life.

2. Now I come to the second, which is self-conceit; self-seeking supposeth self-conceitedness. There is a bird called S. a fair bird, in French it is called the Devils bird, it is a black-bird, and yet it is conceited with itself that it is fair. By S. I mean first the conceit a man hath of himself. What shall I (saith self) be disgraced by one that goes to plough and to cart, and shall I put it up? No, I am a Gentleman, &c. Another saith I am such and such a Scholar, and shall I be contented with such a poor living? These men will bear no reproof, they will none of my counsel, Prov. 1:30, and therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, &c. ver. 31.

Secondly, when a man is conceited of himself and of his own gifts, as commonly women are of their beauty, and scholars of their learning. A handsome man, and I warrant you he knows it; diligent at Church, and he knows it is so, &c. and he thinks his case the better; nay, you shall have men so conceited of their parts, as that they will be conceited of their wicked parts, as Simon Magus was of his Sorcery, Acts 8:9.

Thirdly, when a man is self-conceited of his actions; he doth as Sisera's mothers Ladies did when they had given their verdict of Siseras staying; they were presently conceited, oh what a witty answer they made her; see Judg. 5:29,30, as if they should say, we have answered very wisely; so a man cannot make a sermon, but presently he is conceited oh what a learned Sermon it was; he cannot break a jest, but straight he is conceited, oh what a witty one it was; nay of wicked actions; you shall hear many an old man tell what pretty pranks (as he calls them) he played in his youth, and he tells it

laughingly, which is a sign that he is self-conceited, or else surely he would speak it with shame and grief of heart.

Fourthly and lastly, self-conceit is when a man is self-conceited of the estate he is in. Many a man though he be the child of hell, yet he is conceited that he is the child of God; who with the wretch in the Gospel have conceits that they love God and Christ, and therefore with him they will come to the Sacraments; but Christ will say to such as he did to him, friends how came you in hither? Can you conceit yourselves to be friends? Get you gone into utter darkness (i.e.) into hell, saith our Savior.

Now if you would know what self-conceit is, you must remember that it contains four things.

First, where there is self-conceit, there is no real worth at all; he that is self-conceited is a base man; take that for a rule. A self-conceited fellow is a base fellow, as we use to say; there is no real worth at all in a conceited man; all the worth that he hath, is either real as he thinks, or conceitable; now what real worth can self have? You know what the Scripture saith, tis only in imaginations, and God scatters the proud in the imaginations of their hearts. Luk. 1:43. They it may be do imagine that they are Gentlemen, or that they have faith, and yet God scatters these men in their imaginations.

Secondly, as he hath no real worth in himself, so he will not stand to the judgment of those that can judge him. God can tell the worth of everything, but they will not be judged by him; God's Ministers out of God's word can tell him that he hath no reason to think his case good; but he will not stand to the judgment of God's Ministers. If a Minister should come to a man and say unto him, Sir, you are conceited that you are a good Christian, I pray what signs have you for it; you pray, so do Reprobates; you hear the word and receive the Sacraments, so do Reprobates; hast thou no better signs then

these? No better arguments then these? Why, I tell thee that a Reprobate hath these and more then these too. A self-conceited man will be judged by none but by himself; A sluggard is wiser in his own conceit then seven men who can give a reason, Prov. 26:16. The sluggard is loath to take more pains; why, he thinks he takes pains enough, and so he is conceited, and more he will not do; let seven men come and tell him that he must take more pains, yet he will not, and that because he is conceited that he doth enough. Even so it is with the sluggish Christian, he is wise in his own conceit; for let seven Ministers come and tell him that he must take more pains for heaven, or else he will never come there; yet he will not believe them, he is wiser then so, they are fools as he thinks, though he have no reason so to think; he indeed is not as he should be, and God's Ministers can bring reasons out of the Scriptures to prove it; for Wisdom is profitable to direct, Eccl. 10:10. But every conceited man is a blind man.

Thirdly, A self-conceited man as he will not stand to the judgment of those that can judge him, so he hath too high a conceit of himself; be he never so little godly, he is presently conceited he is a child of God; so if a man have never so little humility or patience, If he come to Church, pray or do but a few good duties in religion, he thinks presently it is as a high wall unto him, and he shall go to heaven cock sure; and let other men be never so holy, strict, religious, and pious in their ways, yet they are apt to think them Reprobates. If he see never so little slips among them, he is presently ready to say they are all naught; if any be false among them, he is ready to say they are all-hounds; but if himself be conceited that he have never so little faith, oh presently he thinks that is a high wall.

Fourthly and lastly, he resteth in the judgment of himself; and this is the case of thousands in the world; they think well of their own cases, when

they die they shall go to heaven, there is no question but Christ will save them, and from this conceit they will never be put; let all the Ministers in the world come one after another, and discover unto a wicked man his estate, yet he will not come from his own censure; for though you bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him, Prov. 27:22. So if you should bray these men with the threatening's of the law, with the plagues contained in the Bible, making their consciences black and blew (as we use to speak) yet they will not leave off their conceitedness.

Now the reasons hereof are four.

1. Because all sinners are fools; and the foolish shall not stand in God's sight, Psal. 5:5. All that work iniquity are fools; a self-conceited fool is a proverb; and our Savior who knew the combination of all sins, joins pride and foolishness together, Mark 7:22, a proud conceited man and a fool are put together by our Savior. And this is the cause why so many thousands in the world are conceited of themselves that their case is good when tis nothing so, even because they are fools; none but fools will look more after pelf, then jewels, and prefer transitory things before heavenly; yet such are the wise men of this world. That man is a fool that cannot eat his meat; and such is every sinner; his soul hath no food but Christ, the word and his promises; yet he knows not how to feed on them; he hath no cover to hide his nakedness but Christ, &c. yet he knows not how to put on Christ; therefore he is a fool.

Secondly, men are borne fools; of all fools none so self-conceited as the born fool; one that hath been a wise man, knows how to hold his peace, but a born fool is invincible; vain man would be wise, though he be borne like a wild Asses colt, Job 11:12. Of all creatures the foal of the Ass is the

simplest; needs then must the wild Asses colt be most simple. So although a man be borne a fool, yet he would be counted wise; he is conceited that all the Ministers in the world cannot direct him; no, he is wise enough for that matter; this folly is bred and borne in him, he hath it by kind, and that is the reason that it is hardly clawed off, but they are ready to say they are as wise as the Ministers themselves.

I call not into question the wits of many; I know many of you are understanding men and women; but I speak now of the Wisdom of the Spirit, and how you may understand to save your souls. What is it for a man to be worldly wise, to get riches and honor, and to behave himself like a Gentleman, and yet a fool in seeking his salvation? This is to be penny wise; but here is the question, are you not pound foolish? Can you go on in your sins, swearing, &c? Then surely you are pound foolish; all your wisdom and money avails nothing; alas you are but penny Gentlemen. The Sodomites, Gen. 19, were blind, they could not find the door; they could see well enough else, they were only blind in this; so man is *stultus ad hoc*, wise enough for anything in the world but this; take him for husbandry, and his knowledge is good; for matter of carriage he can behave himself as well as the wisest; he is only *stultus ad hoc*, for salvation he is a fool, a born fool, and self-conceited.

3. Men are self-conceited for their own estate; those that praise themselves we use to say have ill neighbors; so if a fool had a good neighbor to tell him of his folly, and to laugh at him for it, he would not praise himself; so he that praiseth himself, it is certain he hath ill neighbors: so the reason why men are well conceited of themselves, is because they have ill neighbors; they think they are honest, and so do their neighbors; but now if a drunkard could go nowhere but that everyone would tell him that

he were a hellhound, he would not be drunk; but an ill neighbor he tells him he need not fear, by the grace of God he shall do well enough, he is a good Christian; and hence it is that when fools are not answered according to their folly, that they are conceited of themselves; when men are soothed up, others think well of them, and they also think their own cases good; for say they, if I were not a good Christian, such and such would not be acquainted with me.

Fourthly and lastly, because the Lord delivers many up to the spirit of slumber, Rom. 11:8. Black poppy seed will cast a man into such a sleep as that his eyes shall be broad open, and yet he not see; so the Lord hath cast men into a slumber like a man between sleeping and waking; of all sleep none like to slumber, because it is full of imaginations; never is a man so full of dreams as then when he is in a slumber. If a man were a drunkard and in the deep of all evil, and lulled in the deep sea of security, he could not be so well conceited; but now that his eyes are half open, half shut, half awake, half asleep, half out, half in, he thinks his repentance is good, his case good, and he hopes he shall find mercy at the hands of God, as well as the best Puritan in the parish; they are like the dreamer (as Joseph's brethren termed him) singular, in Hebrew the Master Dreamer; they dream they shall have mercy, and they shall not be damned, these men are in a slumber, they have eyes and see not, &c. Isa. 28, they see the judgment of God, but perceive it not.

Consider what a woeful case these men are in, and how the Scripture calls this self-conceit.

First, it calls it nothing but a thinking; if a man think himself to be something, he is nothing. Gal. 6:3, to think thyself a Christian, is a vain thought.

2. The Scripture calls it superstition; what a vain thing it is for a man to be a supposing? They suppose they shall go to heaven, they suppose they are better than others, better than those on whom the Tower of Siloam fell; and so many suppose they are not in the gall of bitterness not in the band of iniquity.

Thirdly, it calls them shadows; they walk in a vain show Psal. 39:6, viz. their repentance shows as if it were good repentance. They can speak lowly, there is a show that they are humble. Man walks in vain show, like a Tradesman who hath abundance of things which he makes show of, yet are none of his own; so he talks of grace which was never his own.

Fourthly, it calls them imaginations, Acts 4.

Fifthly, it calls them appearances, Matth. 6:16. So men appear all at a Sermon, but their hearts never lie down before the Word, there are nothing but seeming's, 1 Cor. 3. Thus you may think yourselves or suppose yourselves to be in good case, when as it were better thou didst appear to be a hell-hound than a Christian, and not be so indeed; for then there were some hope that thou wouldst look out. If a man be sick, yet if he seem to be well, none will look out for him as they would do if he seemed to be sick indeed; and therefore this is the most dangerous sickness; so if men did seem to be damned wretches, that they were borne and continue in sin, and when they die they must be damned, if men feared thus, they would look out.

Secondly, consider so long as thou art well conceited of thyself, Christ hath no commission to call thee; and Christ will do nothing but what he hath commission to do, he will not run into a Praemunire; Christ doth protest to all the world that he hath no commission from his Father for such; I am not came to call the righteous, &c. Matth. 9:3, viz. those that are

righteous in their own esteem and thoughts, but are not; if a man tell them that they are fitter for hell then for heaven, they are better-conceited of themselves then so; if a man tell them for all their profession they may be hell-hounds, yet they conceit better of their profession then so; now then consider what a case thou art in, if thou be out of Christ's road.

Thirdly, as Christ hath no commission, so he is glad he hath not, and he gives thanks to his Father that he put him not into commission, I thank thee O Father, &c. Luk. 10:21, q.d. thou dost not convert those that are self-conceited, those that think they shall not be damned, such as conceit that they need no summons, that are righteous enough; Father, I am glad of it, &c. and it is said there that Jesus rejoiced, &c. I rather rejoice that thou hast sent me to poor souls, such as are the off-scouring of the world, &c. but he that is self-conceited, is wiser forsooth then so; Christ tells thee that thou must take up his cross; but thou thinkest that thou hast more wit, thou canst go a wiser way to work; thou hast an easier way to heaven, thou wilt none of the Cross; and I tell thee then that Christ will none of thee, but he will be glad to see thee damned.

Fourthly and lastly, he is in the broad way to hell that is self-conceited; there be many ways to hell; the covetous goes one way, the Drunkard goes another, there are a thousand ways to hell; though there be sundry ways to hell, yet they all meet in self-conceit, there is the broad high way where all meet; self-conceit is not only the way to hell, but it is the broad way where all ways meet. There is a way (saith the wise man) that seems right, &c. Prov. 14:12 but the end of it is death; there is the wages, there all the ways meet. Oh then examine yourselves. I should give you signs and tokens to make it appear unto you; but the time will not give me leave. I will only name one or two. That man that self-swears, is conceited of himself, that is

one sign; As I am an honest man, As God shall help me, by my faith and troth, As I look that the Lord should save my soul, &c. these men are highly conceited of themselves, they think that their salvation is sure, yea so sure that that they may swear by it, but these are devilish and damnable self-conceits; it is God's prerogative only to swear by himself, Heb. 6:13,14. I speak this because I know it is a common practice among men, and a hellish brand of a cursed self-conceited man.

SERM. III. THE EFFICACY OF IMPORTANT PRAYER – PT. 1.

L UKE 11:9.

Ask, and it shall be given unto you; Seek, and you shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Our Savior Christ being demanded by one of his Disciples, how they should pray; He here teaches them these two things. First, a Platform of prayer, in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, verses; Say, Our father, &c. Secondly, he teaches them the importunity of Prayer, which he sets forth by the similitude of a man who having a guest come to him at midnight, and had nothing to set before him, he went to his friend to entreat him to lend him three loaves, and at the first he nakedly entreats, Lend me three loaves: The door is shut, says his friend, and I cannot open it now. Secondly, he falls to entreat and to beseech him to do him this favor, He had a guest come to him, and he knew not what to do: Why, 'tis midnight, says he, is there no other time to come but now? Thirdly, he begins to knock, he must needs have them, though it be an unreasonable hour. Why, I tell you I am in bed.

Then he entreats him as a friend. Friend me no friends, says he again. Yet the man would not leave knocking: at last with much ado the man rises, saying, Will you never be answered? And he lends him three loaves, because of his importunity. Now, saith our Savior, I say unto you, though he would not give him as a friend, yet because of his importunity he will.

The similitude is this: Thou art that man, oh Christian soul, this guest is thy self: Now then come home to thyself with the Prodigal, who when he was come to himself, goes to his father and friend. This friend is Christ, that thou art to pray unto; these three loaves are grace, mercy, and peace: These thou art to pray for; it may be Christ answereth thee in thy conscience, It is midnight, thou comest too late, there is no mercy for thee. The soul prays still, Oh Lord awaken and help me: it may be the Lord will answer thee by terror in thy soul, The door of mercy is shut, thou shouldest have come rather. Yet Lord, open unto me, says the soul: Nay, saith the Lord, all my children have mercy already; now mercy is asleep, I have converted them already; they came in due season, thou comest at midnight, there is no mercy for such a hell-hound as thou art. Up Lord, have mercy on me, says the poor soul, and look on me, &c. Look me no looks, saith the Lord; I came to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel: there was a time when I would have converted thee, when I called unto thee early and late: But now I am asleep, and my mercy is asleep, it hath been awake as long as it could well hold open its eyes; and comest thou now? Oh the soul cries still, and will never give over: if mercy be to be had at the throne of grace, he will have it. Even as a beggar being at a gentleman's door, they bidding him be gone, there is nothing to be had: nay, says the beggar, I will not be gone, here is something to be had, and I will have something, or else I will die at the door: The gentleman hearing him say so, thinks it would be a shame for

if him if he should die at his door, and gives him somewhat: So when the soul is thus importunate, because of importunity it shall be granted. Verily I say unto you, if you thus ask, it shall be given unto you.

These words contain in them the main duty of importunate prayer. Ask; if asking will not serve turn, seek; if seeking will not serve turn, then knock: try all means.

Another parable our Savior put forth, Luk. 18:1,2, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. There was a poor woman wronged by her adversary, and there was no Judge to right her but a wicked one, so that she had but poor hopes; yet she resolves to go, or else she shall be undone; therefore if she perish, she will perish at his feet. He calls her all to naught. Oh, for God's sake help me, says she. I care not for God nor man, says the Judge: Nay, good my Lord, saith the woman. The Judge seeing her thus importunate, said, I shall be troubled with her if I do her not justice. How much more (saith the text) shall not God avenge his elect that cry day and night?

Obj. But some man may demand, what is importunate prayer?

Ans. I answer, it is a restless prayer, which will take no nay, nor contumelious repulse, but is in a holy manner impudent until it speed; and there are in it four things:

First, it is restless: he that is importunate, cannot rest till he speed in his suit before God: as the poor woman of Canaan, she sought the Lord God of heaven and earth, (she was of the cursed stock of Cham whom the Lord commanded to destroy; yet she repented, and became of the faith of Abraham) to see if the Lord would own her: but the Lord seemed to reject her, and suffered the devil to possess her daughter. Now, what, might not this poor woman think she had made a sorry change of religion, seeing that

God the author of it would not own her, but suffered the devil to possess her daughter. But see the importunity of this woman, she would not be quiet until she had found Christ, Mark 7:24,25. Christ could not be hid. No? What, could he not hide himself in some corner? No, no, thinks she, there is a Christ, and if he be to be had under the cope of heaven, I will have him. Even so it is with the soul that is importunate in prayer, it is restless. What if Christ do hide himself in the Word, &c. and will not own a poor soul; yet the poor soul knows there is a Christ, and if he be to be found in the whole world, he will have him: I will, saith he, turn over all duties, I will go to all the Ministers that are near, I will use all the means. Now Christ cannot be hid from such a soul that is thus importunate.

Now as it is a Prayer that will take no nay, so first it will take no privative nay of silence; Secondly, no positive nay of denial.

First, no positive nay of silence: A man that is importunate in prayer, must and will have some answer; he is not like Baals Priests, that could get no answer, 1 King. 18:26, nor like wicked men that pray in their pews, they know not what, nor whether God hears them or no: but an importunate prayer will have an answer, like the woman of Canaan: Have mercy on me O Lord (said she); but Christ answered not a word. Hath she done then? No, she cries so much the more; Have mercy on me O Lord: yea she was so importunate, that his Disciples were ashamed to hear her; yet she cried, Have mercy on my daughter; the devil hath my daughter, and misery will have me, unless thou wilt have mercy on us. Christ answered her never a word. It was much trouble to her to have her daughter vexed with a devil, but this troubled her much more, that Christ in whom all her hopes was, would not hear her, nor lend her one look. What? Might she think, Is this the merciful Savior, that is so full of pity and compassion? Is this he that

hath made proclamation to all the world, saying, Come unto me all ye that are weary, &c? And I am tired and wearied by reason of the devil that possesses my daughter &c. yet he regards me not. Thus she might have said: yet these discouragements could not put her off, but she cried so much the more, yea so that the Apostles were ashamed that Christ should let her stand on that fashion; yet she stood it out, and prevailed.

Secondly, it will taken no [possibility] of denial: For when she had an [answer], and that flat against her, it was like bellows to the fire, she was to much the more inflamed, she doubles her forces, Have mercy on me O Lord, &c. Christ put her off with a denial, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; I come for sheep, not for goats; you are of the Canaanites, on whom I have set a brand of damnation, a servant of servants, a slave of hell and darkness: These are all of your blood; but I come to save them of the house of Israel. But the denial of an importunate soul is like the stop in a passage of water; the more it is stopped, the more violent it is: so this poor woman is so much the more eager with Christ; she did but cry before, now she worships him, ver. 24,25, as if she should have said, Lord help me now, I am one of thy lost sheep; I confess I am a Canaanite, I am of that damned blood; yet Lord help me; I am persuaded that thou canst take a course whereby to help me, Thou canst cast some mercy on a Canaanite.

Thus you see, an importunate soul will take no denial, but will renew its forces at the Throne of grace.

Thirdly, an importunate prayer will take no contumelious repulse; suppose God should answer never a syllable of thy prayer, yet thou wilt pray; suppose he do answer, and that against thee, yet still thou wilt pray, Nay suppose he call thee all to naught making thy conscience tell thee of all thy sins and abominations, making thee think that heaven is shut up against

thee, and God hath shut his ears, calling thee Dog, hell-hound, and wretch, &c. yet nothing can break thee off if thou be importunate indeed. So this woman was not beaten off with Christ sending the Devil into her Daughter, nor with Christ hiding himself when she sought him; nor with Christ's answering never a word, nor with the Apostles frumps, nor with his denial, nor contumelious repulse, for he called her dog, ver. 26. Hence dog, I had as leave fling my mercy on a dog, as on thee. What creature but an importunate one, could have gone so far? But see here the nature of importunity, it gets within Christ and takes advantage: she confessed the cause, saying, Truth Lord, thou hast hit me right, I am a dog, or a wicked woman; let me then have the privileges that dogs have; though dogs may not be equal with children at the table, yet they may wait under the table: I acknowledge that thy children are so plentifully fed, that some crumbs fall from the table, therefore let me have the privilege of a dog. Naaman the Syrian was a dog, as well as I; Rahab the harlot was a dog, as well as I; Ruth a dog, as well as I; yet these got crumbs: truth Lord, I am a dog, yet thy mercy can metamorphize a dog: Of these stones thou canst raise children to Abraham. Thus it is with an importunate soul; though God call it all to naught, and cast all ignominious terms upon it, as, I had as lief thou shouldest offer me swine's blood, as to speak in my hearing; yet if thou be importunate, thou wilt bear any contumelious repulse.

Fourthly, an importunate prayer is in a holy manner: And as an impudent beggar that is needy, counts it no manners to hold his peace from begging, although he be bidden; Or as a poor petitioner to the King, the King bids him hold his peace, yet he will not, but still he goes on: The officers say, Thou filthy fellow, wilt thou never have done? Dost thou not see that the King is angry? Yet he still cries, Help me Lord, O King. So the Canaanitish

woman, or an Importunate prayer, is an impudent prayer, yet in a holy manner.

I remember a story of a poor woman in Essex condemned to die: she falls to crying and screeching, as if she meant to pierce the heavens; the Judge and those on the bench bid her hold her peace: O my Lord, said she, it is for my life I beg, I beseech you, it is for my life. So when a soul comes before God, and begs for mercy, he must consider that it is for his life, O Lord it is for my life. Now though the Lord will not answer, and though he call the soul all to naught, letting it go up and down with a heavy heart; yet the soul crying out, 'It is for my life; if I must go to hell, I will go to hell from the throne of grace, weeping and wailing for my sins, and catching hold on the horns of the altar: this soul shall find mercy.

I have wondered at the story in the 5th chapter of Luke, it is a strange passage, where this godly kind of impudency was seen. Our Savior Christ was preaching in the house to the people, and there was a poor man that could not tell how to come to Christ; so the poor man got some to lift him up to the top of the house, and to untile it, and so to let him down; now the rubbish could not choose but fall either on Christ's head, or on the heads of some of his hearers; Was not this impudent action? Could not this man have stayed until the sermon had been ended? But importunity hath no manners: And although he did interrupt Christ, yet Christ asked him not why he did so, but says, Man, be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee. Let us therefore come with boldness unto the Throne of grace, Heb. 4:16, with freedom to talk anything; Not as if God had given us leave to be irreverent, but as to a loving generous man, of whom we use to say, He is so kind, you may say anything unto him; come to him at dinner, he will rise up and hear you, or what business soever he be about, yet he will hear you. Even so it is

with God: he is such a God that all poor souls may be bold before him to speak what they will, they may lay open their cases, and show their estates. Now when souls come boldly, and give the Lord no rest till he establish them, Isa. 62:7, then saith God, How now, cannot I be at rest for you? &c. This holy kind of impudency is in prayer, and it will give the Lord no rest.

Reasons why we must seek importunately, are three.

First, in regard of God's majesty, he loves to be sought unto, and it is fit he should be sought unto. Among men, we account it a matter of too much stateliness to be much entreated; and we use to say he loves to be entreated; this is a fault among men; yet for all this, *Quis vestrum*, &c. as Seneca speaks, what man of us can be content to be but once, or slightly entreated? When a man comes to entreat a kindness of a man there is If-ing and And-ing and shall I, &c. nothing but importunity can get a kindness of a man; and this is a sin among men, because men are bound to do good; but the Lord is not bound to us. If we sin, he is not bound to pardon us therefore; the Lord being a God of majesty, looks to be sought unto of us for his mercy, and he looks that we should be importunate; and hence it is that God saith I will give you a new heart, Ezek. 36. I will vouchsafe you all these favors, yet I will look to be inquired for of you. Ver. 76. I will look that they shall send to me for these things.

Suppose a man should need a 1000 pound; What, saith the gentleman, doth he think a 1000 pound is nothing? I will have good security for it. So when we come for such high mercies as these, for such infinite compassions; these are somewhat, and God looks to be sought unto for them; and Christ the son of God is a great heir, and those that are faulters to him, must be importunate with him, if they mean to be at peace with him.

If one will marry a rich heir, who hath all the preferment and dignity that the country can afford, he looks to be well sued unto. So the Lord Jesus is a great heir, heir of the whole world; if thou goest to be married unto him, thou must sue unto him, and he looks for prayer, he loves to hear his children cry: this is one of his titles, though he be a God, yet he is the hearer of prayer, Psal. 65:2.

Again, we have wronged his Majesty. Suppose thy servant wrong thee, thou wilt say thou wilt pardon him, but first thou wilt make him humble himself unto thee, he shall and must know that he hath wronged a good master: So God is willing to pardon thee, but yet he will make thy bowels know that thou hast sinned against a good God; he will make it appear by thy prayer, he will make thy spirit melt, he will fill thy face with shame and confusion, he will make thee know what a patient God thou hast rebelled against, or else the Lord will never pardon thee. Doest thou think to pacify God with a lazy prayer, with coming to Church and saying, Have mercy upon me, most merciful Father? Doest thou think that the Lord will have mercy upon thee for this? No, no, he may send thee quick to hell for all this; he will make thee cry and cry again with groans; he will make thee cry out and pray on another gates fashion, and he will make the sovereignty of his mercy to be seen in thy salvation: therefore in regard of God's majesty, he loves men should be importunate.

