

f A CHILD OF LIGHT
WALKING IN DARKNESS.

**A CHILD OF LIGHT
WALKING IN DARKNESS:**

A TREATISE,
SHEWING THE CAUSES, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND PURPOSES FOR
WHICH GOD LEAVES HIS CHILDREN TO DISTRESS OF CONSCIENCE,
WITH
DIRECTIONS HOW TO WALK, SO AS TO BE RELIEVED FROM
SUCH A CONDITION; AND SOME OBSERVATIONS ON
ISAIAH L. 10, 11.

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WHEN HE HIDETH HIS FACE, WHO CAN BEHOLD HIM?—JOB XXXIV. 29.

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A CHILD OF LIGHT
WALKING IN DARKNESS.

ISAIAH L. 10, 11.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; this shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

THE WORDS PARAPHRASED.

WE have in these words a true believer in his *worst*, and natural men in their *best* condition, set forth together unto our view; and withal, the power of true faith, as it alone upholdeth him in the saddest *hour of darkness* that can befall him,—opposed unto and compared with the falseness of their presumptuous

confidence in their greatest security, together with the different supports of either,—the one in the tenth verse, and the other in the eleventh.

First, Take a true believer, who hath had the least beam of the *light of the glory of God which shines in the face of Christ* let in upon his soul, and his heart so taken with that sight as it became eternally divorced from all things here below, and resolved to adventure all his future hopes of comfort and happiness in the enjoyment of that light of God's countenance alone; which, that he may enjoy, he feareth to offend the Lord more than Hell; and endeavoureth as truly to *obey the voice of his servants* as ever he desires to attain unto that happiness. Think with yourselves, What is the worst thing, next to the eternal loss of God, really and indeed, that can be supposed to befall this man? What is worse than to have that cranny through which he first espied that beam, to be as it were quite shut up, the *light of God's countenance* withdrawn, yea, all light and appearance to him of his own graces withheld and overclouded; the face of Heaven so overcast with darkness, that neither sun-light nor star-light appeareth to him, so as he *hath no light*: yea, further, finds his soul beset and besieged round with all the powers of Hell and darkness, and the terrors of the Almighty shot into his soul;—and he thus quite left, *walking in this darkness*, is filled with strong fears and jealousies that God is not his God; nay, questioning whether he *ever will be*,—yea, apprehending by the wrath he feels, God to be *become his enemy*. All this is set forth to us

here as the very estate of one *who feareth the Lord and obeys him*; and is comprehended in these words, *That walketh in darkness and hath no light.* You see him at his worst.

In such forlorn condition, what is there to be found to relieve and support this man? But only one thing, which is here held forth to him, *The name of the Lord*, for him to *trust and stay himself upon*;—both that name of God, *The Lord God, gracious and merciful* (Exod. xxxiv. 6.) &c. and that name of Christ, *which is called Jehovah, our righteousness.* Jer. xxiii. 6. Both or either of which, he, by the naked hand of Faith laying hold upon, may now make use of, as of a staff (as David compares it, in Psalm xxiii. 4.) whilst he thus *walks in darkness and through the valley of the shadow of death*, safely to *trust and stay himself upon*, so as, in the end, to come forth, *to see light in God's sight for evermore.* You see likewise the prop of his soul in this condition.

On the contrary, let us behold (as all are here called to do) the best and most secure of unregenerate men encompassed about with all means and supports of confidence and comfort, whether of legal righteousness of their own (which these Jews made boast of) together with the addition of all worldly and outward comforts; both which the prophet here compares to *fire and sparks*, as preserving *light and comfort* in them. As let their lives and natural dispositions abound with ever so many sparks of legal righteousness, which themselves have kindled,—for so he compares all those several acts and performances of natural

and acquired righteousness, struck out and educed from the powers of natural principles improved, which make a great blaze in a man's own opinion and esteem, which yet, not proceeding from the Holy Ghost baptizing them as *with fire*, and renewing them; nor from internal principles of regeneration, which Christ compares to *fire* (Mark ix. ult.)—are all in God's account but as a *sacrifice offered up with strange fire*, which was forbidden, and are here said to be of *their own kindling*; and such were the *sparks, in the light of which these Jews walked*, who went about to *establish their own righteousness*, and with confidence trusted therein, and not on *the name of the Lord*. Further, Let these men be surrounded and encompassed about with the greatest splendor of worldly glory, and abound in all those good things this world can afford them (the comforts whereof Solomon in like manner compares to a *fire of thorns*; and the pleasures of it to the *crackling* of thorns, as here to *sparks*); and let them keep ever so good fires to warm and cheer themselves withal, lay on as much every day as shall even encompass them about with *sparks*; and in the light and confidence of both these, let them walk for many years,—despising that other poor believer who feareth to be found in his own righteousness, and refuseth to be comforted by any of these; yet let them know, says Christ, who is brought in as the speaker here, that when they have thus walked presumptuously and securely, and even walked themselves *weary* (Isaiah xl. 13.) weary of all their own ways and pleasures, as they will be one

day; and then at their death-beds think to lie down and rest them. They *shall lie down* indeed, says Christ; and their bed shall be of my making and providing. *This you shall have of my hand,—you shall lie down,—but in a bed of sorrow and despair; in which they shall lie down, never to rise again.*

CHAPTER I.