Secondly, in regard of God's mercy; it is a disgrace for Mercy to be begged frigidly; 'tis a disgrace to God's bounty, for a man to beg it with lukewarm importunity. What makest thou of the mercy of God? Dost thou think that it is not worth a groan, with the running over of a Pater-noster? Doest thou make God's mercy of such base reckoning? This is a disgrace to God's goodness, to be so cold or frigid in prayer. Thou hast offered many

offerings, yet I scorn them, saith God, Isa. 43:23. Thou hast not honored me with them, thou hast not called on me, thou hast been weary of calling on me, thou hast too short a breath in thy prayers, thou carest not how soon thou comest to an end? Do you come and lay lazy prayers upon my altar? Thou hast not honored me.

It was a custom among the Romans, when any was condemned to die, if he looked for mercy, he was to bring father and mother, and all his kinsmen and acquaintance, and they should all come with tears in their faces, and with tattered garments, and kneel down and beg before the Judge, and cry mightily; and then they thought Justice was honored. Thus they honored justice in man, for a man condemned to die; and so the Lord loves his mercy should be honored, &c. and therefore he will have prayer to be importunate, that it may appear by groans how highly we esteem of grace; our souls must pant and gasp after grace, the breath of the Lord being the soul of our souls, our hearts will die without it: This is to the honor of mercy, therefore the Lord will have us importunate.

Thirdly, as importunity must be in regard of God's mercy, so it must be in regard of ourselves, else we cannot tell how to esteem it: Soon come, soon gone; lightly gotten, suddenly forgotten; I have it, come let us be jovial and spend it, when this is gone, I know where to have more. But if he had wrought for it, and also must work for more, if he meant to have more, he would better esteem it. The world little esteems Mercy; what's the reason? The greatest covetous men are they that once were poor; when a poor man hath gotten store of riches, he is more covetous than he that was born to hundreds or thousands; they are careless of it, and spend lavishly, whilst a covetous man's teeth water at it; and the reason is, because they come lightly by it. Therefore the Lord loves that we should come hardly by our

mercy; not as if he sold mercy for our pains, but for our good: yet we are not capable of it. See, Jer. 31:9, where the Lord speaks thus to his people: They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them. This is a fine phrase, God leads a soul up and down with supplication, before he grants his request; just as a beggar on the high-way, a gentleman coming by, he begs of him, the gentleman goes on his way as if he took no notice, but the beggar goes on crying, For God's sake (sir) bestow something on me; yet he goes on still, till at last the gentleman comes to his house, and then he gives him his desire. Even so God leads a soul up and down from one good duty to another, till he have brought the soul to that pass that he would have it to be, and then he hears it, and says, What is thy suit? I will pardon thee.

What then is the reason, may some man say, why so few are importunate in prayer?

I answer, first, because men count Prayer a penance: there is a natural kind of Popery in men's breasts; the Papists, when men sin, their Priests enjoin them penance, as pilgrimages and scourging's, so many Pater-noster's, and so many Ave-Marie's, where they reckon Prayer to be a penance. This natural Popery is in men's breasts; they count Prayer laborious unto them, and they are weary of it, they are not eager upon prayer, they look not on Prayer as a blessing, but as a yoke; behold what a wearisome thing it is, Mal. 1:13. They were weary of the service of God; Oh, say they, that the Minister would once have done! They had rather be in an Alehouse, or about their business; all good duties are as penance unto carnal men. If a man be to do penance, he cares not how little he does of it; a Rogue cares not for too much whipping.

Secondly, Men content themselves with formality. Many men pray, as Haman spake the Kings words before Mordecai, for he had rather have led him to the gallows, than to have said, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the King will honor: but he thought it would be the worse for him if he spake them not, and therefore he only spake them for form. And so men for the most part go to church, to hear the Word, to Pray, to receive the Sacraments &c. even for form, or because it is the fashion, and they think if they do not thus and thus, they shall not be saved.

You shall have the Drunkard say, I am sorry for my drunkenness; but he lies; for the next day he will be at the Alehouse again: so the Whoremaster says, Lord I am sorry that I have sinned against thee; but he lies; for the next Quean that he meets with, having opportunity, he falls to whoring again: So the Covetous man will say, I am sorry I am so full of earthly thoughts; yet he lies; he is not sorry; for you shall have him carking and caring all the day long, and he hath a thousand proclamations in his head; He only prays for form with the rest, they only say prayer, they pray not. I deny not saying of prayer, if they pray; Our Savior Christ saith, When you pray, say Our father. The proud man dishonors God's name, saying, Thy will be done; whereas he should be humble, for that is God's will; it is God's will he should be zealous, yet he prays not: He says, Forgive us our trespasses, &c. but he prays not so; for he wrongs his neighbor, and his neighbor wrongs him, and he does not forgive those that trespass against him. He says, Lead us not into temptation; but he prays it not; for he runs presently into temptations, and hath no care to avoid them. And this is the reason why men are not importunate, viz. because they do make formality of it.

Thirdly, because they are Gentlemen-beggars. Of all the beggars in the world, I would be loath to meet with a gentleman-beggar, for he is the proudest of them all; if a man tell him that he hath been an ill husband, and hath abused himself, presently he sets his hands to his side, saying, I am not as every beggar, I am thus and thus descended, I am as good a man by birth as yourself: a gentleman-beggars heart will not stoop. So men are gentlemen-beggars to God, they were (say they) borne of Christian parents, and they have been baptized the children of God already; What, are none the children of God, but a company of Puritans? We are descended as well as the best of you all. These are proud and not as yet brought to a sense of their own misery.

When John did preach to, and baptize the Scribes and Pharisees, he calls them all to naught, O ye vipers and full of poison, who hath forewarned you to flee from the anger to come? Viper, say they? Viper in thy teeth; we are the children of Abraham, we are better descended then so; we are Believers, and do you call us Vipers? Then indeed we might cry out, Oh we are damned! Then we had need to cry for mercy. And in this sense, men are Gentlemen-beggars.

Another reason why men are not importunate, is, because they have wrong conceits of Prayer. I will tell you the sundry conceits of men,

First, they have high conceits of their own prayers; they cannot pray in a morning, between the pillow and the blankets, half asleep and half awake, but they think that they have done God good service; so that he cannot afford to damn them: At night he says, Lord have mercy on me, and so goes to sleep, and then he thinks God must keep him until the morning: So when he goes to dinner, he says, Lord bless these creatures unto us, and so falls aboard, and he thinks that God must needs sanctify them unto him; and

after supper he goes to prayer, and so to bed, and thinks that he shall be heard for his much babbling sake, Matth. 6, they think God will have mercy on them. But poor souls, if they knew how unseemingly they prayed, how unfitly, and what want there is in seeing their own estate, they would say, is this to pray for my soul, for such infinite mercy? Lord, how do I abuse the throne of grace? How do I abuse thy sabbaths, thy house, thy name, and all the holy ordinances which I go about? A man that is importunate in prayer, is ashamed; but when they think highly of their prayers, they are insolent, their prayers are damned, and they too.

Secondly, as men have high conceits of their prayers, so they have mean conceits of their sins, they think not their sins so bad as they are. These men are like Abner, who said, Let the young men arise and play before us, 2 Sam. 2:14. They account murder a sport, and dancing and musicking little worse than David's playing on the harp; Amos 6:5. And if they commit adultery, they say that's but a trick of youth; if they tell a lie, it is only at a dead lift when they have no other shift. That man that doth not think of every sin he commits, as David did of his, even to make his heart to ache for it, that man shall never speed well before God.

Thirdly, as men have mean thoughts of their sins, so they have base thoughts of God. They cannot think that God should damn a man for drinking a pot with his friend; I cannot think God will be so strict; No, no, I love God with all my heart, say they; and they think that God is of their mind; and if they were as God, they would not be so strict. So, Psal. 50. They thought I was such a one as themselves; they think God will pardon them, and therefore because of this, men are not importunate with God. God hath sent me a cross (saith one) but I hope to rub it off well enough. Why? God will not keep his anger forever, Jer. 3:5. Suppose a man be absent from

Church, or break out into some unsavory speech, will God be angry for this? Suppose a man be negligent in a good duty, will God require every day's work? Tush, tush, God will not, Psal. 10:13. A company of Puritans say he will, but I know he will not: and hence it is, that men will not be importunate.

Lastly, because they have wrong conceits of importunity. If a man knock once or twice, or thrice, and none answer, presently he will be gone; this is for want of manners; thou wilt knock seven times, if thou be importunate with them: They within may say, Hold thy peace, be gone, &c. but thou wilt not so be answered.

Beloved, men are close-handed, they are loath to give; and they are close-hearted too, they are loath to take the pains to ask of God; they are loath others should be importunate with them, and therefore they are loath to be importunate with God. Examine yourselves then in this duty; for importunate prayer is ever more the prayer of an importunate man.

SERM. IV. THE EFFICACY OF IMPORTANT PRAYER – PT. II.

L UKE 11:9.
Ask, and it shall be given unto you; Seek, and you shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

To proceed then: There be six signs to know whether our Prayers be importunate, or no.

First, importunate prayer is evermore the prayer of an importunate man; and the man is importunate, if his prayer be importunate: But how can a man importune God for mercy, when his person importunes God for vengeance? It must be the prayer of a godly heart; Preserve my soul, for I am holy. Psal. 86:1,2. David makes a prayer, and he was holy when he made it; his prayer could tell him that he was one that labored to work in holiness. Therefore when thou goest to God in prayer, consider, whether thou canst say, Lord hear me, for I am holy, and I would fain be holy: but if the saying of these words choke thee, then thy prayer condemns thee.

Of all begging, it is a great matter who it is that begs at the door: Who is that, saith the indweller? And when he opens the door and sees it is a thief, &c. Oh, is it you, says he; you may stand long enough, you shall never have alms of me. So in prayer, it is all in all who it is that prays.

The woman in the Gospel having an issue, touched our Savior; he looking about, asked who touched him; and when he saw the woman, Oh is it you, says he, be of good cheer, Luk. 8:48. So when a man prays to God, Who is that, says God, that would have these mercies? And when the Lord sees it a Drunkard, or a covetous man, &c. is it you? Says the Lord; you may stay till Dooms-day, and yet never find mercy. The spirit of supplication and the spirit of prayer, is called the spirit of grace, Zech. 12:10. If then thou hast not the spirit of grace, thou canst not pray. The text saith not, Whosoever asketh the Father in my name, but, whatsoever you ask the Father in my name? There is many a man may use the name of Christ at the throne of grace, but certain it is none but those that are in Christ can pray, and with them everything operates. A man that will walk with God in obedience to his laws, must be a holy man: hence is that saying of our Savior, Joh. 15:7, a place fit for the purpose; If you abide in me, and my word abide in you, &c. as if he should have said, You may ask what you please, and entreat God all the days of your life; yet unless you abide in me, you cannot speed. That man that walks not in holiness of life, can never be an importunate orator as was Moses the man of God; but a wicked man's prayer (as Augustine speaks) is *tanquam latratus canum*, &c. no better than the barking of dogs, or the grunting of swine: therefore you whose consciences tell you that you live in sin, your prayers never speed at the throne of grace for eternal mercy.

Secondly, an importunate prayer is the prayer of a pure conscience. Suppose a man doth not see that he lives in sin, yet if his conscience cry guilty, if he have a foul conscience, his prayer never prevails with God. If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer, saith David, Psal. 66:18, that is, if I can say, or my conscience can tell me that I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. A man must have a pure conscience, 2 Tim. 1:3, else let him not look God in the face beg he may, but he shall never speed as long as he goes on with a conscience that can tell him he regards iniquity.

There be many pray, (for indeed their conscience will make them pray) but they may pray till they come to hell, yet they shall never be delivered, if there be but one sin unrepented of.

I remember a story of a poor woman being troubled in conscience, and many Ministers using to visit her, at last came one which (after much talk and praying) hit upon one sin which she was guilty of, and loath to part with; Then the woman cried out, Till now you have spoken to the post, but now you have hit the mark, my conscience tells me I have been loath to part with this sin, but I must leave it, or else I cannot be saved.

Mala conscientia bene sperare non potest. The Pagans had so much divinity, as to say, The gods must be honored with purity; therefore they wrote on the doors of their temples, Let none having a guilty conscience enter this place,

Thirdly, Importunate prayer is evermore a prayer that is full of strong arguments. And hence it is that Job saith, I will fill my mouth with arguments, Job 23:4, like an importunate man, who will bring all reasons and arguments to effect his cause; even so an importunate man at the throne of grace, will bring all arguments to persuade God. If a man be to pray for

any particular grace, he will bring all the arguments he can devise to get it; as, Lord, it is a grace of the Covenant, for the want whereof I endure many temptations; thou hast made me a Minister, I cannot work on men's consciences until I have it; he presseth all arguments he can devise. A good orator before God, must be a good logician. It was noted of the High-Priests that were to pray before God, they were to have Urim and Thummim, and that was two parts of Logic, viz. knowledge and perfection: such a one should a Minister be, he must be a good Logician at the throne of grace.

Fourthly, importunate prayer is a stout prayer; Continue in prayer, saith the Apostle, Col. 4:2, a weak-hearted prayer is a cold prayer, a prayer without a spirit; yet these men that have weak spirits to pray, have strong enough to sin, and wit enough to sin, and knowledge enough to sin; but bring them to grace, then they have no strength. Thou canst not strive to prevail with God, unless thou stand to it. How came Jacob to prevail with God, but by wrestling. Prayer is called fighting, it is a holy kind of violence. Thou canst not obtain a mercy at God's hand, unless thou lay all thy force on it. Even as a Father who hath an apple in his hand, and his child would fain have it; he first opens one finger, then another, till the apple drop out. So is it with a poor soul at the throne of grace: the Lord opens his hands, and fills all things living with plenteousness; What is the means that is used? Why, the prayers of his children; they by their prayers open God's hand, and so make the blessings to descend. Go for grace; why, the Lord will say unto thee, Thou art proud, thou must be humble, and so open that finger; Thou art careless, thou must go quicken thyself, and so open that finger: God says, thou wilt not make much of this grace when thou hast it, but thou wilt turn it into a wantonness; then thy soul must learn to mortify its members, and so open that finger; thou canst not get grace at God's hand,

unless thou do open all his fingers, and then it will fall down. There is a several power in all God's children, some have more, some have less, yet all must be powerful, else none can prevail with God.

Fifthly, if thou pray importunately, thou prayest wakefully; he must be deeply awake that prays; his soul, his heart, his understanding must be awake: that man that prays drowsily, prays not powerfully; Watch therefore, saith Christ, and pray, Luk. 21:36. Watch to pray, q.d. for as there is a sleepy head, so there is a sleepy heart. As a Beggar who is begging, is all awake, head, feet, hands, &c. all is awake to beg; so must that soul be that means to speed in prayer.

Sixthly, importunate prayer is an assurance-getting prayer; a prayer that will not be quiet till it have got assurance that God hath heard it. Wicked men pray, and presume that God hears them, but God hears them not; nay, many of God's dear children pray many times, and are not heard. How long wilt thou be angry with thy people that prayeth? Psal. 80:4. Not only with their persons, but with their prayers also. How then, think you, is the prayer of such as live in their sins taken? Who pray, but their prayers vanish away in the air like clouds: these may pray and pray, but they get nothing.

Behold he prays, saith the voice to Saul, Act. 9:22. What, did he not pray before? Yes, he had made many a long prayer, else he could not have been a Pharisee; but now he did not only pray, but he prayed unto God as David did, who did lift up his heart to God, Psal. 25:1, or else his heart could not have prayed; and then in the next verse David begins his prayer. Our hearts are just like a bell, which so long as it lies on the ground will make no music, till it be lifted up; Our hearts are not like the bell of Rochea, which (they say) will ring of its own accord; but our hearts must be lifted up, else they will make no delightful music in the ears of God. Wherefore if you

pray, and labor not to bring your hearts home to God, that so he may hear them in mercy, he will (it may be) hear them, but it will be to your condemnation, as he hears the prayers of wicked men: therefore if thou prayest, pray fervently.

There be six or seven marks of Prayer that is not importunate, and he that prays so, may go to hell, for ought I know.

The first is a lazy prayer; An importunate man works hard to bring up his suit; his understanding, his counsel, and all his policy works: so if the soul be importunate, then it is a working prayer. Prayer is a labor, 2 Cor. 1. Labor with me in prayer. That man that plows his field, and digs his vineyard, that man prays for a good harvest; if a man pray to God never so much, yet if he do not use the means, he cannot obtain the thing he prays for. Even so it is with grace; A man may pray for all the graces of God's spirit, and yet never get any, unless he labor for them in the use of the means. God cannot abide lazy beggars, that cannot abide to follow their calling, but if they can get anything by begging, they will never set themselves to work. So, many there be, that if they can get pardon of sin for begging, then they will have it; but let such know that the Lord will not give it for such lazy kind of praying; but if thou wilt have pardon of sin, thou must labor for it, thou must get it with thy fingers ends; God gives not men Repentance, Faith &c. by miracles, but by means: Thou must then use the means, and keep watch and ward over thine own soul, that so thou mayest get the grace thou prayest for.

Secondly, a prayer that is not a full prayer never speeds with God; but an importunate prayer is a full prayer, it is a pouring out of the heart, yea of the whole heart, Psal. 62:8, the Psalmist saith, pour out your hearts before him, trust in him at all times, pour out your hearts (the addition is made in the

Lamentations of Jeremiah) like water. It maybe thou pourest out thy prayer like tar out of a tar-box, half sticking by the sides; but when thou prayest, thou must out with all before God. When thou givest thanks, dost thou labor to remember all the blessings of God? When thou dost petition to God, dost thou pour out all thy heart before him? Dost thou cast all thy care on God?

Thirdly, Snatch-prayer is no importunate prayer; when men pray by snatches, or piecemeals, by breaking off a limb of their prayer, because of sluggishness, or because their hearts are eager about other business; it is not good to trust fits of devotion; 'tis a base kind of praying, when men gallop over their prayers, that so they may come to an end quickly. Should I accept this at your hands, saith God by his Prophet? When they brought a sheep, it wanted a limb, they were loath to give God a whole offering, Mal. 1:13. Many pray a piece of a prayer in the morning, and then they go after the world; he downs on his knees, and gives God a rag of a prayer, a company of ragged ends; And God counts it an indignity; shall I accept this (saith he)? What, a lame prayer? No, no, the Lord looks for a prayer that hath its full growth; it is a shame to speak in the congregation what men do in secret before God, which many have confessed after they have been converted, how they have gone into God's presence, and have shuffled over their prayers, thinking every hour seven, until they had done.

Fourthly, Silent prayers are never importunate. I mean by silent prayer, when a man is silent in that which God looks he should most insist upon. David made a prayer, Psal. 32, and the Lord looked that he should stand much upon his adultery and murder which he had committed, to see what shame he took on him for it; but he shuffled it over: and what saith the text? When I kept silence; what, did the Prophet roar, and yet keep silence? These are contradictions. Yea, the Prophet roared, and kept silence; as if he should

say, the Lord counted his prayer but roaring, so long as he laid not open that sin which the Lord looked he should have stood on; the Lord let him roar, and roar he might long enough, but (saith he) I brake my silence, I said I will confess my transgressions, and then thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin. So many go to God, and tell God they must needs have mercy, and fain they would have mercy, and yet they are silent in confessing the sin they should. I say, the Lord will never hear that man; he may pray to God all his life, and yet go to hell in the end. Hast thou been a drunkard, and dost thou think that the Lord will forgive thee for crying, Lord forgive me &c? No, no, thou must insist on it, and say, Against thy word I have been a drunkard; my conscience told me so, but I would not hear; I have felt the motions of thy holy spirit stirring against me, and I regarded not; Now if thou shouldest turn me into hell, I were well requited; so many Sermons have I neglected; I have wronged others in this kind, and I have been the cause why many are now in hell, if they repented not. I have prayed for mercy, yet with the dog to his vomit have I returned, and therefore for all my prayers thou mayest cast me into hell forever; and now I have prayed, yet it is a hundred to one but I shall run into my old sin again; yet as I expect forgiveness, so I desire to make a covenant to give over all my sinful courses, and I am justly damned if I go to them again. Such a kind of prayer the Lord loves.

Fifthly, Seldom prayer is no importunate prayer; when the soul contents itself with seldom coming before the throne of grace; an importunate soul is ever frequenting the way of mercy, and the gate of Christ; he is often at the threshold before God, in all prayer and humiliation.

The reelings Drunkard in the world sometimes can do so too; the basest Adulterer in the world sometimes can be chaste: the Devil is quiet so long

as he is pleased, and the wicked may sometime have a fit in prayer. But this is the condition of an importunate heart, he is frequent at the throne of grace. The Prophet David prayed seven times in a day; and Hannah continued in prayer night and day.

Sixthly, Lukewarm prayer is not an importunate prayer; when a man prays, but is not fervent, when a man labors not to wind up his soul to God in prayer. That man that prays outwardly only, that man teaches God how to deny his prayer. Though you make many prayers, saith God, yet I will not hear you; why? Your hands are full of blood. *Qui frigide orat, docet negare.* They are like luke-warm water, that never boils out the blood: So they have been guilty of murder and abundance of other sins, and they did indeed pray against them, but they were never but luke-warm, they never boiled away the blood of their sins. Thou must pray fervently, with a seething-hot heart, if thou meanest to get pardon for all thy sins, as security, and deadness of heart, &c. And as it is Jon. 3, let every man cry mightily unto the Lord.

Seventhly and lastly, By-thoughts in prayer, keep prayer from being importunate; as when a man prays, and let his heart go a wool-gathering. I remember a story of an unworthy Orator, who being to make an acclamation, O earth! O heaven! When he said O heaven, he looked down to the earth; and when he said O earth, he looked up to heaven. So, many when they pray to God in heaven, their thoughts are on the earth: these prayers can never be importunate. When a man prays, the Lord looks that his heart should be fixed on his prayer; for our hearts will leak, and the best child of God, do what he can, shall have by-thoughts in prayer:

And that,

First, from corrupt nature.

Secondly, from nature curbed.

Thirdly, from Satan.

Fourthly, from a man's own sluggishness.

For the first; The best children of God have corrupt natures, and when they have done what they can, distractions will fasten on them. They would perform good duties better, if they were able, saying with Paul, The good which I would, I do not, &c.

Secondly, from Nature as it is curbed; The more grace binds nature to its good behavior, the more rustling it keeps. Even as a Bird being at liberty keeps no stir, but being in a cage, it flutters about, because it is abridged of its liberty: so when thou hast curbed thy corrupt flesh, it will be skittish in every good duty thou goest about; and hence it is that the Apostle useth this phrase, viz. I find another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, &c. When grace curbs the law of sin, then nature rebels.

Thirdly, from Satan; as in Job, Satan stands at his right hand as a Plaintiff, as Aegidius compares it, which puts in all Cases to hinder the Defendant; Even so the Devil puts in all by-thoughts that he can devise, to hinder a man's suit for going on before the throne of grace. But thou must do as Abraham did, when he was sacrificing; when the birds came, he drove them away; so must thou do by thy by-thoughts, if thou wilt have fruit of thy supplications before God.

Fourthly, they come from spiritual sluggishness that creeps on the best, if they take not heed: And this was the reason the Apostle cried, O wretched man that I am, &c.

I speak not now to the children of God, who are troubled with by-thoughts in their prayers; For they, the more by-thoughts they have, the more earnest they are in prayer; they mourn, with David, in their prayer. Consider O Lord (saith he) how I mourn, Psal. 55. There was something in the Prophets

prayer that did vex him, and that made him so much the more to mourn before God.

But as for you that can have by-thoughts in prayer, and let them abide with you, your prayers are not importunate; the Heathen shall rise up against you and condemn you.

I remember a story of a certain Youth, who being in the temple with Alexander when he was to offer incense to his god, and the Youth holding the golden Censer with the fire in it, a coal fell on the Youths hand and burnt his wrist; but the Youth considering what a sacred thing he was about, for all he felt his wrist to be burnt, yet he would not stir, but continued still to the end.

This I speak to shame those that can let anything, though never so small, to disturb them, yea (if it were possible) lesser things then nothing; for if nothing come to draw their hearts away, they themselves will employ their hearts. Baals Priests shall condemn these, who did cut themselves with knives, and all to make them pray so much the more strongly. What a shame is it then, that we should come on life and death to pray for our souls, and yet come with such loose and lazy prayers! Think you that a malefactor when he is crying at the Bar for his life, will be thinking on his Pots and Whores, &c? Was it ever heard of, that a man at deaths -door, should be thinking on his Dogs? Can he then think on them? Do you think that Jonah prayed on this fashion, when he was in the Whales belly? Or the Thief on the cross, or Daniel in the Lion's den, or the three Children in the fiery furnace, or Paul in prison? Do ye think that these prayed thus? What, shall I be at prayer, and my mind in the fields? No, no; if I will pray, I must melt before God, and bewail my sins, and be heartily affected in prayer. But as long as I pray thus, I pray not at all. And as God said to Adam, where art

thou? So may he say to thee, Man, where art thou? Art thou at prayer, and thy mind at mill? Is thy mind on thy Oxen, and art thou at prayer before me? What an indignity is this? Should a man come to sue to the King, and not mind his suit? Will not the King say, Do you mock me? Know you to whom you speak? The Lord takes this as a heinous sin, when men come into his presence with such loose hearts.

Now seeing these things are thus, take a word of exhortation to labor for importunate Prayer.

Prayer is the art of all arts; it enables a man to all other duties, it is the art of Repentance, &c. Samuel confessed, if he had not had the art of Prayer, he could not have had the art of Preaching, 2 Sam. 12:23. See the antithesis between these two words. God forbid; as if he should say, God forbid that I should cease to pray for you, for then I should not teach you the right way. A Minister can never preach to his people, that prays not for his people. It is the art of Thanksgiving; a man cannot be thankful, if he cannot pray. Psal. 116:12. It was the means whereby the Prophet David would be thankful to God; he would take up the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord. A man hath not a good servant, unless he can pray for his master; see the story of Abraham's servant, Gen. 24. Prayer helps to perform all other good duties. How dost thou think to have benefit by the Word, unless thou be fervent in prayer with God to get a blessing upon it. We can do nothing but by begging.

Secondly, as Prayer is the art of all arts, so it is the Compendium of all divinity. Therefore to call zealously on the name of the Lord, is to be a Christian; Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, &c. It includes repentance, humiliation, sorrow for sin, joy in God's goodness, thanksgiving for mercies, obedience to his commandments, yea the whole

duty of man; therefore we must labor to be importunate in prayer. A Reasonable soul is eminently all souls; so Prayer is eminently all good duties. Psal. 72. The prayer of David the son of Jesse; that is, all his repentance, in all passages; he did humble himself before God; all David's duties are included by the name of the prayer of David the son of Jesse. And therefore thou hadst need to make much of Prayer; for thou canst never repent, unless thou pray well.

Thirdly, Prayer is a man's utmost reference; a man cannot have Christ, but only by Prayer. 'It is bad enough for a man to be a Drunkard, or to live in any other sin; but yet after all this, if a man have the spirit of prayer, there is hope of this man; if after all his sins committed, he can pray to God, there is hope. But for a man to sin, and not to be importunate in prayer, is dangerous. What saith the Psalmist? They are corrupt and become abominable, they have not called on the name of the Lord, Psalm 14:4. Oh fearful condition!

Fourthly, Prayer is that which God's people have, though they have nothing else; it is the beggar's dish (as I may so call it.) A beggar hath no way to live, but by begging; therefore he had need beg hard: so we have nothing to live on but praying; I mean nothing that is to be done on our side; all the promises of God are to be gotten by prayer. Suppose a man have nothing to live on but his fingers ends, no house nor land, nothing left to maintain his wife and children, but his fingers ends; will he not be toiling all the day? He is a day-laborer, as we use to say. So, to pray earnestly, is a Christians fingers ends. When a house stands but upon one pillar, will not a man be fearful and careful of that pillar? Why, Prayer is a man's pillar; is this be gone, down falls all the hope of salvation.

Fifthly, Prayer is that which hath the command of Mercy; we are such unprofitable servants, that Mercy will not meddle with us, unless it be commanded. Patience is loath to bear; we have so provoked God that Mercy is loath to make or meddle with us; for unless it have command from God, it will not admit of any soul. When David begged for loving kindness, he was importunate; else mercy and loving kindness would not look on David, Psal. 42:8.

Sixthly, Prayer is God's delight. The supplication of the wicked is abomination to God, but the prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. 15:8. The Lord must have something to please; Kings (you know) must be pleased; so the King of heaven would be pleased by all that come unto him. Now nothing is more pleasing unto him then prayer.

Seventhly, Importunate prayer is a willing prayer. There be many that pray to God for mercy, and yet they are loath to have it; why? Because they are not importunate. When a man's lust runs on the world and worldly pleasures, &c. he speeds not. When the woman of Canaan was importunate, Christ saith unto her, Woman, be it unto thee as thou wilt: she had a will to grace, Matth. 15:28.

Eighthly, Importunate prayer is the only faithfully prayer. A beggar never goes away from a gentleman's door, so long as he believes he shall have an alms: so, as long as a soul is importunate with God, it is a sign that it is a believing soul. O woman, (saith Christ) great is thy faith. Why? Because her importunity was great, therefore Christ concludes her faith was great.

The means to get importunity in prayer, are these:

First, Labor to know thine own misery. See Eph. 6:18,19,20. They could not have prayed importunately, unless they had known how it had stood with Paul; so unless thou know thy misery, thou canst not be importunate. If

a Drunkard, or Whoremaster, or Sabbath-breaker, or Swearer, &c. knew that they should be damned, they would get out of their sins.

Secondly, You must be sensible of your misery. Simon Magus knew his misery, yet because he was not sensible of it, he says, Pray ye to the Lord for me, Act. 8:24. If he had been sensible, he would himself have fallen down before the congregation, and he would have confessed how he had committed that sin, in a more apprehensive manner.

Thirdly, Observe the prayers of God's people, as here the disciples of Christ did; they hearing Christ pray, say unto him, Master, teach us to pray; they were so affected with Christ's prayer, that they said, Oh that we could pray thus! Oh that we had such a spirit! Master, teach us to pray. So I say, consider God's people, how they pray; they can pray as if they would soar up to God in supplication; they pray as if they would rend the heavens. If men did but consider this, it would quicken them.

Fourthly, Get a stock of prayer. That man must needs be rich, that hath a stock in every market. So if a man have a stock of prayer, it is a sign he is like to speed, as 1 Cor. 4:2. If God did lend his ears to the Corinthians when they were crying for Paul, then certainly Paul's prayers were importunate.

Fifthly, If thou wilt be importunate, labor to be full of good works. *Qui bene operatur, bene orat*; as Act. 10. Cornelius his alms and prayers were come up to God: now if he had committed drunkenness, that had come up to God with his prayer; therefore was it happy for Cornelius that he was full of good works; so thou canst not be importunate, unless thou be full of good works; take heed that swearing, and lying, &c. cry not louder in God's ears than thy prayers.

Sixthly, If thou wilt be importunate in prayer, labor to reform thy household. When Jacob was to call on God, he said to his household, Put

away your strange gods, Gen. 35.

SERM. V. THE NECESSITY OF GOSPEL-OBEDIENCE – PT. 1.

COL. 1:10.
That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful unto every good work.

There is a double sense in these words:

First, wherein we may not, not cannot walk worthy of God.

And secondly, there is a sense, wherein we may, and must walk worthy of Him.

The first sense, wherein we cannot walk worthy of God, is twofold.

First, We cannot walk worthy of God, with an absolute worth of exact proportion; for in this sense the Angels of heaven cannot walk worthy of God: they bless God and praise him incessantly; but God is above all blessing and praise, Neh. 9:5. Their holiness &c. had a beginning; but God is infinite. Oh then, how much less can we walk worthy of God!

Secondly, We cannot walk worthy of God, with a sinless worth of a mortified condignity, so worthily as we might have done if we had not had

sin; for we are compassed with the flesh and sin, which leads us on to all impieties. And in this respect John saith, I am not worthy, &c. Luk. 3:16. It was no idle complement in that good man, That he was not worthy to untie Christ's shoo-tyers, or to carry his books after him, as we use to speak; but it is certain, in regard of sin which makes us unfit to do any duty to God; God is worthy of better service then the best of us can perform, and to have better attendance then we can give him.

Nevertheless, there is a sense wherein we may and must walk worthy of God. And this is also twofold:

First, *quoad dignitatem non repugnantiae*, As a miserly or a sparing servant is an unworthy servant to a bountiful master, or a drunkard to a servant of God: there is a repugnancy between a master and such a servant. He that will not take up his cross and follow me, is unworthy of me, Matth. 10:37. And in this sense we must walk worthy of God, that is, not contrary to God.

Secondly, This worthy includes *dignitatem condeceniae*; Walk worthy of God, i.e. suitable unto him. A correspondency there must be between Christ and those that are his, between the children of God, and God; we must walk answerable to him; God is holy, gracious, merciful, &c. now we must walk worthy, (viz.) suitable to those attributes; and not to deal basely with God, who hath dealt bountifully with us, and hath delivered us from hell, and helps us to heaven. Let us not then put unworthy tricks on God, but let us walk as men renewed. So much for the sense.

This speech is directed to the professors of the gospel of Christ in Colossae; for first, Epaphras had given out that there were godly souls in that city.

Secondly, as it was reported; so this report came to Paul; he heard that there were a company of men, that went for God's saints: We have heard, saith he &c. ver. 4. I Paul heard so; and hence it is that Paul directs his speech. As if he should say, (for so it is in the ninth verse) I hear that there are professors among you; Now I pray God that you walk worthy of God; You profess Christ and his word, I pray God you may walk worthy of the master you serve. Hence observe,

That those that profess Christ, must walk worthy of Christ; worthy of Christ whom you say you serve, or they serve.

This is further commanded, and that expressly in 1 Thess. 2:12. That you would walk worthy of God. Think not that this is a duty left to your choice no, no, saith the Apostle, you know how we have exhorted and charged you; as if he should say, I have given many exhortations to this purpose, I have begged that you would do so, ver. 11. I have encouraged and comforted them that have done so; I commanded the unwilling, and you know it, and I tell you that this is a duty of great consequence.

First because he hath called you to be Christians; now it is a shame for you to be unworthy of your calling whereunto you are called. It is fit, if a man be called unto a calling, that he be worthy of it. When a wicked and an unjust man is preferred to be a Judge, God knows he is a very unworthy man for that calling: A licentious Divine for a pulpit, is unworthy of that vocation. It is a shame a man should be unworthy the calling whereunto he is called. We are called to be Christians; is it not a shame a man should be unworthy the vocation the Lord hath called him unto? I beseech you, saith the Apostle, Eph. 4:1. You are called to be Christians by Christ: I beseech you consider this, and be worthy of this calling. Art thou a Christian, and art thou not loving and kind? Are you Christians, and yet are you careless and

secure, and will you not walk as Christ walked? What, shall a man be a Christian, and carry himself dishonestly, otherwise then the Gospel commands? What a shame is this?

A second ground or reason is; The Gospel of God whereby we are called, this is a blessed calling. The Lord Jesus tells thee what gospel is, Luk. 4:18, it is riches to the poor, sight to the blind, deliverance to captives, a gospel of peace and liberty &c. It hath many excellent names in Scripture. Now this is the gospel whereby you are called from being damned wretches, to be the sons of God. That man is unworthy of freedom, that is content to be a slave; he is unworthy of these blessed things which the gospel brings, that will walk in sin still. What, will you be captives to hell still? Will you go on in your old fashion still? Will you live after the imaginations of your own hearts still, notwithstanding you are called by the gospel? Have you the gospel of a Kingdom, and will you not obey it, when it calls you to be Kings? What an unworthy thing is this, that a man should not behave himself worthy of the gospel whereby he is called? Phil. 1:27. This is a main one, that your conversations be worthy of the gospel of God. For men to be covetous proud, drunkards &c. still, when we have the gospel to draw us out of these sins; surely it is a shame, and we are unworthy of this gospel.

Thirdly, because we are called to Repentance. For as we are called by the gospel, so by the gospel we are called to repentance; therefore we must walk worthy. Is it repentance enough, to hear a Sermon, or do any good duty? No, no, these are not fruits worthy the name of repentance, Luk. 3:8. I mean not worthy to be repented of, but, not worthy the name of repentance. For a man to put finger in the eye, and cry, Lord; is this worthy the name of repentance? No, no, it is other[wise] mourning then this. True it is, many

repent, but they repent not enough; they must bring forth fruits worthy repentance.

Fourthly, because if we walk not worthy of God, the wisdom of God will not hold us for his servants. A master, if he be wise, will not keep a servant that will not do his business; if the master have cattle to be looked unto, and other business abroad to be done, if his servant do lie and sleep all day, or lie at the alehouse and neglect his masters business, sure I am, if he be but worldly-wise, he will not keep such a servant. In 1 Sam. 30,31, an Amalekite did turn away his servant because he was sick; this was hard dealing; Nevertheless, that man that will not walk worthy, that will not look to the charge that God hath given him, he is unworthy to be God's servant. The Lord hath abundance of business to be done; Commandments to be performed, Sacraments to be received, and abundance of employment; and shall he hire servants and do his work himself? Will any keep a dog, and bark himself? That man is not worthy of God, that will not do his business: therefore the wisdom of God will turn us out of doors, because we leave his work, and fall to wrangling within ourselves. What division is there amongst us? What heart-burning between neighbors and neighbors? What growing cold in religion, &c? And God hath haste of business to be dispatched; why are not his Commandments regarded, his Promises desired, his Judgments feared? Certainly, the Lord expects that we should go about these things, and we are unworthy, if we do them not.

Fifthly, if we will not walk worthy of God, then 'tis for his glory to cashier us out of his sanctuary. It is not for a masters credit to keep a servant that will discredit him; as to keep a whoremaster, or a sharking companion; what will honest men think? Is not he naught himself, that keeps such shag-rags about him? All the dishonor lies on the master. So it is not for the honor of

God, to suffer such to be within the company of professors of his Name, that dishonor his Name, and cause the gospel of God to be blasphemed by them that are without. So soon as Elishia his servant had abused him, he sent him packing, He went forth from his presence, &c. 2 King. 5:27. He should stay no longer with him; why? Because he had dishonored him; and what might Naaman think? Will he now have something? And even now he would have nothing; he hath soon repented him of his kindness. Though Naaman did not argue thus, yet thus he might, and, for ought we know, such thoughts he had; but howsoever, Gehazi greatly dishonored his master, and therefore his master sent him out of his presence. Even so, if we walk not worthy of God, he will turn us out of doors.

You that be the servants of God, and be taken with a Lie, undermining one another, or that live uncharitably one with another; this is a dishonor to God, this is not to walk worthy of God: no, It is to disgrace the Gospel, and to cast aspersions on it. Therefore as it concerns the glory of God, so we ought to walk worthy of God. What may the world think, if Professors walk loosely, and be taken tripping? What will the world say? God keep me from being a Puritan; I had rather be a Papist: and thus the name of Christ comes to be blasphemed for your sakes. These say, Come, come, I warrant you for all this, yet he will lie for a need, though he say, Yes verily. And thus Religion and the gospel of Christ is called into question by the men of this world, even for your sakes that walk not worthy of God; nay, by reason of this, God cannot hire servants to do his work. Beloved, God hath sent us out to hire servants; now many would come in willingly, but because they see and think that those that profess the name of Christ be dissemblers, Puritans, and hypocrites; and therefore they say as sometimes the Indians did of the Spaniards, If these men be the servants of Christ, I will never be

his servant; So, if these men be the servants of God, Lord bless me from them. What a damned thing is this?

Sixthly, If we walk not worthy of God, we put great indignity upon him. A worthy man cannot abide to meddle with unworthy things; and shall a Christian serve God after an unworthy fashion? No master, either in heaven, earth or hell, will have a servant unworthy of him; and this is the reason why men swear, and lie, and live like devils incarnate, because the Devil will have them worthy of hell. So the world lets men cozen and dissemble, for no other cause but because the world will have them worthy of the world. So that all masters, whether the world, the flesh, or the devil, look that their servants should be worthy of them; and do you then think that the Lord will not have his servants walk worthy of him? Be not deceived, God is not mocked, Gal. 6:7. Dost thou come into his house, hear his Word, and wilt thou not obey it? Comest thou to a Sacrament, and hast thou drinking, carding and dicing, at home? Thou goest under the name of a good Christian, yet thou livest in thy sins, having a secret lust, either to swear, or lie, or to commit adultery. Take heed, I say, God will not be mocked. For men to go in the name of God's children, and yet not to serve and obey him, this is to make a mockery of God; but God will not be mocked.

Oh, saith one, my Father will never like it, if I be so strict and precise; and as for my Mother, she cannot abide a Puritan. Another saith, I cannot keep my children unless I put my money to use, &c. But what saith Christ? He that loveth father or mother, &c. more than me, is not worthy of me, Matth. 10:37. Dost thou argue on this fashion, and yet hopest to be a Christian? Dost thou plead self-respect, and dost thou hope to go for a Christian? What a mockery is this? Nature abhors it.

I remember a story of a Boy, who being at Lions, and saw two men, one tall, and he had a short cloak, the other short, and he had a long cloak; and thought it very unseemly; so he took the long cloak and put it on the tall man's back, and the cloak on the short man's back, and then it liked him. So, is it seemly that any of us should wear the long robes of Christianity, and yet be short in Obedience? That we should go for the people of God, and not behave ourselves suitably?

In this place there is no room for Papists to establish merit for themselves; the Apostle intends no such matter in this place; for we are not our own men, and therefore cannot merit. We are taught to pray, Give us this day our daily bread; we have not one bit of bread but we must beg it; and when we have done all we can, (as who doth?) yet we are but unprofitable servants. But suppose we could merit all righteousness; yet all our ability is from God. Again, suppose we be righteous, what is that to him? If we be holy, what is that to him? If we be damned, he is never the worse, if we be saved, he is not the better; if we keep all his commandments, yet it is his mercy to save us. He shows mercy to thousands; to whom? Not to them that sin, but to them that love me and keep my commandments, Exod. 20:6. To one that keeps God's commandments, it is his love to save him, it is his love that he hath mercy on him. The Church of Rome do talk much of their well-doing; but in the mean while what becomes of their sins? They should go and suffer for their sins, and then come and talk of merit; Do they talk of merit before they have satisfied for their sins? The Law will be satisfied first; and when they have endured hell-fire world without end, then let them talk of merit. The Lord doth not mean that we must walk worthy so as to merit anything: for suppose that all the sufferings of this life, and all the torments of the world that all the Saints of God have suffered, were put on one man,

and he to endure them all; yet they are not worthy the glory that shall be revealed, Rom. 8:18 Here then is no room for Papists merits. Yet we must walk worthy of God with suitableness; and if we do not so, the Lord will not own us. You know the story of the guests in the Gospel, and how they were invited to the supper; one pretended one thing, another, another thing; one had married a wife, he could not come, yet sure I am he might have brought her with him: another had bought oxen, &c. But what follows in the text, Matth. 22. Those that were bidden were not worthy, therefore they shall not taste of my supper. So some say for their sins, it is their nature, or one occasion or other puts them off, they could not come. None that are unworthy of God, shall taste of the mercy of God, neither in the pardon of their sins, nor salvation; no, you get not so much as a taste of Christ, if you walk not worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The truth of this will appear in the Use, if we consider what this worthy walking is.

First, We must be as it were even the very nature of God; we should, as Peter speaks, show forth the virtue of him that hath called us, that we may show what a glorious God, what a blessed Redeemer, and righteous Judge we have, and admire his goodness that hath called us out of darkness into this glorious light; and we must be holy as he is holy, 1 Pet. 1:15. How doth this suit with the nature of God, when we walk not worthy of God? God is just, 2 Cor. 1:3, how unworthy then are we that are cruel, unmerciful, and unjust? God is a God of peace, 1 Cor. 14:22, how unworthy then are we of him, that live in heart-burning one with another? We are the image of God, if we please him, 1 Cor. 11:7. What a shame, dishonor, and wrong then is it to God, that we should have his image, and yet be nothing like him? Should a glorious King see a deformed picture of himself, surely he would make

that man smoke that pictured him so: And shall we go for the image of God, the God of all glory, and shall we be vile and unclean, negligent and careless, and yet go for God's picture? What do we make of God? Will not God be angry, and will not his wrath burn like fire? What, am I a drunkard, a whoremaster, &c. is this my picture? Sure I am, God cannot endure this.

Secondly, consider the relation we have with God; we are the children of God, we are the begotten of the Father: doth God beget monsters? Doth God beget such children? We profess ourselves servants to God; the ground of that relation is, that we are at God's command: did God command us to do the duties of Religion thus? No, no, beloved; if we be servants, we must be at his command. We profess ourselves sheep of his pasture; but do we live as if we fed on his Commandments? Is this to live worthy the commons that Christ hath put us in, which is such rich food of salvation? How unworthy is this? If I be a father, where is mine honor? If I be a master, where is my fear? Mal. 1:6. Is not this rather to dishonor God, that a child should have a worthy man to his father, and be a lout himself? What indignity is this that we put on God? Let us examine ourselves whether we walk worthy of God, or no. I speak to the professors of the gospel; for it is certain, that they that profess it not, are unworthy; you that are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, are not worthy.

For first, Christianity is a trade. What profession soever thou art of, that is thy trade: will a man say to a Physician, what, cannot you keep your Physic to yourself? Must you needs make profession of it? Or will a man go to a shoo-maker and say, Cannot you keep your shoes and trade to yourself? So Christianity is a Profession, and thou art unworthy of it unless thou profess it.

Secondly, To what end is a trade? It will do a man no good unless he profess it; Every man in his calling lives on his calling; then, if he live by it, he must walk worthy of it. A Lawyer may die for all his calling, if he profess it not: Dost thou walk in no calling nor profession? Undoubtedly, thou wilt get no living by it?

Thirdly, Christianity is an Order. If a man be a Papist, yet he cannot be a Franciscan, unless he profess himself to be of that Order. So if we be Christians, Christ is the father of that order. Jesus Christ the High-priest of our profession, Heb. 3:1, he is the Father of all Christianity, and thou canst not be a Christian, unless thou profess that Order. Let your light so shine &c. saith our Savior, or else you walk not worthy of God. I speak this to those that profess Christ; for a man may profess a trade, and yet not walk worthy of it.

For first, If we walk worthy of God, then our labors answer all the cost God hath been at. That ground is unworthy tillage, that will not pay the cost that is bestowed on it; that Scholar is not worthy to be maintained, that doth not answer the cost of his Parents. So, my beloved, if you walk worthy of God, answer the charges that God hath been at with you. It hath cost God his Son to redeem you, and what are you the better? The work of his Spirit comes to enlighten us; the labor of his Ministers to teach us: Now what are we the better for all this? It hath cost God abundance of Mercy to allure us, abundance of Judgment to terrify us, many Corrections, and above all he is patient to bear with us; and this is a mercy of mercies. A man will show all he hath, before he show his patience; a man may show himself kind, and if he be much wronged, he will say, What, will you try my patience? I tell thee, God hath suffered his patience to be tired by us a long time, and he hath been at a great deal of cost with us; but have we answered it? If we

have not, we are unworthy of God. God hath been at a great deal of cost to make you love one another, and shall there be heart-burning still? Good ground brings forth good herbs meet for use, not only herbs, but meet herbs: so if you be good children to God, you will bring forth fruit meet for God; otherwise, if God have been at all this cost, and you secure, and strangers still one from another, and never the better, you are near unto cursing, your labor is not to profit in the Word, and so you answer not God the cost that he hath been at with you. I fear me, God will remove his candlestick, or if he continue it, you shall have hardness of heart with it: For since those rents have been, how hath the number of believers decreased? When was one converted? When was a whoremaster or a drunkard renewed, unless it be to take a higher degree in sin? No, no, the Gospel hath done child-bearing; and surely this is the cause; We walk not worthy of it.

Secondly, If we walk worthy of God, then we walk with God in white. I have a few names, &c. Rev. 5:4, for they are worthy, &c. In white, (i.e.) in true love and holiness, with white robes of purity, clothed with the righteousness of Christ: but if you be of the black qualities of the world, you walk not worthy, you edify not yourselves, nor others; this kind of walking is for the men of the world, 'tis for them to stand at a stay in religion; 'tis for them to hear and not to practice; these are black qualities; but if you walk aright, you walk with me in white, saith God; those that walk aloof, walk unworthy, like base Rogues who are not admitted into the Kings presence.

Thirdly, if we walk worthy of God, we do not disappoint God's account. God accounts us sincere and undefiled, as a Virgin unspotted pure in heart; Such as are renewed, the Lord calls all that are his children by this name. Now if you walk so, as the world may tax you for pride, covetousness,

hatred, or any other vice; this is not to walk worthy of God, but to disparage God's account; God counts you righteous, and the world censures you, and says you are not, and that because of your ill carriage, and so God's judgment seems not to be right. They that shall be counted worthy, &c. Luk. 20:35, they that enjoy God's glory, are counted worthy; God counts them worthy, Christ counts them worthy, conscience and the world counts them worthy: but do you think that the wicked shall say at the last day that they were worthy? No, no, this were a disparagement to God.

Fourthly, If we walk worthy of God, then we are importunate beggars; that beggar that will not beg hard, is unworthy of an alms; so we are unworthy of mercy, if we beg not hard for it: Watch therefore and pray always, that you may be counted worthy, &c. Luk. 21:36.

Fifthly, If we walk worthy of God, then we add humiliation to every duty we do to God. It is true, all our prayers are not accepted, unless they be worthy; our receiving the Sacrament is cursed in God's sight, unless it be done worthily; but yet not as if there were any inherent righteousness in man; no, no. Luk 6:6. I am not worthy, that is, I think not myself worthy. Here is the worthiness of all our wages, if we pray in faith, and add humiliation to our prayers; we must obey God, and add humiliation thereunto, we must add unto every good duty humiliation; so that if we be worthy, we are the more humbled. This is a duty, as of great moment; it is such a duty, as if we walk not worthy of God in humiliation, we are not capable of the gospel, nor pardon of sin, if we be not content to be ruled by Christ. If the house be worthy, let your peace abide upon it, Matth. 10:11. The peace of God's Ministers is peace to the conscience; and the conscience is at peace, if sin be pardoned: So that if this place, this congregation, be not worthy that they should have pardon of sin preached, they are not capable

of it. The world must be pulled down, self-will and self-lust must be lamed and mortified, to do as the Lord will have it; that man is not capable of the gospel, that will not be ruled by it.