The main Proposition and Subject of this Discourse thence deduced, That a Child of God may walk in Darkness: that thereby Distress of Conscience and Desertion in the Want of Assurance of Justification, is meant and proved.

THAT this is the meaning of the words, will more fully appear in opening the several propositions to be delivered out of them, whereof the first and principally intended is this, That one who truly fears God, and is obedient to him, may be in a condition of darkness, and have no light; and he may walk many days and years in that condition.

And herein, further to explain the text, and bottom. this great point well upon it, and more particularly to discover what the condition of a child of God thus in darkness is, we will first inquire, What is meant by walking in darkness?

First, Walking in darkness is taken, in 1 John i. 6, for living in sin and ungodliness,—in the commission of known sins, or omission of known duties, going on in the works of darkness: but so it is not to be taken here; for Christ would not have encouraged such to trust in God, *who is light*; and there can be no fellowship between him and such darkness, as the apostle tells us. Nay, the Holy Ghost reproves such as do *lean on the Lord*, and yet transgress; and besides, the text speaks of such who, for their present condition, fear God, and are obedient to him, which if they thus walked in darkness, they could not be said to do.

Neither, secondly, is it to be meant of walking in ignorance, as in John xii. 36, it is taken; for one that *hath no light* in that sense, can never truly fear God, nor obey him. The *heart that wanteth knowledge is not good*, says Solomon, and so to walk in darkness is accompanied with *walking in vanity of mind*. Ephes. iv. 18.

But, thirdly, He means it of discomfiture and sorrow: as often we find in Scripture darkness to be taken; as in Eccles. v. 17. As, on the contrary, *light*, because it is *so pleasant a thing to behold*, is put for comfort; and that so it is taken here, is evident by that which is opposed in the next verse:—*Walk ye in your light, yet ye shall lie down in sorrow*.

But, fourthly, Of what kind of sorrow?—and for what? Whether from outward afflictions, or inward distress of mind and conscience? or (to use Solomon's distinction) whether by reason of man's ordinary in-

firmities, or of a wounded spirit?—that is yet in question.

And, first, It is not to be restrained to outward afflictions only, which are called Man's Infirmities, as being common to man, which arise from things of this world, or from the men of the world, though to walk in darkness is so taken (Isaiah lix. 9.) and I will not exclude it here; for in them also a man's best support is to trust in God; and it is the safest way to interpret Scriptures in the largest sense which the words and coherence will bear: but yet that cannot be the only or principal meaning of it; for besides what is further to be said to the contrary, he adds, *And hath no light*; that is, no comfort. Now, as philosophers say, 'There is no pure darkness without some mixture of light,' so we may say, There is not mere or utter darkness caused by outward afflictions,—no outward affliction can so universally environ the mind as to shut up all the entrances to it, so that a man should have no light; and besides, God's people, when they walk in the greatest outward darkness, may have, yea, often use to have most light in their spirits; but here is such an estate spoken of,—such a darkness as hath no light in it.

Therefore, secondly, It is principally to be understood of the want of inward comfort in their spirits, from something that is between God and them: and so meant of that darkness and terrors which accompany the want of the sense of God's favour; and so darkness is elsewhere taken for inward affliction of spirit and mind, and want of light in point of assur-

ance, that God is a man's God, and of the pardon of a man's sins. Heman useth this word to express his distress (Ps. lxxxviii. 6.) ; and the reasons why it is thus to be understood here, are,

1st. Because the remedy here prescribed is faith ; to stay himself upon God, and that as upon *his* God : he puts in his God emphatically, because that is the point he is troubled about, and concerning which he is in darkness, and of which he would have such an one to be persuaded ; and that is it which faith, which is propounded here as the remedy, doth in the first place and principally look unto, as its primary aim and object.

2dly. In the foregoing verses he had spoken of justification, whereby God pardons our sins and accepts our persons. The prophet, or Christ in the person of his elect, having expressed his assurance of this : *God is near that justifies me,—who shall condemn ?* Which words the apostle (Rom. viii. 32, 33.) doth allege in point of justification, and to express the triumphing assurance of it ; and applies them in the name and persons of true believers too : but because there might be some poor souls who, though truly fearing God, yet might want this assurance, and upon the hearing of this might be the more troubled, because not able to express that confidence which he did, therefore he adds, *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and walketh in darkness ? &c.*—as if he should have said to such, Though you want the comfortable sense and assurance of this, yet be not discouraged ; but do you exercise faith, go out of your-

selves, rely upon Christ, and that mercy which is to be found in God ;—you may fear God and want it, and you are to trust in God in the want of it.