In the second place, let us consider, If we walk not worthy of God, we walk worthy of somewhat else; if not of God, then of hell, vengeance, and condemnation: Let us assure ourselves, of whatsoever we walk worthy, that we shall have. I speak not of worth of proportion. Let a man be ignorant, if he be thought worthy of hell, then to hell he shall go; none shall go to hell, but those that are unworthy of heaven; and none shall go to heaven, but those that have the tokens of heaven about them. Fill her with blood (saith God) Rev. 15:6, as she was worthy of blood, so God would give her blood her belly-full; so when men walk on in their sinful courses, as they are worthy, so shall they have.

Secondly, You are guilty of Christ, if you walk not worthy of Christ. It is a damnable thing for a man to be thought or found guilty of perjury; but to be thought or found guilty of Christ, this is the greatest of all. Beloved, you are guilty of Christ, if you walk not worthy of Christ: see it in one branch of a Christians walk. If a man receive the Sacrament unworthily, he is guilty of Christ, 1 Cor. 11:27. If a man walk unworthily in any one duty, he is guilty of Christ, and the death of Christ shall be laid upon him: Oh, what then will become of them who walk unworthily in all the duties of Christianity? Judas betrayed Christ, and thou art guilty; Pilate condemned him, and thou art guilty; so &c. His blood lies on thy soul, and thou shalt answer for it, if thou get not into Christ. Thus you see, if we walk not worthy in one duty, we are guilty if all.

Thirdly, If you walk not worthy of Christ, you shall be condemned; the sentence of condemnation is on you forever. He that eateth and drinketh

unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation; and this is but one branch. So he that prays, or profeseth the name of Christ unworthily, whatever duty it be, if a man labor not to do it suitable to God, it is his damnation. That prisoner is unworthy of a pardon, that will not stand to the conditions of his pardon, and be ruled by the Judge. Even so, you that will not walk holily according to the conditions of the gospel, you are not worthy of pardon, and you shall never enjoy it; for the Lord knows beforehand who are worthy walkers before him. Hath God children here, and would they be so accounted? Let them walk worthy of God, let their light shine, &c. let them labor to quit the cost that God hath been at; walk with Christ in all thy ways, for this is to walk worthy of God in all pleasing. Let this suffice for Exhortation.

SERM. VI. THE NECESSITY OF GOSPEL-OBEDIENCE – PT. II.

C^{OL.} 1:10.

That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful unto every good work.

The Apostle having delivered unto us the sundry duties of walking worthy of God, concerning which we have spoken; he comes now to amplify it, and that he doth these two ways. First generally, unto all pleasing; Secondly particularly, in the sundry duties wherein we are to please God; namely, to walk worthy, and then to be fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God unto all pleasing (as it is in the Original.)

Some would have all pleasing to be meant of pleasing all men; but this were a sin; for if a man will be a man-pleaser, he cannot please God. What then doth the Apostle exhort us unto? To sin? God forbid. Would he have us strive to please all men? This were but flattery: No, no, there is no such matter in the Original; it is not the adjective, in all pleasing, that is, pleasing to all: but in the substantive, unto all-pleasing, that is, unto all manner of

pleasing: Labor to walk so according to the gospel, being directed in all your ways according to the light thereof, that so you may please God in all things. It hath reference to the walking worthy of the Lord, that is, in all manner of pleasing to the Lord. And this is not impossible;

First, because God is not a rigorous God, but kind, loving and amiable, full of compassion and kindness, a God easy to please. There be some men that a man cannot please, they are so captious, and so full of exceptions, and so humorous, that a man can never please them; but God is a kind God, full of compassion, abundant in goodness and truth, and therefore 'tis possible for a man to please God. True it is, if God should require obedience in rigor, holiness in rigor, &c. if he should do thus, then it were impossible to please him, then he must have other[wise] servants than we; but the Lord deals in easy terms, he demands obedience according to the gospel: When a man's ways please the Lord, saith the wise man, Prov. 16:7, where we may note, that it is possible for a man so to walk, as that his ways may please God.

Secondly, as God is not a rigorous God, so there is a way to walk wherein we may please him, and that is the way of sincere walking. It was God's advice to Abraham Gen. 17:1. We must be faithful in our calling: see it in David; I will magnify God with thanksgiving, and this also shall please the Lord, &c. Psal. 69:31. To be thankful and to obey his commandment is the way to please God.

Thirdly, the Lord hath showed us this way; he might have been at choice whether he would have told us what would be pleasing in his sight or no; he might have left that for us to have studied out, or else he might have sent us to hell for our ignorance in it; he might have chosen whether he would have come and taught us our horn-book or no. Like as a Master once in a comedy, when his servant could not please him, saith the servant, pray

Master tell me what I shall do to please you; nay saith the Master, Sirrah, look you to that; so God might have made us look to that ourselves, and that most justly too; but here appears the love of God; as there is a way so he hath showed us this way, saying this is my beloved son, hear him. Matth. 12:3. As if he should say, go to my son, he will tell you what you shall do to please me, for in him I am well pleased; he doth not say with him, though that had been true, yet but half the meaning; but in him; get to him, be governed by him, be engrafted into him, this is the course you are to take to please me; this is my beloved.

Lastly, as God hath showed us this way, so there be some that have walked in this way before us. The children of God, in all ages have labored to please God, and that as a child laboreth to please his Father Heb. 11:5.

Thus you see it is possible to please God.

Secondly, as it is possible, so likewise it is a fit duty, it is very fit we should all labor to please God.

For first, God is a great king; now great ones you know look to be pleased. A man cannot speak to a great man without he say and if it shall please you. Est. 1:19. If it please the King, &c. such as have greatness, look for this style; and it is fit it should be so, that greatness should have the companions of it, which is to be pleased. Now who is so great as God? And therefore 'tis fit his servants should please him.

Secondly, as God is a great God, so his pleasure is a good pleasure, ergo it is fit he should be pleased; hence it is called the good pleasure of his will, Eph. 1:5. Look what ever God's pleasure is, 'tis always good, ergo it is fit he should be pleased, because it is always agreeable to reason; 'tis not always fit we should please men, for they are wicked many times in their desires. See it in Ahasuerus; his pleasure was one while utterly to extirpate the Jews;

It was Darius pleasure to seal an idolatrous Decree; it was Pharoh's pleasure to set hard tasks on God's people, and Herod's pleasure was to put James to death, and it pleased the Jews too; thus you see all their pleasures were wicked; nay, all men, their pleasures are not always good, and therefore not fit at all times to please them; but God is always good, and therefore it stands with equity that he should always be pleased.

Fourthly, if we will not, our betters will, and therefore it is fit we should; Christ was and is our better, and he did those things which pleased God, Joh. 8:29. The Angels of heaven think it fit, they bless the Lord, and they also are our betters, see Psal. 103:21. If these think it fit to please God, it if much more fit that we should serve and please him. We argue thus, Will you not do as I bid you? Your betters will: so then you see they are our betters that will please God.

Fifthly, it is most suitable with our conscience that we should do so; for if we should not please God, our consciences would find fault with it. If our consciences condemn us not, &c. Joh. 3:21, then we do those things that are pleasing in his sight; the pleasing of God is set down as a pleasing thing to our consciences; and can we desire a more fit duty then that which our own selves will charge us with rebellion if we be not conformable unto it? Such is the pleasing of God; it is naturally in the conscience of all men that God is to be pleased; how often read we in heathen books, if it please God? And it is a common phrase in most men's mouths, and therefore a fit duty.

Sixthly, it is a duty most suitable with human society; if all men would labor to please God there would be no hatred, no tale-bearing, no falling out: Oh what a blessed life might we lead if we would labor to please God? This is the true ground of all good fellowship: But what was the reason the Jews were contrary to all men? It was this, because they did not please God,

1 Thes. 2:15, when everyone pleaseth himself in his lusts and desires, then there must needs be a contrariety among men; for one man's will is contrary to another's; one will have this, another that; but if all would refer their will to God's will, and agree in one, there would be no contrariety among men.

Thirdly, as it is a possible and a fit duty, so it is a large duty; it runs along as Expositors observe, in all our thoughts, words and deeds. It must be at all times and in all places, and in all regards. It is I say a large duty, and I will show it in six things.

First, it is the end of all our duties; what duty is there for a Christian to undertake, but he is to please God in it? Why do we hear, pray, receive the Sacrament, believe, repent, suffer injuries for Christ's sake, but that we may please God? Why must children obey their parents, but that they may therein please God? I can go about no duty; but if I mean to do it aright, I must propound this end, that I may please God.

Secondly, it is large in that it is the most acceptable of all duties; and indeed it is the form and life of all performances; prayer is abomination to God, unless we please God in that action; the pleasing of God is that which puts life in that duty which we undertake, Phil. 4:19, the Apostle combines these two, acceptable and well pleasing; and they cannot well be separate; if any Sacrifice be well-pleasing, it must needs be acceptable unto God; therefore it is pleasing, because it makes every duty acceptable.

Thirdly, it is large, in that it is unconfined to place or time, we must not only be godly at Church, but at home also; not only fair carriaged in the company of the godly, but we must be holy in all companies, please God in all places; we must labor to please him wheresoever we are; it is a duty not conscribed to any place; shall a man please God at a Sermon and displease him abroad by drunkenness and whoring, &c? Shall we think to please God

in such a place where we cannot for shame break out into unsavory speeches, and at another time, and in another place endure any ungodliness? This is not to please God, but rather the contrary. No, no; it is not limited to time, not place; we must please God not only in prayer time, but also when prayer is ended; not in Sermon time only, but when the Sermon is ended also. Labor therefore to please God at all times; not on Sundays only, but on the week days also; many will read on the Sabbath, but never else; but this is a duty to be performed at all times; 'tis not as hearing, that cannot be performed always: no, it is a general duty, Aristotle's Universals: and Psal. 116:5. I will walk before the Lord, &c. *Placebo Dominum*, will please the Lord in the land of the living. This contains the sum of all Religion.

[*Obj.*] The largeness of it appears in this, that it is in all things: 'tis larger than the servants duty to please their masters; yet servants must labor to please their masters in all things, 2 Tit. 9:9. But if servants must please their masters in all things, then how can the duty of pleasing God be larger? [*Sol.*] True it is, servants must please their masters in all things, (i.e.) in all that are commanded of God; otherwise they may not; for when the thing is forbidden by God, 'tis nothing but the privation of the thing. Sins are privations: an Idol is nothing; all sins are as idols, they are nothing; 'tis not an action, bur the privation of the image of God that should be there, and of agreeableness to the Word in all things that are not contrary to the Word: the duty of pleasing man must be bounded within another, but we must please God without limitation.

Fifthly, it is large, in that it is an everlasting duty; it shall be a duty, when other duties cease. Prayer, belief, repentance, weeping and mourning, &c. must cease, when God's children come to heaven; they must pray no more, fast no more; no, these duties must cease; but this is and must be a duty

when they are dead and gone, it is an everlasting duty, it is that which we must carry to our graves, yea into another world with us. It is the fruit of all other duties; we are tried by prayer and hearing, &c. as by apprenticeship, that so we may learn this art of well-pleasing God; if we have not learned this art, we are not capable of entering into life, so that in some sense it is above the commandments: we will keep the commandments, that we may please God; this is the crown of all our obedience, not as if it could be more, but the pleasing of God in these is the upshot of all our obedience to God.

Sixthly, It is large, in that it is the whole duty of the new man; only new men in Christ can please God, unregenerate men cannot please God; let them give alms, &c. yet if they be not new treasures, they cannot please God; let them do actions, though never so good for manner or meaning, yet they are worthless in the hand of an unregenerate man. They that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8:8. He speaks not of such as are married; for Zechariah and Elizabeth were married, and they pleased God: but those that walk after the flesh as unregenerate, unsanctified, unpurified, such as live in sin, none of these can ever please God. Thus you see it is the whole duty of the new man.

Fourthly, as it is possible, fit, and large, so it is a necessary duty. The Apostle sets a must, and an ought upon it, 1 Thes. 4:2. It must be done, there is a necessary laid upon it. It must be done.

For first, we have no saving grace, unless we labor to please God; it comes from God good pleasure, and it goes to God's good pleasure. God is well pleased in his image, and grace is the image of God: Now then, if a man please not God, it is because he hath no grace: Thou thinkest Christ did die for thee, thou thinkest a lie, why? Thou hast no saving grace. Let us

have grace, saith the Apostle, that we may serve God, Heb. 12, as if he should say, without grace it is impossible to please him: therefore you see it is very necessary to please God, 'tis as necessary as grace, and without it we are damned.

Secondly, if we do not please God, we may see what a woeful case we are in; if God be not pleased to spare us, we cannot be saved. Now a man will be sure to please that man that can hang him if he please; he will not pull his displeasure upon him. Act. 12, when Herod was displeased, they labored to turn away his displeasure, and made friends; so we depend on God, and therefore our souls, bodies, and everlasting happiness or destruction depends on God; and if he be not pleased, what benefit can we wretches expect? Wouldest thou have mercy, and wilt thou not please God? Thou shalt be deceived. Because Hester pleased the King, he showed her kindness; and God will never show us kindness, unless we please him. There is no man so mad, to heap good turns upon a man's head that will not please him; how can we have the good pleasure of God, when we will not seek to please God? Before Enoch was translated, it was said he pleased God? Heb. 11:5. God would never have brought him to heaven, if he had not been pleased with him. So before he translates thee from earth to heaven, before he delivers thee from, damnation, thou must be sure to please God.

Thirdly, if we labor not to please God, God knows what infinite dangers we are ever in; in the morning he may brain us, or we may die and perish in our sleep, or in any action; God knows what mischief may befall us if we please not God. If a man prove a Traitor to the King, God knows what the King will do unto him; the wrath of a King is as the roaring of a Lion; Oh then what is the displeasure of the judge both of quick and dead? If God be

displeased with us, God knows what will become of us, we cannot eat a meals meat safely, we may be choked for ought we know; we cannot be secure one moment; It may be this is the moment he means to disgrace thee, to lay rottenness on thy heart; It may be he will lay the curse of heaven upon thee before thou go home and be no more seen; but if thou please God, Eccl. 9:7, come what can come, nothing can come amiss to them that pleaseth the Lord but if thy ways please not the Lord, thou livest in a damnable condition.

Is it so that the duty of pleasing God is so possible, fit, large, and necessary? Here then three sorts of men are condemned,

First those that please not God. Do you think then that this is pleasing to God that there should be so many Ale-houses in the Town, or in any such place as this where the Gospel hath been so long taught, that there should be so many profane Esau's which walk after the stubbornness of their own hearts? Do you think that it is pleasing to God that you should think hardly of them that think best of the Word? Think you, is it best pleasing to God, that you should have inordinate courses in your families, that after so much preaching, yet many of you should be still in your sins? Is this pleasing to God? Oh consider what you pull upon yourselves, viz. wrath, yea wrath to the utmost. It is a grievous thing for a man to pull the wrath of a King upon him; You shall not do this on pain of Our displeasure. Do then, if you dare. If the wrath of a King then be so great, and so to be feared; what then is the wrath (and that to the utmost) of the ever living God? Destruction and damnation to the utmost; God will show no mercy to them that make no conscience to please him.

Secondly, this condemns those that please men. If it be so necessary to please God, what will then become of men-pleasers, as such there are, and

too too many amongst, us, that carry tales, &c? Why? Because they will please such and such men: Such are many of your children and servants in Alehouses, that can fill pot after pot, and that because it is their masters pleasure that it should be so: But what will become of this in the end? If I should please men, &c. Gal. 1:10. If not the servant of God or of Christ, then I must needs be the servant of the Devil. I, even I Paul, if I should seek to please men, I were none of the servants of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, this also condemns those that please themselves. Many there are that are self-pleasers, which walk after their self-wills, self-conceits, self-desires, and self-affections. It is pleasing to them to drink, to swagger, to dice and to card; It is pleasing to them to shuffle over the ordinances of God; why? Because they have other things to do. Oh think, I beseech you, what a grievous evil you pull on your heads, that are self-pleasers; You draw down upon you more than swift damnation. How can that be, will you say? Yes, a man may pull down more than naked damnation; double damnation is more than single; now if you please yourselves, live as you list, do as you list, you pull on your selves damnation with a mischief. God will reserve all the wicked for the day of judgment to punish them, 2 Pet. 2:9, but chiefly them that are self-pleasers, unto whom he gives special marks; as first, unclean persons; 2. Such as rebel against God; 3. Presumptuous, such as build castles in the air (as we use to say) on God's mercy; 4. He reckons the self-willed, in the Original self-pleasers (i.e.) when a man follows his own will and pleasure. These are they that God will chiefly cast into damnation: this is to pull damnation, and more then damnation upon thee. And thus, by God's assistance, you have seen the prosecution of this Point.

SERM. VTI. A CAVEAT AGAINST LATE REPENTANCE.

L UKE 23:24.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

This is spoken from the good Thief on the Cross, and he said unto, &c. Extraordinary cases never make a common rule: The ordinary rule is this, As is a man's life, so is his death. 'It is a common axiom, and it is as true as common, *Qualis vita, finis ita*; a good life cannot choose but have a good death, and a wicked life a cursed end: this is the ordinary rule.

Nevertheless there are extraordinary cases wherein it may be otherwise, and these cases are referred to four heads.

First, when it pleaseth God to show his prerogative royal, he may convert a man at the last gasp, and give unto the last even as unto the first, Matth. 20:13, his grace is his own, Christ his own, Heaven is his own, and he may do with his own as he will; this is God's prerogative; as a King may pardon

an old beaten Traitor, and thereby show his prerogative: but this is not ordinary.

Secondly, when a sinner hath not had means of salvation in this life, but only at his death; as when S. Paul came unto Corinth, many were there lying on their death-beds, S. Paul converted some of them, 1 Cor. 15:29. Alas, they were Pagans before, they never had the means of salvation before; yet so it pleaseth the Lord sometimes to step in and convert a sinner that never had the means before: but this case is not ordinary neither; for now we have the means and health.

Thirdly, when it comes to pass that a sinner is made an example to all the world, as when a thief is brought to the gallows, and the Lord converts him: And for ought we know, this was the case Of Achan, Jos. 7:25, he was converted perhaps, when the stones flew about his ears.

Another extraordinary case is, when the Lord may be as much honored by a man's death, as he hath been dishonored by his life. In such a case some live, and it pleaseth the Lord to give repentance unto life: And this was the case of this Thief; he did as much honor God at his death, (as you shall see in his repentance) as many whose lives were spent in all holiness.

The privileges of a few men make no common rule; men deal with repentance (as a Divine speaks) as they do with their Wills, they put them off to the last gasp; so they put off repentance to the last hour, like Achitophel, that never set his house in order till he went and hanged himself. As it is said of the serpent, it grows crooked all the days of his life, and when it dies then it straightens itself: So many walk perversely while they are well, and then to straighten all, cry God mercy when they are a dying, as the heart of oak, that never grows soft till it is dead and rotten; so they never soften their hearts with repentance, till they see they must die,

and then they fall to their beads and say, Was not the Thief converted at the last? And did not the Thief on the cross find forgiveness? And why then may not I? Thus they bear themselves on the example of the Thief's conversion. I dare be bold to say, that this Thief never stole more goods in his life, then his example hath stolen souls from heaven after his death. Therefore I have chosen this Text, to let you all know that the repentance of this Thief was no ordinary thing, nay, to us an extraordinary wonder, and therefore there is no trusting to it; For, for a man to be careless while he is well, hoping to speed with repentance at the last, is vain.

Now that this his repentance was extraordinary, I prove it by five arguments.

First, because it was one of the wonders of Christ's passion: now Christ's passion was full of wonders, and they were of two sorts, Corporal and Spiritual.

The first wonder was in the heavens, the Sun was eclipsed, the Moon the being at the full, which is a miracle in nature. To show that Christ the Sun of righteousness was eclipsed at that time; for there was darkness over the face of the whole earth, Mark 15:33.

The second wonder was in the temple, the veil of the temple did rent, ver. 38, to show that the ceremonies therein contained were abrogated, the substance being then present.

The third wonder was in the rocks, the hard rocks clave, to convince the hardness of those that did not rent their hearts.

The fourth wonder was in the earth, Matth. 27:31, the earth did quake at the sight thereof, to upbraid those that quaked not.

The fifth wonder was in the sepulchers, many graves were opened, to show the virtue of Christ's passion.

And as there were wonders corporal, so there were wonders spiritual.

First, the Centurion glorified God, saying, This was the Son of God, Matth. 27:54. Secondly, there was a wonder among the people, beholding the things that were done; they smote their breasts, and returned. A third wonder was on this thief, for he was converted; Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Thus you see that Christ's passion was full of wonders, so that there is no ground for a man to delay his repentance, hoping to repent as this Thief did, unless he will look for wonders. Canst thou expect, when thou liest a dying, that that he will rent the rocks again, or open the graves, or create new wonders? No, no, thou canst not look for forgiveness, if thou deferrest thy repentance: This repentance was extraordinary, and one of the wonders of Christ's passion.

Secondly, that this repentance was extraordinary, it may appear by the number; for of all numbers of men from the creation to that hour, it was never read that any one was converted thus at the last, as was this Thief; so that for all that we know, for this one Thief that was penitent and so saved at the last, the whole world of the wicked and ungodly, that delayed their repentance, living and dying in sin, were damned forever. For all that we know, Er and Onan, Jeroboam and Pharaoh, as they lived in sin, so the Scriptures plainly show that they died in their sins. What need I speak of those hundred fourscore and five thousand, 2 King. 19:35, all clapt to hell in one night, for all we know? What need I speak of the old world? As they were disobedient in the days of Noah, so they are now in chains. What need I speak of Admah, Zeboim, Sodom and Gomorrah, burnt with fire and brimstone? So that as they lived in sin, so they died and were damned in their sins, for all we know. Now what poor ground is this for a man to defer his repentance, thinking to repent at the last hour, when among so many

millions of men, only this Thief found repentance? Thus you see it was extraordinary, in regard of the number.

Thirdly, in regard of the suddenness of it. Repentance the work of grace ordinarily takes up the whole time of life, and will require as many days as a man lives; this is a great work and it cannot be performed on the sudden; and yet that this work should be attained unto in that while he was on the cross, this must needs be wonderful; nay he had not so much time; for it seems he did hang on the cross in his sin, the thieves (saith the text) reviled him, Matth. 27:44, both cast the same thing in his dish, therefore he was not working repentance all the time; this then must needs be wonderful, that this work should be dispatched in one hour, and God knows it might have been in less time effected. Is it not a wonder that a man that hath no skill in music should learn that Art in one hour? Is it not a wonder that a boy that knows not a letter in the book should learn to write and read well and speak good Latin in one hour? Is it not a wonder that a man that is an errant ignoramus, should attain to be a good Lawyer in one hour? These are wonders: So I tell you repentance, grace and conversion, are hard arts, harder than music or divinity, harder then all arts; there is no art so hard as to learn to go to heaven, and can a man learn this in one hour? If he do, it is a wonder; It cost David all his life time; Timothy from his youth studied the Scriptures, and Hillary said, 90 years have I been learning to die. If a man had Methuselahs days he could no more than con this lesson, now seeing repentance is so long an art, and we think to repent as the thief, because Philip was carried to Azotus at a trice, Acts 8:30, which was as some affirm 16 miles, doth it follow that another shall do so too? The way to heaven is a long way, and if the thief dispatched it in one hour, it was a miracle.

This repentance was extraordinary in regard of the Evangelical perfection of it, though dispatched on a sudden, yet it was not done to halves, but was perfect consisting of these seven parts.

For first, there was his penitential confession, as you may read ver. 41, we indeed justly receive the due reward of our death, q.d. It is just with God that I am brought to the gallows, and just it were with God if I were damned; I have lived all my days in roving and hunting up and down, in breaking God's commandments, and now God hath justly found me out; this is his open penitential confession.

Here is his penitential profession, but this man hath done nothing amiss, all his Doctrine was true, not one jot amiss in all his life, there was nothing amiss; but you Scribes have cried crucify him amiss; thou wretched Judas hast betrayed him amiss; he is the Son of God; here he confesseth Christ to be the Messiah, and thus he stood for him against all the world.

3. Here is his penitential satisfaction; as he had been partner with the other thief in sin, so now he labors to make him satisfaction in turning him to God; in the 40th verse, dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? Alas thou and I have played the villains against God, and are justly damned; But as we have been thieves together, so now let us repent together, and call on God together; dost thou not fear God seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? And thus he labors to convert his fellow thief.

4. Here is his penitential self-denial; he denies himself, he loves the glory of God more than his own soul or salvation, mark here how he labors to convert his fellow thief and to make him give all the glory to God; he was so wounded to the soul that his fellow thief should dishonor God, as that he labored to turn him before he prayed for his own soul; dost thou not fear

God? &c. this he said, before he said, Lord remember me; he lets his own soul lie at the stake while he labors to glorify God; so that it is plain he loves God more than his own soul.

5. Here you may see his penitential faith, he believes not with a general faith, but with a saving and particular faith, with faith and assurance he looks on Christ as his Jesus; he said unto Jesus; there is not one idle word in this text, the holy Ghost says he said unto Jesus, he said not that he thought to say so, but the Spirit of God witnesseth that he said so indeed, he spake to Christ as to a Jesus.

6. Here is his penitential resolution of newness of life and new obedience for time to come; Lord, remember me; he acknowledgeth Christ to be his Lord, q.d. I have followed the imaginations of my own will hitherto; all my stealing and other sins have been to fulfill my own will; but now I confess thee to be my Lord, and were I to live again, or any longer, I would forever serve thee.

Lastly, here is his penitential prayer, Lord remember me; he acknowledges Christ to be his Lord, nay he did not only pray thus, but saith Basil, he offered much prayer unto God, even as much as his short time could permit; these words are but the sum of what he spake, Lord remember me, &c. thus you see he was no more a thief but a convert and confessor, as Augustine observes, a wicked thief to steal earthly things, but a good thief (as we call him to this day) to break through into the Kingdom of heaven, he steals Paradise; thus you see what a wonderful repentance he had in regard of the perfection of it; faith was in it, humiliation was in it, turning to God was in it, self-denial was in it, satisfaction was in it, and glorifying of God in the face of the world was in it; nay he was the only professor of Christ, to the Nations at that time; he had never a servant but this; never a

word at this time spoken for Christ, but that which this Thief spake; none to back Christ but this Thief; he was the only professor and confessor of Christ at this time, the only man on the earth that glorified God. Therefore unless thou expect such a death, to bring such glory to God as this Thief did, never bear thyself upon his example.

Fifthly, This repentance was extraordinary, in regard of the incomparableness of it; Never was there such a repentance since the world began, nor shall be while the world stands: for when all the world, Jews and Gentiles, stood in their obstinacy, Priests and Rulers, great and small, all cried Crucify him; and when the Disciples doubted, this Thief believed; and when Peter denied Christ, this Thief repented and confessed Christ; nay, when all the Apostles showed their heels, this Thief stood to his tackling's, this Thief maintains Christ against them all; nay when Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, when she was afraid to come near to the Cross, Matth. 27:55, and the mother of Zebedee's children, who should have come near, yet they stood a far off; only this Thief published the gospel of Jesus Christ, and makes open acknowledgement of him to be the Savior of the world, when all his Disciples and the world forsook him in their obstinacy, and, as the Papists observe, God then had no visible Church upon the earth; so that this Thief on the cross put down all the world for repentance, yea the Apostles of Christ. Now show me such a repentance whereby thou mayest put down Peter and all the Apostles of Christ; either show me such a repentance, extraordinary, incomparable, and wonderful, to make them all ashamed: I say, either show me such a repentance, or never trust on the Thieves example on the cross. If a man have a hundred miles to go for his life, and but a short time allotted unto him, he had need make haste. Now the way to heaven is a long way, and he that can begin and end

that journey when he lies a dying, is the quickest man of foot that ever yet was heard, this Thief only excepted. If thou run to obtain, thou hadst need to have the art of prayer and repentance, or else thou canst not overtake them, for they are before thee much.

This may serve to condemns those that rely upon this example. Oh, saith one, did not the Thief on the cross repent at the last hour? And God is the same God still; and if he repented at thee last, why may not I? How many wrest this Scripture to their own damnation? That live in sin with this Thief that went to heaven; yet die and are damned, with the other Thief that went to hell.

I will demonstrate this and make it plain, because I desire to convince all that hear me.

First then, tell me when this Thief was converted? Was it not when Christ hung on the cross? Matth. 27:33. Christ hung then on the cross, and was to be inaugurated King over all. Now, when Kings are inaugurated into their kingdoms, they show that bounty, then, which they will not do again all the time of their reign. We have of this a sufficient story in the Chronicles of England, of King Henry the fourth, who when he was inaugurated King, he created 55 Knights, he hung all the streets and lanes in London with cloth of gold, he made all the Conduits in London to run with Sack. Claret and White wine: this he did when he was inaugurated King, which he never did all his life time afterwards. Even so Christ was pleased to show mercy and grace unto this Thief, unto life eternal, when he was inaugurated King over principalities and powers, over hell and darkness. Now as K. Henry never created so many Knights again, never hung London streets so again, never made the Conduits run so with wine again; even so the Lord showed such a

bounty then, as, for ought we know, he never did before, nor will do the like again.

Secondly, Kings when they are inaugurated, they pardon such offenses, forgive such taxations, wrongs, injuries, treasons and felonies, as they will never pardon again as long as they live in the kingdom. So we read of Charles the 3rd, King of France, that day that he was crowned, he pardoned all those that had sinned against the Crown, in what kind soever they had offended; Why? Because he was crowned King, and so he would make that day a day of rejoicing. And thus it was when Christ triumphed over hell, he forgave the sins of this Thief, the like whereof we never read of, and for ought we know will never do the like again.

3. Tell me where was this thief pardoned? Was it not in Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, the place where Christ did triumph, where he was crowned, where he forgave transgressions and sins? There it was where Christ pardoned him. Now as it is with a Captain when he hath gotten the victory, he will set up some monument at the place, that it may be a token thereof; so Christ having wrought the salvation of the world, set up a monument there where he wrought it, whereof none greater then this could be, not the rending of the rocks, nor the earthquake, nor any of the wonders besides did so honor the death of Christ, as the conversion of this Thief; who like a Physician having made an excellent medicine, and desirous to try it, will do that for nothing; which he will not do again for much: so Christ having made an admirable sovereign plaster for the salvation of mankind, so soon as ever he had made it, he makes an experiment thereof on this Thief; as if he should have said, Now you shall see what my death can do. So then you see that the conversion of this Thief was no ordinary, but an extraordinary wonder.

Fourthly, tell me how he cures by forgiveness, not by bare repentance only, but by repentance with Martyrdom; he did not only nakedly repent of his sin, but he died also a Martyr for Christ; he was a Martyr on the cross; for although he was first hung on the cross for his evil deeds, yet afterwards when he repented and confessed the Lord Jesus Christ, and maintained him to be the Messias, and condemned Pilate, Herod, and the Jews, by publishing that he was unjustly crucified, and that he was the son of God; I say though at the first he was hung on the cross for his sin; yet now they let him hang for his religion, as by their own law it was manifest; for they had a law that whosoever confessed Christ, should be punished; so that now he confessing Christ, they let him hang for his religion to Christ, so that he died a Martyr; and ver. 20, what a witness he gave unto Christ? The other answering, he rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God? &c. As if he should say, thou seest the Scribes and Pharisees fear not God, they have conspired against the Son of God. The Jews that should have believed on him cried crucify him; Herod: hath mocked him, Pilate condemned him; dost thou not yet fear God? What not thou that art in the state of condemnation, thou that art to be damned within this hour? Is it not enough for them to crucify Christ, but dost not thou fear God neither; Oh what a witness was this unto Christ; no wonder if he found mercy when it pleased the Lord to enlarge himself so in bringing his soul unto him.

[*Obj.*] But it may be objected, why is this Scripture recorded, if I may not make this use of it to repent as this thief did, seeing all Scripture is for our learning?

[*Sol.*] You know the common answer, it is once recorded that none might despair, and but once, that none might presume. Christ saved him at the last

cast, that when a man is at that pinch he might not despair if he repent and become a new creature; and but one was saved that none might presume.

There are many reasons why this Scripture is recorded.

First, to show the sovereignty of Christ's death, and as Christ healed all manner of sickness in his life, so his death is able to heal all manner of sins; it is the leaves of that tree only that can heal the Nations, Rev. 22:2, and therefore the Scripture sets down a desperate example of a thief; for a man must be a desperate man, if he be a thief: and Christ did this to show that he can show mercy even to a thief; that so all the world may take notice of the virtue of Christ's death.

Secondly, it is recorded, that no poor soul should cry out of his sins, saying, I am damned, I am accursed, I am more sinful and graceless then any man, more wicked than any man. I say, do not thus reason; for here is an example set down of the thief, and you know what Christ said to the multitude, of a Thief; Do you come unto me as to a thief, with swords and staves? As if he should have said, You deal basely with me, as if I were as bad as a thief, implying, that a thief is the worst of all men, nay as bad as the devil, Joh. 12:6. And it is reckoned as one of their damnable usages against Christ, that they hung him between two thieves, two of the vilest creatures of all: so that a thief is an example of a desperate man; and yet you see Christ hath mercy, and gives it to a thief; Therefore if the Lord have enlarged thy heart to repent, be not discouraged, but lay hold on Christ.

Thirdly, this Scripture is recorded, that we may not cast off all men that come to the last cast; all men, though great sinners, must not desperately be cast off: For suppose a man have been a Drunkard, yet prayer and supplication may be made to God for him, and God may open his eyes, and there is some possibility that he may be saved, though it be a thousand to

one; yet I say there is some possibility; for there was one thief saved at the last cast: and therefore a Drunkard, &c. is not to be given over for quite gone. It may be there are a wonderful company of improbabilities in it, yet we cannot tell but that this may be the second to whom the Lord will give repentance, and therefore the Lord converted this thief.

Lastly, this story is recorded, that by it we may be encouraged to believe, and to be converted betimes. For if the Lord were so willing to receive the thief that sought him but at the last hour, how willing will he be then to receive thee that seekest him betimes? But as for thee that livest in thy sins, and bearest on the example of this Thief; let me tell thee, this story was never penned for thy comfort. The Lord knew how men would abuse this story; therefore S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. John omit it; and if we had none to testify it, all the world would say both the thieves were damned; nay, S. Matthew saith, the thieves, both the thieves cast the same thing in his teeth: only S. Luke, he pens it for the comfort of the godly; he was loath (as it seems to me) to leave it out quite, because some poor soul might stand in need of it. Therefore let me here rap off the fingers of all those that would lay hold on this example of the thief, to defer their repentance: this story belong not unto such.

First, because this thief had not the means of life and grace before; for where do you read in all the gospel, that ever this Thief had the means of life? Perhaps when Christ was preaching, he was pilfering; where do you read that ever he heard any of the Apostles, or Seventy, or John the Baptist, or any Sermon in all his life? No, no, he went roving up and down, we have not one title to imply that he had the means of salvation; and therefore this is nothing to thee, that hast the preaching of the Word, which reproveth thee of thy sins and therefore if thou wilt go on, thou shalt die, Ezek. 3:19.

Secondly, this story belongs not unto thee; for, where dost thou read that ever this thief did build upon this hope? Do you think that this thief said I will steal as long as I can, I know I shall be imprisoned, and I shall be crucified with Christ, but while I lie in prison, I will repent, and then he will have mercy on me? Did this poor thief ever dream of these hopes; did he presume of mercy, and so sin against mercies, and therefore thou that buildest on this example, whosoever thou art, it belongs not unto thee.

Tush, tush, says the Drunkard shall I be damned? The thief was saved. Thou cursed caitiff, what though thou shouldst repent and cry for mercy? Art thou sure the Lord will hear and pardon thee? When I spake to you said Moses, you would not hear, but rebelled, and were presumptuous, Deut. 1:43. Dost thou presume on God's mercy that he will convert thee at the last? I tell thee that God's mercy is good mercy, it is not like the mercy of a wicked Judge; that is wickedly merciful, and suffers Rogues to be pardoned; No, no, God's mercy is good, Psal. 109:21, mercy and justice are all one with God, and they have all one name in scripture. There is a crown laid up for me saith Paul which the Lord, the just Judge shall give me (viz) which God the merciful Judge shall give unto me; God is just in his mercy, and therefore thinkest thou to live in thy sins, to swear, to lie, to be drunk, &c. and yet hope to have mercy? Thou art deceived; the Lord's mercy is just mercy, and he will damn thee for evermore, if thou repent not in sincerity. You never read in the Scripture, that there is mercy in the ways of the devil: But, Psal. 25:10, all the ways of the Lord are mercy and judgment, &c. So long as thou walkest in the ways of the Lord, there is mercy to thee in every step; mercy in Prayer, mercy in hearing the Word, and in receiving the Sacraments; but in the ways of the devil there is no mercy; for as long as thou walkest in darkness, security, and all sinful and vain courses, which are

the ways of the devil, there is no mercy for thee; for, the Spirit of God saith, those that follow their vanities, forsake their own mercies; you must turn from your own ways; for the way of mercy lies in another road, in the road of holiness, humiliation, and repentance, in the road of forsaking all your vain imaginations and thoughts; If thou follow thy own ways, God will have no mercy on thee, Jon. 2:8. He will not tell a lie, to have mercy on thee: God's mercy is true, and mercy and truth go together, Psal. 98:3. Now if thou be a Drunkard, and dost live and die in that sin, God hath said that he will damn thee, Gal. 5:21. Now he should be a liar, if he should not do it, and thou knowest that mercy and truth go together in him: Therefore in time repent. Pish, pish, says the Drunkard, &c. I hope the Lord will be more merciful; these Preachers preach nothing but damnation, I hope the Lord will pardon me. Pardon thee; saith God? How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods, and though I fed them to the full, yet they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots houses, Jer. 5:7. As if God should have said, I cannot pardon thee. No: why? Thou wilt not come at me, thou hast forsaken me in mine ordinances, &c. Will a Physician cure a man that will not come at him? Why, they have forsaken me, saith God, and they will not come at me; as if he should say, I am willing to pardon, I send out my commandments, but they will not bend their minds to keep them, they forsake these ways of mercy. Have mercy on them? Nay, shall I not rather visit for these things, saith the Lord? Jer. 5:9. If those that disobeyed Moses law died without mercy, Heb. 10, how then lookest thou for mercy, that despisest the Lord Jesus, even the gospel of his kingdom? Nay, the cross of Christ calls thee, he woos thee by his death and passion, and now if thou wilt not obey, thou shalt die without mercy. Oh what a cursed conclusion is

this: I have a merciful and a good Father, and therefore I will lift up my head against him; I know he will forgive me; I will break my head, I know where to have a plaster to heal it; I will offer such a man a wrong, I know he will not sue me? Thou cursed wretch! Though the Lord pardon ten thousand, yet he will not pardon thee; no, no, thou sinnest with a high hand. But keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, Jude 21. Keep yourselves there, if you be wise; for if God's patience be abused, it will be turned into wrath and wormwood, and it will burn like fire unto the nethermost hell: to a man that sins against mercy, there is no redemption; this story belongs not unto such.

Thirdly, this story is nothing to thee, because at that time God was in a way of working miracles, but now he is not in that way; then he rent the rocks, opened the sepulchers, and raised the dead, &c. Now unless thou take God in this way again, never look to have thy sins pardoned, if thou goest on in thy sins with a high hand. It may be God will not be in the way of working of miracles, when thou art a dying; No, the Lord will show salvation to no man but unto him that orders his conversation aright, Psal. 50:23, thy life must be right, and all thy ways must be upright, if thou mean to find mercy.

But the Thief was converted, without ordering his ways aright.

I answer, one Swallow cannot make Spring, nor one fair day a harvest; One example cannot make a rule, one instance concludes nothing. This example breaks no square; but it is only he that lives uprightly, that shall see the salvation of God, and none else. And if thou dost mean to go to heaven, thou must go in the way that leads thither, and thou must do those things that are between thee and heaven: there is but one way to heaven, and all that go to heaven must walk that way; there is one faith, one newness of

life, one kind of regeneration, and God will have thee go all these over, he will have thee run through every Commandment; all that come to heaven must travel thither: therefore never bear thyself on this or that example, for 'tis a wonder of wonders, one of the miracles of Christ's passion.

I remember the story of an ancient Confessor which proved a worthy Christian, 300 years after the Apostles time: this man was an old man, and had been a Pagan all his days, and in his old age he hearkened after Christ, and said he would be a Christian. Simplinus hearing him say so, would not believe him; but when the Church saw him to be a Christian indeed, there was shouting and dancing for gladness, and Psalms were sung in every Church, Gaius Marius Victorious is become a Christian: this was written for a wonder, that he in his old age and in his gray hairs should become a good Christian; so this is a great wonder, and an extraordinary example, that this Thief was converted. Do you not think that there were a thousand thieves that at that time lived and died in their sins, and so were damned? Were there not many widows in the days of Elijah, and yet to none of them was he sent but to the widow of Sarepha? Were there not many Lepers in the days of Elisha? Yet none of them were cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian. So there were many thousands at that time, and yet for all that we know they were all damned, only this one is excepted. Now, shall a man rush into a den of Lions, because Daniel did escape? Or will a man cast himself into a fiery furnace, because the three Children were cast in and had no hurt? Shall a man venture to cast away his jewels or his purse, because one among a thousand did so, and found it again? No, no, these are wonders, and therefore bear not thyself on this, or the like example.

The common rule is this, Live in sin, and die in sin; you that live in sin now, shall then be damned in sin forever, if you repent not. St. Paul knew

well that this thief was converted; and yet he saith, Be not deceived, neither Drunkards, nor Fornicators, nor Thieves, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6:9,10. St. Peter also knew that this thief was converted, yet saith he, If the righteous scarcely be saved? Where shall the sinners and ungodly appear? 2 Pet. 2:9. St. James also knew this story, Jam. 5:12, yet if we swear, we may fall into condemnation. This is a most sweet example, if by it we return unto God; but thou makest a damned use of it, if by it thou makest thyself secure in thy sinful courses, hoping to be saved at the last, as this thief was. Consider with yourselves, wherefore are the commandments of God? Are they, think you, to be disobeyed while men live, and then when men are dying, to cry God mercy? Again, why hath God given you Ministers to preach the Word of eternal life? Never to preach it to men till they are a dying? No, no, deceive not thyself; thou must hear God's Ministers preach whilst thou art well. What, hath God given you days, that you should spend your lives in sin? No, no; saith God, I gave her time to repent, but she repented not, Rev. 2:21. And this is the lesson that God gives thee time; That thou mightest repent. The Lord could have sent thee to hell as soon as thou wast borne, but that in mercy he gives thee life and time to repent, that so thou mayest find forgiveness with God, and chat thou mayest become a new creature, before thou go hence and be no more seen. You that think to repent, resting on the example of this thief, take heed lest the Lord put you off: therefore labor to obey whilst it is called today, and make use of the Word whilst it is sounded in your ears, before these things be hid from your eyes.

SERM. VTII. THE SOVEREIGN VIRTUE OF THE GOSPEL.

P SAL. 147:3.
He healeth them that are broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

Here are two things contained in this Text: the Patients, and the Physician.

First, the Patients; the broken in heart.

Secondly, the Physician, Christ, it is he that healeth and bindeth up their wounds.

The Patients here are felt and discerned to have two wounds or maladies; First, brokenness in heart; Secondly, woundedness: He binds up such.

Brokenness of heart presupposeth wholeness of heart: Wholeness of heart is twofold; either wholeness of heart in sin, or wholeness of heart from sin.

First, wholeness of heart from sin, is, when the heart is without sin; and so the blessed Angels have whole hearts, and so Adam and Eve, and we in them before the fall, had whole hearts.

Secondly, wholeness of heart in sin; so the Devils have whole hearts, and all men since the fall from their conception, till their conversion, have whole hearts; and these are they that our Savior intends, The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. The hearts that are whole, need not the physician, but they that are broken and sick. Sin is in the godly, and they are sick of it; even as when poison is in a man, it makes him sick; why? Because the poison is contrary unto him. But sin is in the wicked, and they are not sick of it; as poison is in a toad, and the toad is not sick, because a toad is of that nature which the poison is; and therefore he needs not a physician. Will a Physician go to cure a Toad? Surely no, he will rather kill it, he will not cure it. So, as long as a man is not sick at the heart of his sin, Christ will rather kill him than cure him. When a man says he is sick, and yet can sleep, eat, drink, and work, and look as well as ever he did, feels no pain, nor anything to trouble him, what need hath this man of a physician? So when a man lives in sin, yet never breaks his sleep for it, but minds his pleasures, his profits, hath never the more pain nor anguish in his soul, he is soul-whole, and heart-whole, what need hath he of a Physician? This is a man whole in his sins.

The wholeness of the heart is called fallow-ground, Jer. 4:4, for it is like an unbroken field, not tilled nor manured; there can be no harvest, because the ground doth lie fallow; so there can be no harvest of grace in that man, whose heart is fallow and unbroken; and therefore to repent and to break the heart, in Scripture is called the putting of ones hand to the plough, Luke 9:62, to plough up the fallow ground of the heart.

Brokenness of heart may be considered two ways; First, in relation to wholeness of heart in sin: so brokenness of heart is not a malady; but an inchoative cure of a desperate malady.

Secondly, in relation to wholeness of heart from sin; and so it is a malady or sickness, and yet peculiar to one blood alone, namely God's elect; for though the heart be whole, yet it is broken for its sins: as a man that hath a barbed arrow shot into his side, and the arrow is plucked out of the flesh, yet the wound is not presently healed; so sin may be plucked out of the heart, but the scar that was made with plucking it out, is not yet cured. The wounds that are yet under cure, are the plagues and troubles of conscience, the sighs and groans of a hungering soul after grace, the stinging poison that the blow hath left behind it; these are the wounds.

Now the heart is broken three ways. First, by the Law: as it breaks the heart of a thief to hear the sentence of the Law, that he must be hanged for his robbery; so it breaks the heart of the soul, sensible to understand the sentence of the Law: Thou shalt not sin; if thou do, thou shalt be damned. If ever the heart come to be sensible of this sentence, Thou art a damned man, it is impossible to stand out under it, but it must break. Is not my word a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces? Jer. 23:29, that is, Is not my word, my Law a hammer? Can any rock-heart hold out and not be broken with the blows of it? Indeed thus far a man may be broken, and yet be a reprobate; for they shall be all thus broken in hell, and therefore this breaking is not enough.

Secondly, by the Gospel; for if ever the heart come to be sensible of its blow, it will break ail to shatters. Rent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious, &c. Joel 2:12. When all the shakes of God's mercy come, they all cry, rent. Indeed the heart cannot stand out against them, if it once feel them: Beat thy soul upon the Gospel: if any way under heaven can break it, this is the way.

Aristotle observes, that a hammer may easily break a hard stone against a soft bed; but if it be laid on an anvil, which will not give way underneath,

strike it as hard as you will with the hammer on the top, the anvil underneath props it from breaking, or if it do break, it will not break into shatters; for the anvil below helps the stone to hang fast together: but if you smite it against a soft bed, it breaks it all to shatters. So, smite thy soul upon the Gospel; preach the Law as much as you will, preach hell and damnation as much as you will, let that be the hammer; but then be sure lay thy soul on the Gospel, drive it to the Gospel, smite against this soft bed, and then (if ever) it will break. If you strike a stone against a hard anvil, though the parts thereof would fall asunder, yet how can they fly off, when as the hard anvil will not give way? The hard anvil on the one side, and the hard hammer on the other side, stop up its way from falling asunder, So, strike the soul with the blows of God's wrath as much as you will, and let it be upon the Law; alas whither should the Law open itself that it might break? The Law doth but fear it on the one side, and the wrath of God doth terrify it on the other, yet all this while it is not broken; the soul all this while knows not what it shall do: but smite it on the Gospel, and this, with the Law, rents it and breaks it indeed. So Joel he preached hell and damnation to the people of the Jews, and laid their hearts upon mercy, and then the hammer cries rent; for he is merciful, &c. he laid them on the soft bed of the Gospel, and then he smites them.

Thirdly, the heart is broken by the skill of the Minister in the handling of these two, the Law, and the Gospel: God furnisheth him with skill to press the Law home, and gives him understanding how to put to the Gospel, and by this means doth God break up the heart: For alas, though the Law be never so good a hammer, and although the Gospel be never so soft a bed, yet if the Minister lay not the soul upon it the heart will not break; he must

fetch a full stroke with the Law, and he must set the full power of the Gospel at the back of the soul, or else the heart will not break.

It is a pretty observation of Aristotle, Lay (saith he) an axe upon a block, and a great and mighty weight upon it, yet it will not enter into the block to cleave it; but if you lift up the axe and fetch a full blow at the block, then it enters presently. So if the Minister have not skill to fetch a dead blow at the heart, alas he may be long enough ere he break it; but let him fetch a full blow at the soul, then doth he break it, if ever. I took unto me two staves, saith the Prophet, the one I called beauty, the other I called bands, and with these I fed the flock, Zech. 11:7. There is the course of a true feeder of the flock, he feeds them with the Law and the Gospel; he takes his two staves, and he lays about him, till the hearts of his hearers feel him: and this is the way to feed them, and to break them off from their sins. Thus you see the means that God useth to break your hearts. He healeth the broken in heart. Hence observe,

That Christ justifies and sanctifies. For that is the meaning.

First, because God hath given Christ grace to practice for the sakes of the broken in heart; and therefore if this be his grace, to heal the broken-hearted, certainly he will heal them. The spirit of the lord is upon me, &c. He hath sent me to heal the broken in heart, &c. Luk. 4:18. If he be created master of this art, even for this purpose, to heal the broken in heart, he will verily heal them, and none but them. He is not like Hosander and Hippocrates, whose father appointed them both to be Physicians; he appointed his son Hippocrates to be a physician of horses, yet he proved a physician for men; he appointed Hosander to be a physician for men, and he proved a physician for horses. He is not like these; no, no, he will heal those

whom he was appointed to heal: now God appointed him to heal thee that art broken in heart, and therefore without doubt he will do it.

2. Because Christ hath undertaken to do it. When a skillful Physician hath undertaken a cure, he will surely do it: indeed sometimes a good physician may fail, as Trajan's physician did, for he died under his hands; on whose tomb this was written, Here lies Trajan the Emperor, that may thank his Physician that he died. But if Christ undertake it, thou mayest be sure of it, for he tells thee that art broken in heart, that he hath undertaken it, he hath felt thy pulse already Thus saith the high and holy one whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him that is of a humble and broken spirit, &c. Isa. 57:15. He doth not only undertake it, but he saith he will go visit his sick patient; he will come to thy bed-side, yea he will come and dwell with thee all the time of thy sickness; thou shalt never want anything, but he will be ready to help thee: thou needest not complain and say, Oh the Physician is too far off, he will not come at me. I dwell in the high places indeed, saith God, but yet I will come and dwell with thee that art of a humble spirit. Thou needest not fear, saying, Will a man cure his enemies? I have been an enemy to God's glory, and will he yet cure me? Yea, saith Christ, if thou be broken in heart, he will bind thee up.

Thirdly, because this is Christ's charge, and he will look to his own calling; To this man will I look, even to him that is of a broken heart, Isa. 66:2. Mark; I will look to him, I will tend him and keep him. Neither needest thou fear thine own poverty, because thou hast not a Fee to give him; for thou mayest come to him by way of begging, he will look to thee for nothing; For, to him will I look that is poor, &c.

Fourthly, none but the broken in heart will take Physic of Christ. Now this is a Physicians desire, that his Patient would cast himself upon him; if he

will not, the Physician hath no desire to meddle with him. Now none but the broken in heart will take such Physic as Christ gives, and therefore he saith, to him will I look that is of a broken heart, and trembles at my words, Isaiah 66:2. When I bid him take such a purge saith God, he trembles, and he takes it. I bid him take such a bitter Potion, or such an untoothsome vomit, to fear him from sin; he trembles at my word, and he dares not but off with it: But when a soul doth not tremble, then the Physician may say let him blood; but he cares not for being let blood; he cares not for corrosives, he cares not for his advise and counsel, he trembles not at his word; Christ will never come at such a one; Christ bids thee follow such a diet as to watch, to pray, to fast, to mourn, &c. to keep in and to take heed to catechizing, grow not cold by being lukewarm, &c. If thou tremble at his word, well; If not, but that thou wilt go on in thy sins, and be damned forever, then thank thine own willfulness. But if thou beest broken in heart, Christ will assuredly heal thee. Suppose thou shouldest come unto Christ, be his physic never so sovereign, and thou shouldst take it: yet if thy heart be against it, the physic cannot work. Imagination or fancy is a great thing in the good or ill success of physic. If thou carpe at his precepts, as too strict, and except against his word as if it had an ounce of wormwood too much in it; If thy imaginations thus run against the physic, Christ's physic will never cure thee; why so? Thou art not broken in heart, to tremble at his word; he will help thee without fail; but then thou must tremble at his word, and take his directions, though he prescribe thee to eat thine own dung, and drink thine own piss; take it I say whatever it be, and I will warrant thee health.

[*Obj.*] But thou wilt reply, I have but a little faith.

[*Sol.*] I answer, so had Peter; O thou of little faith wherefore didst thou doubt? Saith our Savior, Matth. 14:13. There is a little faith, and there is a

great faith; O woman great is thy faith, Matth. 15:28, whether it be a little faith or a great faith, so it be true saving justifying faith, it is good physic, and it will assuredly cure thee. It is not the quantity of faith that saves a man, but the quality of faith. True it is, a great quantity of faith, because it hath more of the quality, more of the truth, it heals more strongly and more steadily; But faith whether it be great or small, so it be true, that doth the deed. Shall the Patient doubt of his recovery because of the small measure of physic that the Physician gives him? The Physician gives but a dram of such powder, but perhaps the Patient would have a pound, when as it may be the state of his body will not bear it. The Physician observes his measures in prescribing so many ounces of this, so many scruples of that; there lies his skill in giving the true measure; so there is a true measure of faith, Rom. 12:3, one man hath so much, and another man hath not so much faith. Abraham had more faith than Lot; the reason is, because the stare of Lots soul would not bear so much as Abraham's. It is one of Hippocrates Aphorisms, Not too much at once.

A Physician finds it dangerous sometimes to empty the body at once, or to fill it all at once, or to heat it or to cool it all at once; it is the safest way to give by little and little; so God by little and little deals with thee; now he gives thee some faith, and then a little more.

[*Obj.*] O but my faith is smothered; how then can I expect to be healed?

[*Ans.*] I answer, a man is sick, and Violets will cure him; now the Physician makes a compound confection, so that the Violets do not appear, but only in oil; Now, will the Patient thus argue, I cannot see one leaf of a Violet, no nor yet so much as color, therefore I will none of it, it will not heal me? So God gives many a soul *unguentum fidei*, an oil of faith; now it may be the soul cannot see one jot of faith in himself, yet he shall be cured

because there is faith in a confection, a mixed faith though there be none in manifestation. Thou weepst, mournest, doubttest, and complainest, and thou canst not believe as thou sayest; yet thou never givest over crying my God my God: well, here is faith in a confection, but it may be it is so compounded with other ingredients that thou canst not perceive it; for you must know that there is faith so great that it breaks out into a flame, and there is faith which is so small that it does but smoke out a little; now whether thy faith be an inflamed faith or a smoking faith, be of good comfort, thou shalt be healed. The bruised Reed shall not be broken, Matth. 12:28.

[*Obj.*] But I am broken all to shatters, and I have no faith at all, how then can I hope to be cured?

[*Ans.*] I answer, as thy heart may be broken, and yet be a right heart; so thy faith may be broken, and yet be a true faith: For it is sometimes bound up in the whole, some; times it is broken, and all to pieces; A man that is broken in heart, although he have not faith bound up together in one act, yet he hath it broken in sunder; never a part is missing, though no part closing one with another. The one whole act of faith is this, I believe that God is my God in Christ. Indeed it may be thou hast not this faith in the whole, but if thou beest broken in heart, thou hast this whole broken in pieces.

First, thou believest that God is a God, there is one piece.

Secondly, thou believest that to whomsoever God is a God unto, it is only in Christ.

Thirdly, thou believest that he that truly repents, may say that God is his God in Christ.

Fourthly, thou believest that repentance is a true hatred of sin as it is sin.

Fifthly, thou believest, and thy conscience tells thee it is so indeed that thou hatest sin, not only as it is able to damn thee, but also as it is sin, and dishonorable to God; now these are the parts of faith in the whole. Thou hast all the parts of the whole, though thou hast not these parts in the whole. Well then, thou hast all the parts of true faith; as thou canst not deny if thou beest broken in heart. *Totum non dissert realiter a partibus simul sumptis*. All the parts and the whole do not differ really, says the Philosopher; he that hath three groats, cannot complain he wants a shilling; he that hath ruffe and stock and string, can he be far to seek for a band? So then if thou have faith in the parts on this fashion, it is certain thou hast faith in the whole, though it appear not yet to be whole.

Aristotle asketh this question, whether the parts be before the whole or no; as for example, whether a man or a finger be first. I will not stand here to determine this question; but this is certain, that the whole is a relative thing, spoken in relation to its parts, and it is like the relation begins in the whole; for first, we say that a whole is that which consists of parts, and then the parts are they that make up the whole, and therefore if thou verily believest in part, thou verily believest indeed. Thus David was a believer in part, my very soul saith he is consumed with grief, Psal. 31:9, my strength faileth me because of mine iniquity, &c. ver. 10. I am forgotten as a dead man, &c. ver. 12, he was a vessel of election, but yet you may see he was a broken vessel; he could not believe in the whole, for he was afraid that God had cast him out of his mind, like a dead and an undone man; nevertheless, he was a believer in part, he was God's broken vessel.

[*Obj.*] But I am sure I have no faith, I go whining and crying up and down, I look upon my sins with horror, I look upon Christ with horror, not a *minume* of faith that I have, how then can I be healed?

[Ans.] Hast thou a grounded resolution to seek after God come what can come of it? Dost thou desire and long to be united with Christ? Then let me tell thee, suppose thou hast no faith yet in being, yet thou hast something to secure thee from wrath; there is difference between *Fides creditura* and *Fides credens*, between faith about to believe, and faith that doth already believe. It is belief believing that saves a man: But belief about to believe, cures a man from being a reprobate. Though the fruit in the womb be not yet quickened with reasonable soul, yet it grows in the womb, feeds in the womb, and yet it hath no other life in it then may be in a beast; yet because it is in fieri a man, the Mother complains not saying Oh I am afraid I have a beast in my womb; no, she will wait God's leisure to quicken it; it is secure enough from being a beast; for it hath such dispositions as will not long be without the soul of a man in the same, though as yet there be nothing in it, but what may be in a beast; But yet the Mother is secured because she is persuaded she bears a babe in her womb. So many poor souls are too hasty to censure themselves; for grant thou hast no faith as yet, yet if thou beest broken in heart, thou art about to have faith; only let the word have his full work on thee, unto which thou must diligently attend, and then this *fides in fieri* will be quickly *fides in factum esse*. Thus the blind man in the Gospel was about to believe before he believed; he had a time of a fieri of faith; he was no believer this time; for he had as yet no faith; neither was he an unbeliever; for he was about to believe. Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Saith Christ, John 9:35, he answered, who is he Lord that I might believe on him? Ver. 39. Believe? Yea that I would with all my heart, who is he, and where is he that I might believe? I have been hated for his names sake, I have been cast out of the Synagogue for his sake; Lord thou knowest I would believe on him; but who is he and where is he? And he is vanished

away from me; I have sought him; but I cannot find him. Then Christ told him, I am he that now talketh with thee; and then he believed; and Saint Chrystome observes that this blind man was about to believe, before he did desire it in his soul; and so it may be it is now with thee; dost thou believe in Christ? Who is he? Sayest thou, where shall I find that Christ is in me that I may believe in him? I weep and hunger, and I thirst after Christ; but who and where is he? I have sought him in the word; but I find him not; I have sought him in prayer and in all other his ordinances; but I find him not; I would believe with all my heart if I could find him. Thus the soul may be about to believe, though it do not already believe; hast thou gotten this same about to believe? Be not thou dismayed, the plaster is come; and it will heal thee.

Conceive these words aright I beseech you; a speech is not as it is taken, I mean only the broken in heart; for otherwise a man may be about to believe, yet never believe; about to be healed of his sins, yet never be healed. Even like the wretch that Zophar speaks of, who shall be about to fill his belly, and not be able to fill it, Job 20:23.

There is a twofold about to be; First, either such a thing as is about to be, and that is the nature of it, and it will never be otherwise; but still only about to be. Secondly, or else such a thing as is about to be, and that is the progress of it, and not to rest there, but at the last to be indeed.

Fear you then, all you that are vain, and as yet in your sins; you are about to believe, and that is the nature of your faith; it is only about to believe; like the officers of the next year, who are about to be officers and yet are not. Beloved, never look to be healed, if you be not broken in heart; It may be thou art broken from some of thy sins; but if thou be not broken from them all, it is nothing; and thou canst not be healed. Alas thou mayest be

broken in some sense, and yet never be healed. There is a double breaking, saith Aristotle, either breaking into great parts, as wood is broken into logs; or breaking into small parts, as a stone is broken into powder; it may be thy stony heart is broken, but it is only into lesser stones, thou art fallen from greater sins to lesser, from boozing and company keeping, to drinking and sipping; from playing and gaming on the Sabbath, to talking of worldly affairs on the Sabbath; from praying not at all, to pray coldly. Alas, alas thou hast a hard heart still; when a great stone is broken into lesser stones, the lesser stone is as hard as the great stone; thy heart must be broken to powder, if ever God heal thee.

First, because Physic will never cure a man, unless it may enter and run into the veins; and when it is entered into the body, and diffused up and down through all the diseased parts thereof, then it cures; now if thy heart be not broken, the Physic cannot enter; give a purgation to a stone, it may moisten the outside, but it cannot soak in, to soften the stone; why, because the stone is close; but if the stone were broken into powder, then it would soak even into the heart of the stone.

God opened the heart of Lydia, and then the word entered. Act. 16:14. Brethren, you have been under the hands of Christ's Physicians ever since you were borne; but where is the heart that is broken? All the Physic is lost, the word hath no entrance, it hath skinned the wound; and seared the outside indeed; but the hardness of the heart is not cured. How long have you been under Physic for the curing of your earthliness and vanity? How long have you lien by it for your anger and malice, &c. under the means, yet never the nearer? Whose hearts are broken? I fear the Physic doth not soak, it comes no nearer then the outside. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, Psal. 34:18, why? Because their hearts are open and

broken, and Christ and his word comes near, yea so near that it toucheth them to the quick; But if ye be not broken in heart, no Balm, no Physic can come near enough to cure you.

Secondly, thou canst never be cured unless Christ cure thee; now Christ will never take thee in hand till thou be broken in heart. A Physician will not meddle with a desperate cure, such a one who is not capable of Physic. Let not any Physician saith Hippocrates set upon a fruitless cure. Now it is fruitless to give thee any Physic it is fruitless to pour grace into thee, or to vouchsafe pardon to thee; this Physic will never heal thee so long as thou art not broken in heart; and therefore Christ scorns to take thee in hand. True it is if thou wert broken in heart, God would not despise thee; for the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; so saith the Psalmist, A broken and a contrite heart O God shalt thou not despise, Psal. 51:17, so then if thy heart be not yet broken it is yet incurable. Indeed if we consider Christ's absolute power, no heart is incurable; for he can heal it whatever it be, for all is at his command. But God doth not go according to his absolute power, but according to his expression and meaning of, and in his word; now the method that God sets down in his word, is thus; first the heart must be broken and then it must or way be healed; so then so long as thou art not broken in heart, thou art incurable.

Thirdly, suppose Christ should begin to heal thee, thou being not broken in heart, wilt always be taking off the plaster before thou be cured; sometimes God terrifies thee with the law, and then thou pullest off that plaster; Even like unto a dainty Dame, who having taken physic, and feeling it begin to wamble in her stomach, puts a feather in her throat to cause her to vomit it up before it have its full working. And thus many take hopes and comforts and promises before the set time.

In some physic, a quarter of an hours difference may cost one his life; when a man is to be cut of the stone and he be bound hand and foot, yet if he do but stir or struggle before the Surgeon hath quite done with him, it is a thousand to one but he dies for it; so they in the second Psalm had a stone in the heart; Christ would have cut them for the stone, but they would not be bound, they would not endure their cutting, no let us break his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords from us, Psal. 2:3, men cannot be smitten at a Sermon, but oh they must presently have comfort; as soon as once the physic begins to make the head to ache, and the stomach to be sick, and the man to be exceeding ill, it is a sign that the physic doth now begin to work; but if this man should devise how to vomit it up, or to glister it out, he looseth all the benefit of the physic; keep this plaster on as long as thou canst, if ever thou mean to be healed. If the wound be thoroughly whole, the plaster will fall away of itself. Should a man have never so good a plaster and should every foot be taking it off, it would never do him any good. If God have shot an arrow into thy heart, bind the plaster to the sore, and let it there rest till the malignity of the sore and venom of the wound be put out. But if thou be not broken in heart, it is in vain to minister or to say anything unto thee, because thou wilt not abide the physic within thee, nor suffer the gripes that thou must suffer if ever thou be healed. And therefore all you that are broken in heart, in any measure or manner, be of good cheer, the Lord will heal you; he health the broken in heart.

See here these particulars.

First, for the seasonableness of it, when it is a seasonable time to be healed, and that is when the heart is in need, and it is in need when it is broken; as a man is in need of meat, when he is hungry; so a man is in need of meat, when he is broken in heart: God will give thee that which thou

needest, and that in due season says Augustine. In an acceptable time have I heard thee, Isaiah 49:8. God looks when it will be most seasonable to give grace, and then he gives it; therefore wait, never complain of God's delaying his hand; if he do, it is but for a better season; I have need of healing already sayest thou; but if God do not yet heal thee, then thou must know it is not yet seasonable, and the more need thou art in, the better welcome is help when it cometh.

Secondly, when it is most profitable for thee; when he is broken in heart, it will do him good to be healed; but if God should heal thee before, it would hurt thee; when the Corrosive hath wrought out his work, then it is good to have a Cordial; now the Cordial will help the man; but if the Physician should give him a Cordial first, it would help the disease, and endamage the man. Comfortable Cordials before the time have been the damnation of many souls. Oh thou wouldst fain have comfort for thy soul; what? Before the Corrosive hath eaten out the sin? Thou wishest thine own poison; If God let thee wait for thy healing, understand that he doth it for thy good; only let his Corrosives work their full course, and then he will heal thee. Wait on the Lord saith David, Psal. 27:14, give not over waiting how long so ever it be, and he will heal thee assuredly when it shall be best for thee.

Thirdly, *in puncto*, even just in the very nick of thy brokenness in heart will his healing come. It is well observed that the word in the original is put in the participle indifferent to any time, whether past, present or to come, he doth not set down any time, because he will do it punctually, just at the pinch, when thou art broken in heart; Oh then if thou be not yet healed, know then that thou art not yet come to this punctum; but when thou art come to it, then thou shalt be healed. What if thou dost lie under the heavy

and frowning hand of God? Do not shake it off, but kiss that rod, and humble thyself the more: Sometimes God lets a broken heart shake off his hand a little too soon, sometimes again he will not let them. David would fain have shaken it off; but he could not; God would not let him. Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, saith he, &c. Psal. 38:1,2. How did he know that God's arrows stuck in him fast? It seems that he had been pulling at them; he would fain have had them out, he would have been comforted all on the sudden, but he could not; God would not let him. Lord rebuke me not (says he) in thine indignation, &c. Rebuke means much as thou wilt, but let it not be in thine indignation; chasten me as much as thou wilt, but let it not be in thy heavy displeasure. Oh pluck out thine arrows, take off thy hand; I pluck at them, but they stick fast; I shake and rub to get off thy hand, but it presseth me so sore that I cannot get it off. Beloved, it is necessary that some while God's own people should bleed under God's wrath; for by this means the corruption of sin is purged out. Thus you see in some God will not let them shake off his hand; others, if they will needs have it off, they shall, that they may afterwards see their own folly. Thus many a poor child of God, in conflict of conscience and sense of God's wrathful displeasure, scrapes comfort too soon, and God lets them take it before he gives it: he would have had them first thoroughly cured, but they were loath to be humbling their souls so long: but see the event of it, the sore is only skinned over, and at the last the wound it breaks forth afresh, and then it may be they lie seven years together and get no comfort, yea sometimes twenty years, yea, I have known some that have lived so thirty years. Now they may thank their own folly; for if they would have been ruled by Christ, and been humbled all together at the first; they might have escaped this scouring; but now they repent it every vein in their hearts, and can hardly

claw it off until death. I call these the children of God, because they have lain a long while under God's hand, and yet still cry after God, it is a sign they are his children; for God's children are many times in affliction a long while; see it in Job, &c. Neither can I believe, but that all those that lie sundry years on this fashion still crying after God, are the children of God; or at the least, it is so to be hoped: for if they were reprobates, and had shaken off God's hand, plucked out his arrows, and scraped after comfort, he would either let them fall into a perpetual fools-paradise of presumption or security, or else let them molder away in despair, not caring to seek after God in the means at all. And therefore, beloved, pluck not out God's arrows too soon: I speak net to all, for some will not pluck them out when they should; but I speak to all such as are over-hasty for to get Cordials before the Corrosive have had his full working. If men be never so little humbled, reformed, or wrought upon, presently they think they be in very good case: the very Heathen could say, we are commonly deceived with seeming virtue and grace; and hence it is that wicked men are humbled by halves, They think, they are thoroughly humbled, when their hearts are broken by halves; they think they are broken in heart. And as a stick that is half in the water, and half above the water, seems to be broken or bent in the midst; so these men when they are half in their sins, and half out, seem to themselves to be broken-hearted: But if the stick were either all in the water, or all out, would appear as it is: it seems to be broken, when as it is not: so, many being half in their sins, and half out, seem to be broken-hearted, when indeed they are not.

But (beloved) before I can give you the healing herein, this Text, it is good reason that I examine you whether you be broken in heart, or no. *Prognostica praecedunt Therapeuticen*, says Argastus; *Prognostiques*, and

telling the signs and symptoms of the disease, are before the healing of the disease. When we believe a thing to be so, we have a proverb to say 'tis a sign 'tis so. Doest thou say thou art broken in heart? 'It is a sign 'tis so, thy carriage is so mortified; A sign tis so, thy communication is so heavenly; A sign tis so, thy companions are so holy &c. If a man cannot cast thy water on this fashion, thou art not broken in heart. And therefore, *Signa tibi dicam*, &c. I will help thee with the signs and symptoms of a broken heart, that so thou mayest examine thyself.

The signs I reduce to these two heads.

First, a breaking from sin, as a rotten member is broken from the body; so that the heart is then said to be broken indeed, when it is broken off from sin.

Secondly, a breaking in itself, so that the heart is said to be broken when it is broken with sorrow and self-denial, so that nothing can piece it up again, but the favor of God. These two made up a broken heart, and therefore they shall be the heads of examination.

First, then do thy sins go thick away from thee? When the cold is once broken, we use to say, now it is going away, not in the rheum as before, but in thick fleam. If thou be broken in heart, then thy pride, thy earthliness, thyself-love, thy deadness to good duties, and all thy sins go thick from thee. It maybe thou hast some pores in thy heart, and thy sins fall away from thee in the rheum, but if they go not away from thee in thick phlegm, the cold of thy frozen heart is not yet broken. The sins of Zacchaeus were injustice and oppression, &c. but as soon as ever he was broken in heart, these sins went away thick from him, not dropping as if he were loath they should part but in great flakes, Zacchaeus stood (says the text) and said unto

the Lord, behold half of my goods I given unto the poor, &c. Luke 19:8, see how his sins went away; every word voids thick fleam.

First, he stood; before he climbed and gazed after Christ, but being broken in heart, he stood ready pressed to do whatsoever Christ would command him. Secondly, he said unto Christ; before Christ might have said unto him what he would; what cared he? But now that he is broken in heart, here is hardly a word that Christ said unto him of any such matter yet he said to Christ.

Thirdly, Behold before his behold was carnal, he did what he did to be seen of men, if ever he gave ought, he loved that men should behold, but now all his care was that Christ would behold it.

Fourthly, I give. Before he thought, I will give was enough, I will give when I die, I will build hospitals when I am dead; but now that he is broken in heart he gives it forth-with.

Fifthly, the half of my goods; before he counted a penny or a farthing to a poor body, a great matter, a great dole, if given now and then; but now that he is broken in heart, the half and not only of the superfluity, but also of Esau's very substance and goods, as it is in the original, I give to the poor, not as men commonly do, light come, light go; it may be they feast their rich neighbors, but he gives half his substance to the poor Saints of God.

Sixthly, And if I have taken anything wrongfully, though it were not much; If I have taken anything, though not from the rich and great ones, but from any, rich or poor, young or old, stranger or not stranger, no matter who; if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, not only against Law where the Law binds me to restitution, but if I have taken anything by forged cavillation, though the Law will bolster me out, yet I restore him; he did not say, I give him, as many will do, calling that which

should properly be called restitution for wrong, a gift I give, say they; he says not so; but he casteth off the thought of a gift, and doth what he doth by way of restitution.

Seventhly, If I have taken anything; before he could swallow down the known wrongs that he did; but now that he is broken in heart, he makes a mends for the wrongs which peradventure he did not, to be sure, If I have taken, I restore, his restitution goes absolute; although his wrongs go upon ifs, I restore him says he; and that not miserly or scantly, or no more the needs must, but four-fold. Thus he reasons; now he is broken in heart; his sins go thick away from him.

The text but even now called him little Zacchaeus, before he had seen Christ; *merito adhuc pusillus quia nondum viderat Christum*. Justly might he be said to be little Zacchaeus, because then he had not seen Christ; but as soon as ever he had seen Christ whom he had wronged by these wrongs; as soon as ever he was broken in heart, he became a great repenter, his sins ran thick away from him. As soon as the boil is broken out comes the matter; As soon as the vein is broken, out comes the blood; true it is a drop of blood may come though the vein be not broken; if the finger be but racked a few drops may come, but if the vein be once broken, out comes the blood thick and threefold; If thou dost but prop off thy sins now and then, thy hear was never broken; for if thou wast once broken in heart, thy reformation would come apace, thy repentance and thy amendment would come thick and threefold; but if we preach and exhort, and yet see but thin reformation in thee, as a sight or so, thou was never yet broken in heart: if thy heart be yet full of thy self-love, full of thy pride, lusts, &c. if thy affections be yet full of earthly desires, worldly delights, vain hopes, carnal fears; if thy back be

yet full of thy garish and humorous apparel, thy heart is not yet broken; why? Because the filthy matter runs not out.

Zacchaeus when he was broken in heart, his corruptions ran out apace; both his unreadiness to good duties, and his deadness and dullness to holy duties: Christ need not say much unto him; for he said unto Christ; his desire of the credit of the world ran out, for he gave the half of his goods to the poor; his backwardness and delaying ran out; for he made present dispatch, I give, his very secret and unknowen iniquities ran out, if I have taken, &c. All his sins ran thick away from him. why? Because a broken heart can hold no sin; this is the first sign of a broken heart from sin; if it be broken from its sinful course.

The second is, if it be broken from its wildness; the Hawk is then broken when it is made fit for the Lurk, and the colt is broken when made fit for the saddle; if he be not broken, he will not be willing the rider shall come on his back; man is born like a wild Ass colt, Job. 11:12, so thou wast born, and so thou hast been, and art thou not as yet broken from it? If thou be broken in heart, then thy heart is tame to every commandment, to every truth, and thy affections are tame to every precept. It is Calvin's similitude, thou art not yet (saith he) fit for God's saddle, if thou let the Devil, the world, or any lust ride thee, thou must be broken from thy wildness, or else thou art not broken in heart; it may be thou art a mule bridled from thy lusts; alas so thou mayest be, yet be wild for all that. Be not like those beasts Psal. 32:9. For though they be bridled and held in, yet they are wild still, Be not like horse and mule, saith Ambrose, for though they suffer bit and bridle, yet had they rather be at rack and manger, or a grass in the field, they delight not to be saddled.

Dost thou not despise to be curbed by the word, to be bitted by reproof, wouldst thou not rather be free; God casteth in good motions into thy heart, and thou casteth them out, and they vanish; God puts in good purposes into thy heart, but thou flingest them off, and dost not fulfil them, like a wild horse that flings off his rider. Thou canst not be crossed a little but presently thou art wild with choler and anger; thy flesh and blood cannot endure it, and dost thou yet say that thou art broken in heart? No, no; thou wast born a wild Ass Colt, and so thou art still. Thou wert borne a wild olive, and so thou art still. Thou was never yet broken in heart, never yet broken from sin; if thou wert broken from thy wildness, then every exhortation would tame thee; then thou wouldst be glad to be reprov'd, and controlled by the word; Thou wouldst leap at every commandment, were it never so strict, But if thou count it preciseness and too much strictness to be holy and zealous, I say thou art yet but a wild colt. Oh my brethren we have many amongst us who are like Ishmael, who was a wild man, Gen. 16, many wild men, who pray wildly, and think wildly, and hear wildly; their hearts are wild gadding hearts; while the word is preaching, they follow their own imaginations.

Darest thou venture upon any sin against the Gospel of Christ, and darest thou live in it till thou art a wicked Bedlam, The Psalmist brings all such in as if they were mad Bedlams, saying; why do the heathen so furiously rage, &c. Christ would have bound them, but they forsooth were too wild; they would not be bound; but say they let us break his bonds, and fling off his cords: they will not be bound to such strictness darest thou swear and lie and covet, and be drunk, &c? Alas man thou art in a mad vain. Darest thou break the Sabbath; live in thy lusts, &c. A fury hath taken thee, thou art a mad man; God must break that wild heart of thine, else thou canst not be

tamed, it may be thou art bridled from sin; but dost thou bridle thyself; if not, thou art wild for all the bridling thou hast: you never saw a horse bridle himself; no, no; it is wild, peradventure thou dost bridle they self when thou art not much tempted; but if thou beest broken in heart, thou wilt refrain all provocations whatsoever. I will keep my mouth, &c. Psal. 39:1, while the Devil was before him, as Jerome expounds it, or while Shimei was before him to tempt him with wicked reproaches and disgrace full speeches, as Basil and Theodoret expound it, then would David keep his tongue as with a bridle when he was greatly tempted to sin. Here then is all the trial; canst thou bridle thyself from sin when thou art tempted to sin? If thou be broken in heart, thou canst; but if thou canst not, thou art wild unto this day. The wild beasts are tame enough till a prey comes before them, and so thou mayest be tame when temptations are down; but art thou tame when a temptation is before thee. This is a second sign of brokenness of heart if thou be broken from thy wildness.

Thirdly, if thou be broken in heart, then thou art broken from thy pride, and thou wilt stoop to God's word in all things. A broken heart is a humble heart, I dwell with him saith God, Isa. 37:15, pride is the root of all sin; what is the reason that any dare sin, but because they think better of themselves in their sins then they do deserve? For did a man but think he were accursed and a damned wretch in sinning against God, be durst never sin, or did a man feel that every sin makes a man filthy; yea more filthy then a toad; did a man feel his own damned condition, he durst not live in sin? A man thinks better of himself then he deserves whensoever he sins against God. Hear and give care and be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken it, Jer. 13:15. If the Lord speak, and thou do not hear and obey, thou art proud, Oh but I am not proud, then thinkest thou, for I will hear the poorest

body in the street when they speak to me; yea and I will and do give the wall to my betters, wilt thou so? Wilt thou give man the wall and take the wall of God? Is not this pride? Swear not says God; yet thou wilt take the wall of that commandment, and swearest. Let not the Sun go down upon thy wrath says God; thou takest the wall of that commandment too; and canst remember an ill turn, a month after, so, &c. This is execrable and abominable pride. Thou seekest after thy profits and pleasures more than after the glory of God. I cannot live else, says one; I cannot be merry else, says another; and I must tell a lie now and then, and must suffer bousing and swearing in my house, or else I cannot live. Thou proud wretch, what must thy mirth and thy credit perk above the commandment of Christ? The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God, Psal. 10:4. It is wicked pride indeed when thou seekest thyself more than God. I tell thee the word hath not broken the heart until it hath broken the neck of this pride of thine; never tell me that thou art not proud in thy apparel; if a servant go never so meanly in apparel, yet he is proud if he obey not all his Masters lawful and good commandments, never tell me thou bowest to God or thou kneelest in prayer to God; cluck and crouch, bow and bend thou never so much, yet thou art proud, if every corruption of thine will not yield to every commandment of God; thou art not broken in heart; for if thou wert broken in heart thou wouldst stoop to all God's commandments. Dost thou mock at preaching, &c. Tush, thou wilt not be so precise, If ever thou be one of his, thou wilt not only obey him, but also be circumspect in all thy obedience; nay if thou be broken in heart, thou wilt not only stoop to every commandment of God, but also count it thine honor and glory, though it be the meanest office in his service. Thou art my glory says David, David that was broken from his pride, counted it his glory to obey God, his glory to

serve God, yea his glory to be reproached for his sake, Thou art not broken in heart till thou count it thine excellency to serve We use to say such a ones excellency is in his learning or wit, &c. but he is too precise and too holy as if it were not a man's excellency to be pure and zealous, and to serve God: But I tell thee if thou count it not thine honor to be forward for God, and to be nicknamed for Christ, thine excellency to lie in this that thou art godly and heavenly, thou art a proud fool; when John Hus was to write upon the Epistle of Saint James, he counted it such an high office of dignity that he was confounded at his own indignity, saying unto God, *Hei mihi laudare to contremisco*; he counted it such an honor to do anything for God that he was ashamed at his own vileness. O my brethren God is called the excellency of Jacob; it was not their valor nor wisdom, but this was their excellency, that God was their God; thy riches are proud riches if thy excellency lie in them more then in God; if thou dost not go about every commandment as thine excellency, thy obedience is proud. This is a third sign of a heart broken from sin if it be broken from its pride.

SERM. IX. A FUNERAL SERMON.

I SA. 57:1.

The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart, merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.

In the end of the former chapter the Prophet reproveth the special sin of Idol shepherds who followed their own pleasures and profits, not regarding their flock. Now he reproves the general sin of security in the people, and namely in this, that whereas the righteous perish, yet no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering, &c.

This verse is a complaint of the Prophet touching the people in general, for that they considered not the Judgments of God upon them in taking away the righteous from among them.

In the words themselves we are to consider.

First, the work of the Lord, viz. the righteous perisheth and merciful men are taken way.

Secondly, the people's sin in not considering it, not regarding this work of the Lord, which is, that the righteous may be delivered from the evil to come.

By righteous is here meant not such as are legally righteous by the works of the law; for so no man is righteous, but by righteous is here meant such as are Evangelically righteous, by the righteousness of faith in the Gospel.

Perisheth, that is, from the earth; for otherwise the righteous perish not.

No man considering, that is, no man lamenting, mourning, or grieving for the loss of them.

The first thing then to be considered, is from the first part; and it is plain out of the words of the text, That all men must die; even the most holy and most righteous; for they are all subject to the stroke of bodily death as well as the wicked; There is no remembrance saith Solomon of the wise more than of the fool; and how dieth the wise man? Even as the fool, Eccl. 2:16, so Zech. 1:5. Your fathers, where are they? And the Prophets, do they live forever? So that we see Prophets and fathers die as well as other men; yea those Worthies recorded in the Scripture, Noah, Abraham, David, &c. they are all gone the same way, they are all dead.

The first reason is, because it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that comes the judgment, Heb. 9:27. God hath thus decreed it, and therefore it must be so.

Secondly, because all men and women are of the dust; and therefore must return to the dust again; dust thou art, saith God, and unto dust thou shalt return, Gen. 3:19.

Thirdly, because, all have sinned, even the most righteous man; now the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6:23, the most righteous man must die.

Fourthly because, as death came into the world by sin, Rom. 5:12, so sin must go out of the world by death; and therefore it is needful that the righteous die, that so they may be freed from sin.

[*Obj.*] But some may object and say hath not Christ abolished death? Why then do the righteous die.

[*Ans.*] I answer he hath abolished death; as he hath abolished sin; now he hath not taken sin quite away from us, for we see it doth still remain in us; neither hath he quite abolished death from the righteous, for we see they all die; but he abolished the dominion of sin, so that it doth no longer reign in us; and so he hath taken away the dominion of death, so that it doth not rage as a Tyrant over us, so that it is not hurtful unto us as a punishment, but as a means to convey us into a better life. Christ hath taken away the sting both of sin and death; though not the things themselves away from us; yet he will one day free us from them both; so then the righteous must suffer death as well as the wicked, though not in the same kind.

Let no man then look to be exempted from death for his righteousness, nor from any outward miseries that may befall the sons of Adam; nay if we are the servants of Christ, we must look for a greater share in these than other men; greater crosses, greater afflictions, greater sickness and harder pangs of death do oft befall the righteous, as it did unto this our brother, who though he were old and stricken in years, yet the pangs of death were strong upon him. Those whom God will make heirs of Eternal life, he suffers them to have a greater portion in these afflictions. But the wicked are fat and full, and die with their bones full of marrow, as Job speaks; they commonly have little sickness and an easy death: but the godly do ordinarily undergo greater pangs; let none therefore think that for his righteousness he shall be free.

Secondly, consider we here how few amongst us have learned this Arithmetic, namely to number our days, and they are but short, even a span long; who is there almost that thinks on death? Who prepares himself for it? And yet all, even the most righteous must die; for God hath placed that fiery blade of death at the entrance into the Paradise of heaven, so that none can enter before they taste of death, and all must taste of it, yea the most righteous are not exempted from the stroke of death. This then should teach us to labor to draw our hearts from the love of this present life; and what can better persuade us and wean us from the love of this world, then a due consideration of death? We know we must all die, and therefore we should prepare ourselves for it. If any profane person amongst us knew that this night must be his last night, and that now he had no longer to live, would not this amaze him and make him bethink himself and to prepare for death? If rich covetous men which spend the whole course of their life in providing for the things of this life, did truly consider of death, and that their end draweth nigh, would they do as they do, when this life and all the things of this life, and all our joys and pleasures of this world shall shortly have an end? For when death comes, they shall all be taken from us, or rather we from them. Oh how excellent a thing is it then for us to be drawn from the things of this life unto a due consideration of death, and of those heavenly Joys and happiness to come! Oh you that look for these things, what manner of men ought you to be in holy life and conversation?

Thirdly, seeing we all must die, and this present life must come to an end, this should teach us to prepare ourselves for a better life; to provide for a surer building, a better estate which shall never perish. Philosophers who were but heathen men, could meditate on death, setting it always before their eyes. But this is not enough for us that are Christians; we cannot truly

prepare ourselves for it unless we first build a surer foundation in providing for a better life, which shall never have an end; and this no Heathen or wicked man can ever do. Oh how woeful would that message be unto a wicked man, that was brought unto good King Hezekiah, Comes, set thy house in order, for thou must die, and not live; and why should it be terrible unto him? Surely because he hath no hope of a better life, he hath not provided for a better habitation. Consider then with what comfort thou couldst entertain this message; with what comfort canst thou meet with death? For he is no Christian that cannot in some measure willingly meet with death, for by it we pass unto a better life: for as this our brother spake often, he that would have comfort in death, must look beyond death; he must not fix his eyes on the terrors of death, but he must look beyond to that glorious inheritance to which we are passing through death, and there shall he behold his Savior putting forth his hand ready to receive him; there shall he see the blessed Saints and Angels whose company he shall enjoy, besides an infinite heap of Joys and happiness that is prepared for him also. O my beloved, nothing will make us willingly to entertain the message of death, but only the comforts of the life to come. Oh let us labor then for these comforts that so we may be provided against death; were it not a foolishness for a man who being a tenant at will, and shortly to be turned out of his house, never to take care for another until he is cast out of doors? Beloved we are all tenants at will and we are very shortly to be cast out of our dwelling houses of clay, and shall we not provide for a surer habitation? Death is at hand, and our life must shortly have an end; let us therefore labor to be assured of a better life, when this is ended, that so with comfort we may meet with death.

Now we come unto the second point which is here to be considered; taken from the complaint of the Prophet that the people did not consider nor lay it to heart. viz the death of the righteous, whence I note, that the death loss of good men must be laid to heart as a special cause of grief and sorrow.

We ought justly to be grieved at the death of a righteous man, when God taketh him from amongst us. How did the Prophet Jeremy and the people lament the death of that good King Josiah, 2 Chron. 35:23, so devout men made great lamentation for the death of Stephen, Act. 8:2, so all Israel lamented the death of Moses, Deut. 34:8. And Joash the King of Israel wept for the death of the Prophet Elisha, 2 Kings 13:14, and thus we should lament and sorrow for the death of any righteous man, yet not in respect of themselves, as if their case were worse now than before, for they are now more happy.

But first, in regard of God's glory whereof they were instruments to set it forth; for since they were taken away, God's glory is impaired; because there are the fewer left which do truly serve and worship him; for as David saith, the dead praise not the Lord, &c. Psal. 115:17, so then they being dead, do not praise the Lord among the faithful on earth any longer.

Secondly, in regard of the great loss that others have by their death, who have always received much good by them in their life; for the godly do so order and behave themselves in all their ways that they do good wheresoever they come; therefore when they die, it must needs be a great loss unto such who might if they had lived, been bettered by them.

Thirdly, we ought to lament the death of the righteous in regard of the evil to come; for while they live, they are as a wall about us to keep God's judgments from us; if there had been but ten righteous men in Sodom, it had not been destroyed, Gen. 18:32. If there be a messenger one among a

thousand, saith Elihu, to show unto man his uprightness, then is God gracious unto him Job 33:23. Run ye to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem saith God, and see if you can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, and seeks the Lord, and I will pardon it, Jer. 5:1, so that if there had been but one righteous man among the people in that city, the Lord would have spared them even for that one's sake; and therefore the Lord speaking of the righteous, saith, I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place, he shall be as a glorious throne unto his fathers house. Isa. 22:23. Oh consider then what a loss we have when the righteous die; we are like to perish, when the nail that was in the sure place is removed, cut down and falls; for then the burden that was upon it, shall be cut off, Isa. 22:25. You therefore of this Congregation, consider, and lament for this your loss, in that this good man is taken from among you; for who knows whether God spared this congregation even for this good man's sake? For it is the righteous only that God respects, and for their sakes he will spare a whole people; therefore surely as Solomon saith, the righteous is better than his neighbor, yea though never so poor and despised in the eyes of the world, yet are they precious in God's account; when I make up my Jewels (saith God) I will spare them Mal. 3:17, so that the righteous are God's Jewels, the excellent of the earth, are precious in God's sight; and have we not great cause then to lament for the loss of such?

Seeing then it becometh all God's children to lament the death of the righteous; O how far then are all such from the spirit of God, who are so far from lamenting, that on the contrary they rejoice at the death of the godly man, because he stood in their way? They could not follow their works of darkness as they would, but he hindered them, he stood in their light, they could not run on in sin and wickedness, but he would be reprovng,

admonishing, and telling them of their faults, and this makes them long for the good man's end, and to rejoice in it when it doth come; these do not consider that when the righteous is taken from the earth, then they lie open unto the judgments of God; But as the Sodomites thrust out just Lot out of their city, that so God's vengeance might fall the sooner upon them; for till he was gone, the Lord would not destroy them Gen. 19:21. Even so do these men desire to be rid of the righteous, and rejoice when they are taken from them, not considering that they are open to God's vengeance which hangeth over their heads ready to devour them.

We ought then to be most grieved for the death of the righteous, when any of the Saints are taken away by death; Oh what a comfort is a righteous man to the children of God? What a feeling of grace is there in such a one? What comfortable words come there from the mouth of such men? How full of comfortable speeches was this poor man always ministering comfort to those that came to visit him? What a loss is this then unto us? It is more than if thousands of the wicked had gone together; and shall we not mourn for the loss of such a one? If one of our family or friends die, we can mourn for them; and good reason; and shall we not mourn for the loss of one of God's Saints, one of the spiritual family, one of our fellow members.

In this then examine thyself how it is with thee; when thou hearest of any of the faithful that are taken away, art thou grieved for it, dost thou lament and mourn for it? If thou doest not, surely thou art no true Christian; for the children of God cannot choose but lay it to heart and lament, when any of the righteous is taken from among them. As Israel lamented the death of Samuel. 1 Sam. 25:1.

Now concerning the sin of the people in not regarding nor laying it to heart, this was a great sin of security in them, in that they did as it were rest

on their pillows and cried peace unto themselves, notwithstanding God's judgments upon them, in taking away the righteous, and freeing them from the evil to come, we note that,

When God will bring any great judgment upon a People or Nation, he will ordinarily take away his faithful servants from among them, that so they may be freed from the evil to come. Thus good Josiah must perish in his young years, that so he might not be taken with the evil to come; I will gather thee unto thy fathers faith God, and thou shalt go to thy grave in peace, and thy eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place. 2 King. 22:20. So when God told Abraham of the bondage and captivity whereunto he would bring his posterity, he saith thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, Gen. 15:13. And thus it was with the ancient Father Saint Augustine; when the cruel Vandals besieged his city, he prayed that the Lord would either take him away, or cause them to leave the siege; and the Lord heard him, and took him away, and presently after the Vandals destroyed the city. So Luther writing upon this text, saith that the Lord after his death would bring great affliction upon Germany, and two years after it so fell out indeed. Thus ordinarily God takes away his servants from the evil to come.

See here the mercy of God unto his children in that he takes them away from among the wicked, he calls them out of this world that they may not partake of the evil to come; shall any one then think it a curse to be taken away betimes, in his young years? Nay happy is he that is taken away from these miserable and fearful times wherein the judgment of God, for our sins hangeth over our heads; and is ready every day to seize upon us.

Secondly, seeing that God when he means to bring any heavy judgment upon a people, doth ordinarily take away the righteous from the evil to

come, this shows that when the righteous are taken from amongst us, we are certainly to expect some judgment of God upon us. For these are they which stood in the gap and kept off the fire of God's wrath from us, that it should not consume us: but now being gone, we lie open to the judgments of God; and therefore when any righteous men are taken from us, the loss of them ought to drive us to repentance, lest God's judgments come presently upon us and consume us, therefore we must forsake our sins and evil ways, and perform new obedience unto God, so will he be merciful unto us, yea he will be a shield of defense unto us, and a wall of fire about us, and he will turn away his judgments from us.

Beloved in the Lord we are here assembled to perform this last Christian duty of burial to the Saint of God now deceased, whose soul I am as certainly persuaded is at rest with Christ in glory, as I am sure his body is in this coffin. When I consider those excellent graces that were in him, his great knowledge in the word of God, his love, zeal, patience and humility; when I consider his excellent gifts in comforting, exhorting, admonishing, with his heavenly gift of prayer, &c. and withal consider that he was unlettered, he could neither write nor read, I cannot but call to mind that in the Act. 4:13, where it is said of the Priest and Pharisees that they seeing the boldness of the Apostles how they answered and spake, perceiving them to be unlearned and ignorant men, they knew that they had been with Jesus: Even so may we know that this our brother had been with Jesus: not in the flesh, but in the spirit, and that from him he received these things, that book-learning could never have taught him; for he was a good man and full of the holy Ghost, as it is laid of Barnabas; Truly verifying that of the Apostle that God hath chosen the poor of this world, that they should be rich in faith; he was a true follower of Christ, of whom it is said he went

about doing good; so this Disciple of Christ did good wheresoever he came; how many by him have been stirred up, comforted and admonished and quickened unto good duties, feeding them with the lips of knowledge who fed him with bodily food? How often have I myself through him been stirred up to good duties? How often have I been refreshed and comforted in my heaviness by this poor man! So lively did he bear the Image, of God in him, that me thought Christ Jesus walked in him alive upon the earth; how much true service; sincere obedience, fervent and faithful prayer had the Lord out of that poor cottage wherein he lived? If ever there were a true child of Abraham, and an heir to the promise, this was he; if ever there were among us a true Israelite in whom there was no guile, this was he; If ever there were amongst us a true Christian that shined as a light to those amongst whom he lived, this was he; If ever there were amongst us a poor man rich in faith, this was he. In his life he was a pattern to all that knew him, so contented with his estate, so diligent in the duties of his calling whilst health suffered; In sickness until death whilst speech continued, so comfortable that I never came to him, but I went away bettered by him. O how did he exhort and stir up all those that came to visit him, to hold out constantly unto the end, to grow and increase in those good beginnings which they had made? How often and how excellently would he speak of the benefits which we have by Christ, even the pardon of sin, more like a Divine than a common Christian, and so feelingly did he express the certain pardon of his own sin, even the sweet assurance thereof, that it did my heart good to hear him. Often did he deplore the state of these evil times, in which we live, from which the Lord hath now taken him away; Often did he with tears bewail the state of this congregation, and their unfruitfulness under the ministry of the word. How did he even with tears pray for his

enemies? He had some enemies, but they were such as his piety, religion and care to keep a good conscience made enemies unto him, touching whom I must say that which without trembling I cannot speak, that as they refused his society while he lived, and sought to thrust him from among them, so I fear that where he now is, they shall never come except they repent. O it is a fearful thing to hate a man for his religion and piety; but such was his love and compassion towards them, that he did often with tears lament their estate and pray for them. At the mention of death he would still repeat the point not long since delivered; that he that would have comfort in death, must go beyond death; even to that glorious inheritance to the which we are passing through death? And never in my life did I ever see any man so comfortably and contentedly address himself to encounter with death as he did. O said he, this is the time that I have long waited for; and as the pangs of death grew nearer, so used he the more comfortable speeches, saying with Paul, I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ; now shall I see my sweet Savior whom I have longed for; and when death was even upon him, he said come Lord Jesus come quickly, and so with admirable patience endured the pangs of death after prayer with him when his speech began to fail, I exhorted him now to look up to his Redeemer, who was ready to receive him into his Masters joy; and I spake something out of the Revelations, touching the happy estate of those that die in the Lord, adding further that all this comfort we have by Christ, He answered with these his last words which with much difficulty he spake; saying, blessed be his glorious name, blessed be his glorious name, and thus this faithful servant of Christ and heir of blessing, gave up his breath in blessing God and died, praising that God to whose praise he had lived. And what should I say more but as David said of Abner, died Abner as a fool dieth? Died this our brother

as a fool, as a worldling, as a wicked man dieth, of whom no reckoning is to be made? No, precious is his death in the eyes of the Lord, and in the eyes of all that fear the Lord, and blessed shall his memory be, yea all that knew him well, will call him blessed. And for my own part so often as I shall think of his death, and often I must think thereon, my soul shall wish and pray, Oh let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like unto his Amen.

SERM. X. THE SIGNS OF GOD'S FORSAKING A PEOPLE.

JER. 14:9.
And we are called by thy Name; leave us not.

Two things (Brethren and beloved in Christ Jesus) are intended and expressed by the holy Prophet from the first ver. to the 13th ver.

There is first a denomination of a judgment, and that is dearth or famine from the first verse to the seventh.

Secondly, the sword is threatened to the thirteenth verse; he will send the famine, then the sword, and he will not be entreated.

Then in the eighth and ninth verses we have the importunate prayer of the Church to turn away these judgments: And the prayer is marvelous sweet, in confession, where they confess their sins, and seek to God for succor.

First, they desire God that he would not take his providence from them, why, stayest thou but for a night? Ver. 8, as if they should have said, it is marvelous strange, that thou behavest thyself so like a stranger; thou seest our sorrows, and dost not help us; thou perceivest our troubles, and thou

regardest us not; It is strange, it is strange; that the God of Israel stands as a man astonished; that thou that hast heretofore received us, shouldst now stand as a man amazed and astonished, as if thou wert weary of this thy work, and couldst do no more, as if thou shouldst say Jerusalem cannot be saved, and Judah cannot be succored.

Secondly, they desire that God would not take away his presence from them; leave us not to ourselves say they; let us see thy face; though we die, yet let it be in thy presence; yea though thou help us not, yet it doth us good to look upon our Savior, and thou canst help us; and thus you see the arguments wherewith they press the Lord how, sweet they are, viz.

First, thou art the hope of Israel; Alas if thou forsake us we are all lost; our hope is not in the means only; but our hope is in thee, leave us not, for thou art the hope of Israel, it is the task that thou hast taken upon thee, leave us not therefore.

Secondly, thou hast made thyself a Savior, and now is the time of trouble, therefore now perform what thou hast undertaken.

Thirdly, thou art in the midst of us, that is, thou art a great Commander amongst us, always ready to succor us; and wilt thou now see us perish? Thou art more near to us then the Ark in the midst of the Campe, 1 Sam. 4:6. As if they should say he lives in the midst of us, and will he not save us?

Fourthly, we are called by thy name, and therefore we have interest in thee, to whom should wives go, but to their husbands? To whom should children go, but to their fathers? To whom should servants go, but to their Masters? To whom then should we go, but to thee our God and Savior? Leave us not therefore and we will meddle with none but thee.

Secondly, though God might leave them, yet they beg that he would not; that is, the A men to their prayers; though thou stand and wilt not help us; yet let us die in thy presence; and this is the great request of the Saints, they desire not to be left of God, although God might leave them; whence learn that God might cast off a people.

Israel did fear it, and it is that which they prayed against, God might leave them: I do not say that God will cast off his elect ones eternally, but those in outward covenant. See Isa. 1:2. &c. Hear O Heavens, Hearken O Earth, I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me; The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib, but Israel hath not known, my People have not understood, &c. and verse the seventh; see the judgment; your cities are burnt with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence, and it is desolate like the overthrow of strangers.

There is an outward Calling, as well as an effectual Calling; God may reject; for many are called, but few chosen saith our Savior. My brethren cast your thoughts afar off, and see what is become of those famous Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira and the rest mentioned Rev. 1:11. And who would have thought that Jerusalem should have been made a heap of stones and a vagabond people? And yet we see God hath forsaken them, showing us thereby that although God will never forsake his own elect ones; yet he may forsake such as are in outward covenant with him.

The Lord is said to dis-church or discharge a people, Hos. 1:9, there God saith call his name Loammi for ye are not my people, and therefore I will not be your God. And as I may so say, he sues out a bill of divorcement; as it was in the old Law, they that had anything against their wives, they sued out a bill of divorcement against them, and so doth God, see Hos. 2:2. Plead with thy Mother, tell her she is not my Spouse nor my beloved; but let her

cast away her fornications out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts, lest I make her as at the first, that is, as she was in Egypt, poor and miserable. As if God should now say to England, plead, plead with England all ye that are my Ministers in the way of my truth, and say unto her, let her cast away her rebellions, lest I leave her as I found her in the day of Captivity and bondage under the blindness of popery and superstition.

[*Obj.*] But how doth God cast off a people?

[*Sol.*] I answer, first when he takes away his love and respect from a people; and as his love, so the token of his love, which is his Word and Sacraments, the means of salvation.

Secondly, when he takes away his providence, I mean when he takes down his walls, that is, his Magistracy and Ministry.

Thirdly, when instead of Counselling there comes in Bribing; and instead of true teaching there comes in daubing with untempered mortar; when God takes away the hedge thereof, Isa. 5:5, or the stakes grow rotten and are not renewed then is God going away.

Fourthly, when God takes away the benefit of both these helps, they are signs of God's departure.

May God un-church or discharge a People and cast a Nation off? Oh then let this teach us to cast off all security; for miseries are nigh at hand in all probability; when we observe what God hath done for us, all things are ripe to destruction, and yet we fear it not, but we promise to ourselves safety, and consider not that England is ready to be harrowed, and yet we cannot entertain a thought of England's desolation; when there are so many prophesies in it of its destruction, yet we cannot be persuaded of it, but in our Judgments it must not be, it must not be as yet; as if it were impossible

that God should leave England, as if God were a cockering Father over lewd children; God may leave a Nation, and his elect may suffer, and why may not England? England's sins are very great, and the greater, because the means are great, and our warnings are and have been great; but yet our mercies are far greater; England hath been a mirror of mercies; yet now God may leave it, and make it the mirror of his justice. Look how God spake to the people that did brag of their temple Jer. 7:4, saith God, Trust not in lying words, saying the Temple of the Lord, this is the Temple of the Lord; but what saith the Lord by the Prophet in the twelfth and fourteenth verses, Go now to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the beginning, and behold what I did unto it for the wickedness of my people Israel, &c. Even so England, thou hast the Temple and the Priests; and yet may not God that destroyed Shiloh, destroy thee? Go to Bohemia; and from thence to the Palatinate, and from thence to other parts of Germany; Do but imagine that you were there or do but mark what travelers say. God's Churches are made heaps of stones, and those Bethels wherein God's name was called upon, are now defiled Temples; For Satan and superstition to reign in, you cannot go three steps but you shall see the head of a dead man; And go a little further, and you shall see the heart picked out by the fowls of the air, or some other sad spectacle? And then surely you will say, *Tylly* hath been here or there; now are these Churches become desolate, and may not England? Do but go into their Cities and Towns, and there you may see many compassed about with chains of Captivity, and every man bemoaning himself. Do but look under a tree, and there you may see a poor fatherless child sending out his breath and crying unto his helpless Mother; step but a little further, and you shall see the helpless Wife, the sad Wife bemoaning her Husband, and this is her misery, she cannot die

time enough, but she shall see greater misery; for either she shall (as she thinks) see her little ones dashed against the stones, or tossed upon the Pikes, or if they live, that then they shall be brought up in Popery, and then she weeps again, and thinks that if her Husband be dead it is well: But it may be he is upon the rack, or put to some other torment, and then she dies an hundred times before she can die; Thus if you can set your souls in their souls stead, and imagine you were in their condition, and say, may not this be the condition of England, and who knows but it may? O my beloved, be not high minded; but fear; for as we have God's bounty on the one side, so (for ought I know) we may have his severity on the other side, Prank not then yourselves with foolish imaginations saying, who dare come to hurt England? The Spaniard hath his hands full, and the French are too weak. But beloved be not deluded; who would have thought that Jerusalem the Lady city of all Nations, whither the tribes went up to worship, should become a heap of stones and a vagabond people? But yet you see it was, and is to this day; And I pray, why may it not be England's case? Learn therefore, hear, and fear God, for assuredly God can be God without England's prosperity; Do not say here are many good Christians; do you think that God is beholding to you for your religion? Surely not: For rather than he will preserve such as profess his name, and yet hate to be reformed; he will raise up of these stones children unto Abraham, he will rather go into Turkey and say unto them, Thou art my people, and I will be your God.

But wilt thou let God go England? Are you so content, and will you let Christ go and God go? O no, no; lay heart and hands upon him as they did upon Paul; every one of you lay hold on him and say thou shalt not go from us, for we are called by thy name, therefore leave us not; And for my part I will pray that he doth not take his leave of us. Do you think that Rome will

forsake or part with her God's? No, they will rather lose their lives; and wilt thou let thy God go, O England? Plead with thy God and let him not depart, but part rather with thy rebellions.

We are called by thy name, leave us not.

You see the Church is very importunate to keep God with them, they lay hold on God with Cords of arguments; O thou hope of Israel, do not leave us; they beset God with their prayers, and as it were they watch him at the towns end that he should not go away, and they say, thou shalt still abide with us, they are importunate that he do not leave them, whence observe. That it is the importunate desire of the Saints of God, still to keep God present with them. They cared not so much for sword or famine, as they did for the loss of God's presence; O Lord, leave us not say they; this was their prayer; and blame them not; for consider what a grief it is that God should stand by and not help them, Good Lord (say they) leave us not, we cannot abide to think that God should leave us, much less can we endure to feel it or taste it; thus they did, and thus the Saints of God should do, Exod. 33:14,15. Moses saith if thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence; alas, Moses might have gone upon fair terms; ye shall (saith God) possess the land in peace with prosperity; But what saith Moses? Though we might have Canaan and all the delights there, yet carry us not hence unless thy presence go with us; this is the stay and the strength that he sticks too. So Psal. 80:18,19. Turn us again O Lord of hosts, make thy face to shine upon us; here is a man, a David, a heart worth gold, he makes not many suits, but he comes home, he sues to the purpose, make thy face (saith he) to shine upon us; as if he should have said that is prosperity enough, for it endureth forever.

But what is the presence of God? In a word, it is the particular favor of God which he expresseth in his Ordinances, it is all the good and sweetness that flows from the purity of God's worship, whereby God reveals himself unto us. It is not gold, wealth, nor prosperity, that makes God to be our God; for there is more gold in the West Indies, then in all Christendom, but it is God's ordinances purely administered that brings God's presence to a people. God forsook Shiloh because his ordinances were not purely kept there; when the people left the Ark (viz) his pure worship, then God left the people; when the Ark of God's presence was among them, the word in the purity of it, then his face was there, and there God was principally present; hence it was that Cain is said to be cast out of God's presence; because he was cast out from the Church, he was cast out from God's ordinances; if a people do outwardly reform, and sincerely worship God they may remain; if Sodom and Gomorrah had but legally repented, they had remained, they had not been destroyed; And hence it is that the Saints are so urgent for God's Ordinances in the purity of them: But the wicked say once a Sabbath is enough, and once a week is too much; by this we may see that England; is ripe; and is she nor weary of God? Nay, she is fat fed to the slaughter. But it was not so with the Saints and people of God in former times; it was David's grand request, that he might dwell in the house of the Lord, Psal. 27:4. And Psalm the 42nd, and the first verse he said, his soul did pant for God's ordinances. Thus you see that the Saints of God are marvelous importunate to keep God in his ordinances.

[*Quest.*] But may not a man be saved without preaching?

[*Ans.*] I answer, the argument is clear, the Saints maintain God in his ordinances, the want of which is under the penalty of death and damnation, because we have more need of God in his ordinances than of all the gold in

the world; for all the gold in the world will not satisfy a hungry man; It is bread that he must have, because he hath need of it; so the Saints have most need of God and of Christ; for though they have but ragged coats, and their bodies pinched with hunger, yet God is he that they stand most in need of. In Psalm 37:25, David fretted at the prosperity of the wicked; but at the last he breaks out kindly, saying, whom have I in heaven but thee? As if he should have said, let them have what they will, I will have nothing but thee. And why so? Why? Thou art my strength and my portion forever; mark, he saith that God is his strength, yea the strength of his heart, hereby showing that all the helps in the world cannot help the heart of man, if God and Christ be wanting; you were as good offer a journey to refresh a weary man, or the air to feed a hungry man, as to offer riches, honors and ease to help a distressed soul. These will never help a man; he may well dote upon them, but his soul and conscience will be galled and troubled still; it must be the God of peace that must speak peace to troubled souls. It must be the God of peace that must speak peace to a distressed soul, to a soul that is damned in itself; it is he that must say, I will be the strength of their hearts, and their portion forever; no marvel then if a poor soul cries to God, when happily the heart is full, when the soul gnaws and cries within itself, I am damned, I am damned; happily the palate is pleased with delicacies, when the poor soul for ought it knows must go down to hell; oh then beloved, if you will have safety, go where God is; for every good gift comes in with him; if once a man hath got God into his company, he hath all good things with him. God blessed Obed Edom's house for the Arkes sake; now the Ark was a type of Christ, and where it came, many blessings came with it; even so when God comes unto a people they are married unto him in righteousness, in judgment, in loving kindness and in mercies forever, Hos. 2:9. When a man

is married to a wife, all is his; so get Christ and all is thine, and then what wouldst thou have more?

God speaks to the rain, and it hears; to the corn, and it hears; but if thou be in Christ, hell and death are thy servants; but they that have outward things only, as profits, pleasures or the like, they have their ruin, unless they have Christ with them; get Christ therefore, for if he be wanting all outward and inward dangers befall that man; or that Nation; woe be unto him or them that are without God. For though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be man left; yea woe also to them, when I do depart from them; Ephraim, as Tyrus is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer, Hos. the 9:12,13, ver. True indeed, woe be unto that heart, County or Kingdom, that God is departed from; when God who is the God of mercies and all consolation, is departed away, who can but pity that soul, County or Kingdom who will not submit to God's peace consolation and salvation? When God parts, all miseries follow; for that man that makes no conscience in outfacing God in the Congregation, mark what the text saith Deut. 28:15. I will forsake them, and many miseries shall overtake them, and when the flood gates are once up, then comes in all evils; And then they shall say, are not these things come upon us because God is not with us? If therefore we would avoid woe and sorrow, slaying and killing one another; if the wife would not see her husband killed before her tender eyes, and the man see his wife snatched out of the world by the hands of wicked men, then leave not God, but hold him fast, and then evil days, will depart from us; It is our holding of God that keeps miseries from us; oh then what shall we think of them that are weary of God, and that say to the Almighty depart from us? Job 22:17.

[*Obj.*] But are there any amongst us that are weary of God? I hope there are none such amongst us.

I answer, thou that art a servant, and rejectest the Command of thy Master, in it thou doest reject God, and all such as have a mean conceit of the worship of God and the word of God, and think that prayer or preaching is continued too long; I say, these men know not what they think or say, but certainly it is because they would be freed from the Ordinance; of God: well, God will free thee from them one day, I will warrant thee, and then thou wilt be in a miserable condition; oh that thou wouldest pity thy poor condition; but thou that art weary of God's ordinances and of his mercies, his presence and patience, know thou that thou shalt be deprived of God's goodness, and thy portion shall be with those that hate God in this life here, and after this life (if thou repent not) thy portion shall be with them in Tophet where the worm dieth not, and where the fire goeth not out, and then thy crying will not avail, God will be God over thee in destruction, yea when he hath spurned thousands and ten thousands into hell, such as thou art, then shalt thou be the everlasting object of his never dying wrath, then notwithstanding all thy shrill cries, though thou couldest be heard out of that dungeon, yet were thy help never the near; for God is God still. I advise thee therefore what to do, whilst thou art here in this life, make thy peace with God in Christ, and lay thyself low before him, and bear patiently his hand in his wrath which thou hast deserved. And mark what I say, thou hast deserved to be in hell a hundred times, that is the least; and therefore be contented with thy condition; for thou hast chosen death rather than life: and God should wrong himself and thee also, if he should not let thee have thy choosing.

Will not these things move you, my brethren? Me thinks I see your colors rise, I am glad of it, I hope it is to a good end; you may be wise, and happily so wise as to choose life rather than death: Now the Lord grant it, for see delights not in your destruction.

I will add one word more, to leave the more impression in your hearts; my desire is the health of your souls; though my meat seem sour, yet my mind is the will of God. Thou man or woman, that canst not abide so much Preaching, but standest upon thorns whilst it is preaching: Too much of one thing (you say) is good for nothing; You do as much as say you will not have God with you; you will have a little of God, but you will have more of your pleasures: is this your desire, your delights? Know then, whosoever thou art, that hast an ill will to God and his Ordinances, and wilt not have the gospel in the purity of it; thou shalt have thy desires: Thou sayest, depart Preachings, and so it shall, thou shalt, have thy desires. When thou shalt hear the trumpets sound, and when thine ears shall tingle with the sound of war; then depart forever, you that are weary of God, get you down to hell forever: Fulfill your base lusts (then will God say) for I have fed you on earth this twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, nay sixty years and upwards, and my mild Word could not rule you nor prevail with you, and therefore now get you to hell, and there remain forever. Think thus with yourselves; will God serve me thus? Yea that he will, for he hath prepared a place, for the proudest Kings, Princes, Monarchs Captains, &c. that are, or ever were in the world, if they will not be ruled nor guided by God, and his word. See Isa. 30:33, the Text doth as good as say, he delighteth to make bonfires about their ears: And must this be the way to glorify God?

But some may say, surely Kings and Monarchs are exempted, they need not fear that such torments shall come upon them.

To this I answer, that God will say unto them, reign there if thou wilt, and then they shall know that there is a King that laughs at their destruction. Take notice of this I beseech you, and reason thus with your own souls: Is he a good son that cannot abide the presence of his own father? Is she a good wife that cannot abide the company of her husband? And is he a good Christian that cannot endure the company of Christ in his ordinances?

This may serve to rebuke God's people for their neglect. You see the Gospel is going, Christ is departing, he is going to seek better entertainment. (But I marvel you give no better attendance; I pray hearken what I say and have to say, stand up and hear, and the Lord give you grace to believe.) I will deal plainly with you; as sure as God is God, God is going from England. Shall I tell you what God told me? Nay I must tell you on pain of my life; Will you give ear and believe me? I am a poor Ambassador sent from God to do his message unto you; and although I be low, yet my message is from above, and He that sent me is great, and from above; and oh that He would grant that this my message might be believed! What if I should tell you, that God told me (yesternight) that he would destroy England and lay it waste? What say you to this, my beloved? It is my message, by meditation is God's word, that he bid me do to you, and he expects and answer from you: I do my message as God commanded me; what sayest thou unto it, England? I must return an answer to my Master that sent me, yea this present right I must return an answer; for the Lord hath appointed a set time, saying, Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the Land, Exod. 9:5. Why speak you not? An answer you must give: Do you think well of it? Will you have England destroyed? Will you put the aged to trouble, and your young men to the sword? Will you have your young women widows, and your virgins defiled? Will you have your dear and

tender little ones tossed upon the pikes and dashed against the stones? Or will you have them brought up in Popery, in idolatry, under a necessity of perishing their souls forever, which is worst of all? Will you have these Temples wherein we seem to worship God, will you have them and your houses burnt with fire, and will you see England laid waste without inhabitants? Are you well contented it shall be so? I am an importunate suitor for Christ, oh send me not sad away, but speak comfortably and cheerfully, what are you resolved of? Are you willing to enjoy God still, and to have him dwell with you? It is well, I am glad of it if it be so; but you must not only say so, but you must use the means, and you must plead importunately with your God: for although his sword be drawn, and in his hand, lifted up and ready to strike; yet suffer him not to destroy, but rather to sheath his sword in the blood of his enemies. I would be glad to have England flourish still; but if desolation do come, thank yourselves for it, it is your own fault if you be destroyed, and not God's, for he delights not in the death of any. We may justly take up the complaint of the Prophet Isaiah, who saith, No man stirreth up himself to lay hold on God, Isa. 64:7. But this is our comfort, or rather our misery, that we have quiet prosperity, with ease and commodity, our bellies full, our coffers full, and our backs curiously clothed, &c. not remembering the afflictions of our neighbor Nations; but all is well with us, and it will serve our turns: and if we do humble ourselves a little, we think it is well. And thus we play mock-holiday with God and with his gospel, in making it out pack-horse. Well, look to it, for God is going, and if he do go, then our glory goes also; and then we may say with Phineahs wife, 1 Sam. 4:22. Glory is departed from Israel, so glory is departed from England; for England hath seen her best days, and the reward of sin is coming on apace; for God is packing up of his gospel,

because none will buy his wares: God begins to ship away his Noah's, which prophesied and foretold that destruction was near; and God makes account that New-England shall be a refuge for his Noah's and his Lots, a rock and a shelter for his righteous ones to run unto; and those that were vexed to see the ungodly lives of the people in this wicked Land, shall there be safe. Oh therefore my brethren, lay hold on God, and let him not go out of your coasts; look about you I say, and stop him at the towns-end, and let not thy God depart, O England, lay siege about him by humble and hearty closing with him; and although he be going, he is not yet gone; suffer him not to go far, suffer him not to say farewell or rather fare ill England; therefore because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet the God of Israel O England. Amos 4:12. Now God calls upon thee, as he did sometime upon Jerusalem, Jer. 6:8. Be thou instructed therefore O England, least my soul depart from thee, and least I make thee desolate like a Land that none inhabiteth; and thus we see what the godly have done before us, and now let it be our Copy, and let us with Mary clasp close about Christ; they have broke the Ice, let us follow them: this is our day of atonement; this present day is ours, we have nothing to do with tomorrow; we are at odds with God; and this is the day of our reconciliation this is the day wherein we are to make our peace with our God; and to end all controversies, let us labor therefore to prevail with God, and that we may not lose his presence, do as the spouse Cant. 3:1, she sought him, but she could not find him, yet she gave not over but she followed him till she found him; So our God is going, and shall we sit still? Would you have the Gospel kept with lazy wishes, Oh no, no; arise, arise from your downy beds, and fall down upon your knees, and entreat God to leave his Gospel to you and to your posterity; shall we by our sins disinherit our Infants and posterity of such a blessing which is

or should be the life of their lives? And so have them brought up in superstition? No, no; Lord we cannot abide this, Oh give us neither wealth nor any other blessing but thy Gospel; this is our Plea Lord; and when have found God then let us bring him home to our houses, and there retain him, that so he may be our God and the God of our posterity, in all our and their afflictions; and this will make you to rejoice exceedingly; Oh my beloved carry God whom with you, and let him be a Father to you and to your posterity.

[*Quest.*] But now may we keep the Lord, it would be worth our labor; for at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

[*Ans.*] First, we must be sure to prepare a room for him; for he is a King, and a King you know sends his harbinger before him to prepare a room for him; saying come out of her my people and touch no unclean thing, and then I will be thy God and thou shalt be my people, 2 Cor. 6:17, so my beloved brethren, come out of all sinful courses, pleasures, and practices, and you may expect God's coming unto your houses; And when you sit down by your fires, or lie down in your beds, think thus with yourselves, what an equal condition doth God propound, it is but only to part with a sin, a lust, a Delilah, which I may very well spare, as well as I may spare water out of my shoes, or a coal out of my bosom; I say think thus with thyself and say in thy heart, will God keep Company with me, if I will not keep Company with sin? Are the terms no harder? This is a good offer; I will at once then bid sin a due; for now I am upon another bargain; here is an offer that I was nor aware of; I will quickly dispatch this bargain and make my peace with my God; and thus if you would have God to be yours, then let your souls and bodies be his by forsaking all sins; and when you shall call, God will come and say here am I, Isa. 58:9.

Secondly, as you must prepare a room for God, so you must give him content too; let God have his will cross him not. Where the King is, he will have all things to his mind, even so it is with God, If he may have his own worship, you please him wondrous well; you must dress his dishes according to his tooth; but if you put poison into his meat, if you mingle the traditions of men with God's worship, then you discontent him. Lay aside therefore all your superstitions, and erroneous opinions of God and his worship, and do it according to his will in his word revealed, and then you please him indeed; when a Nation or a soul submits to God and to his truth in all things. To bow at the name Jesus, is not meant at the word Jesus for so to give him the bow is to commit syllabical Idolatry; but the meaning is, we should worship him in spirit and in truth, humbly subjecting ourselves unto Christ.

Thirdly, as we must give him his mind, so we must give him welcome, if you displease God and look loweringly or sourly upon him, and grudge at God or at his truth, no wonder then if God go away; land surely this is the sin of England, we bear an ill will unto God and his word, and God hath done well for this Land, and what could he have done more then he hath done for this Land, as he saith of his vineyard? Isa. 5:4,5, but it brought forth contrary fruit; even so we do all contrary to God's expectation; mark therefore what God saith, he will take away the hedge, and it shall be trodden down; and for ought that may be collected, so it is like to be with us, if his mercy prevent it not; for, are we better than the old world? The same sins that were found in the old world, are found in us; Sodom's and Gomorrah's sins were but straws in respect of ours; and yet God rained down fire and brimstone upon them; tell me, are there not as great sins amongst us as were in Jerusalem, who were carried captives, their city

destroyed, and they a vagabond people until this day? Are we better than other Brethren and neighbor Nations, that have drunk so deeply of God's wrath? I tell you truly, we are a burden to God, he cannot long bear us, and he will think his burden well over when he hath destroyed us. You know all men are glad when their pain is over; even so it is with God, we are a pain and a trouble unto him and why should God go continually pained with us, which are worthy to be destroyed? Then shall England seek peace, but shall not find it, God shall not pity us: Oh, my beloved brethren, what a pitiful thing it is, when a merciful God shall show himself unmerciful when his patience shall be turned into impatience? There is a hard time ere long befalling England, if God in mercy prevent it not; but we do not consider it, lamentable is our time. Christ wept over Jerusalem; Oh (saith he) that thou hadst known in this thy day of visitation, the things that do concern thy peace! But now thy are hid from thine eyes Beloved, what do you think we shall do, when God's mercies are turned into justice? Look to it England, the Lord hath wept over thee in mercy many years; What shall we do when we have leisure to consider what once we did enjoy? For God's patience is never truly prized, till we want it; and then the poor soul will thus say: There was a time when we might have been at peace with this patient God, but now he is hid from our eyes, now the gate is shut, barred and locked up. Thus when a people doth abuse God's mercy he sends the contrary judgments, and then it will grieve and wound our souls to think what once we did enjoy; but that soul that will bid God welcome to his heart, may go singing to his grave.

Fourthly, You must be importunate with God to tarry, and account it a great favor if he will stay: For God hath room enough in heaven, and therefore you need not lodge him for want of lodging, but you must be

beholding to him to tarry with you (yet in these days men do not love to be beholding;) Jacob wrestled with God, and by that means he held him till he blessed him: you live under the means, and know the way, and will you not do it? What greater condemnation can there, be, and how great will your judgment be unto you, more than unto them that have no means? And as it was said of Capernaum, so say I to England, Thou England that was lifted up to heaven with means, shalt be brought down to hell; thou shalt be abused for it; for if the mighty works which hath been done in thee, had been done in India or Turkey, they would have repented ere this time; And therefore Capernaum's place is England's place, which is the most scalding's tormenting place of all, if it repent not; And mark what I say, the poor native Turks and Infidels shall have a more cool summer Parlor in hell then England shall have, for we stand upon high rates; therefore thy torment shall be the more intolerable to bear.

Now the Lord write these things in our hearts by the finger of his holy spirit for his Christ's sake, under whom I would we were all covered. Amen.

FINIS.