Thirdly, These words have a relation also to the fourth verse ; where he says (as that God had given him this assurance of his own justification, for his own particular comfort in those immediately foregoing verses to the text) That God had also given him the *tongue of the learned, to minister a word of comfort in season to him that is weary and heavy laden* ; and thereupon in this verse, he accordingly shews the blessed condition of such persons as are most weary through long walking in darkness ; and he discovereth to them the way of getting out of this darkness, and recovering comfort again ; and in all the word of God there is not a more comfortable and seasonable word to one in such a condition to be found. All which argues that it is spoken of inward darkness and trouble of spirit, and that in point of applying justification and God to be a man's God.

CHAPTER II.

The Particulars of the Distress contained in these two Phrases, Walking in Darkness,—Having no Light.

THE second thing to be inquired into is, What is the condition of such an one who is thus in darkness, and who hath no light ?—which I will so far discover, as

the phrases used will give light into, by the help of other Scriptures.

First, He is said to have no light. Light, saith the apostle, is that whereby things are made manifest (Ephes. v. 13); that is, to the sense of sight, to which light properly belongs; and as light and faith are here separated, so sight also is, in 2 Cor. v. 7, distinguished from faith; which is the evidence of things absent, and not seen. When, therefore, he says he hath no light, the meaning is, He wants all present sensible testimonies of God's favour to him: he sees nothing that may give sensible present witness of it to him. God's favour and his own graces, and all the sensible tokens and evidences thereof, which are apprehended by spiritual sight, are become all as absent things,—as if they were not, nor ever had been,—that light which ordinarily discovers these as present he is fully deprived of.

To understand this, we must know that God, to help our faith (which, as I said before, is distinguished from sight, as we now speak of it) vouchsafeth a threefold light to his people, to add assurance and joy to their faith, which is to faith as a back of steel to a bow, to strengthen it; and made to be taken or put on at God's good pleasure.

First, The immediate light of his countenance, which is a clear evident beam and revelation of God's favour, immediately testifying that we are his, which is called, The sealing of the Spirit, received after believing (Ephes. i. 13.) which David desired, and rejoiced in more than in all worldly things. *Lord,*

*lift up the light of thy countenance ; in which, more or less in some glimpses of it, some of God's people have the privilege to walk with joy from day to day. They shall walk in the light of thy countenance ; in thy name shall they rejoice all day (Psalm lxxxix. 15.) ; and this is here utterly withdrawn. It may thus come to pass, that the soul, in regard of any sense or sight of this, may be left in the case that Saul really was left in. God is departed from me, and answers me not, neither by prophets nor by dreams (1 Sam. xxviii. 15.) though with this difference, that God was really departed from Saul ; but to these, only in their own apprehensions ; yet so, for aught they can see of him, God is departed entirely from them,—answers them neither by prayer, word, nor conference ; they cannot get one look from him. Such was Jonah's case :—*I am cast out of thy sight ;* that is, he could not get a sight of him,—not one smile, not one glance or cast of his countenance, not a beam of comfort, and so thought himself cast out ;—and so he dealt with David often, and sometimes long together, (*How long wilt thou hide thy face from me ?* Psalm xiii. 1 ; and *How long, &c.* Psalm lxxxix. 46.) even so long, that David puts God in remembrance, and pleads how *short a time* in all he *had to live* ; and complains how much of that time his face had been hid from him (ver. 47.) ; and the like was Heman's case ; and this also long, even from *his youth up.* Psalm lxxxviii. 14, 15. So from Job,—*yea, and from Christ himself :—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?**

But concerning this you will ask, How can this dealing of his stand with his *everlasting love*, continued notwithstanding to the soul, that he should deal so with one he loves?—but especially, How it may stand with the *real* influence of his grace, powerfully enabling the soul all that while to go on to fear and obey him?

For the first, it may stand with his everlasting love, and God may be *his* God still, as the text tells us. *For a moment I have hid my face; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.* Isa. liv. 8. It is but *hiding his face*, and concealing his love as David concealed his love from Absalom, when his bowels yearned towards him; and God takes the liberty that other fathers have, to shut his children out of his presence when he is angry; and it is but for a moment, that is, in comparison of eternity, though happily it should be thus with him during a man's whole life; and he, therefore, takes liberty to do it, because he hath such an eternity of time to reveal his kindness in,—time enough for kisses and embraces, and to pour forth his love in.

And for the second, the real gracious influences and effects of his favour may be continued, upholding, strengthening, and carrying on the soul, still to obey and fear him, whilst he yet conceals his favour; for, when Christ complained, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (when as great an eclipse in regard of the light of God's countenance, was upon his Spirit as was upon the earth) yet he never more obeyed God; was never stronger supported than at

that time, for then he was *obeying to the death*. Like as we see, that when the Sun is eclipsed, though the earth wants the *light* of it, yet not the influence thereof; for the metals which are engendered in the bottom of the earth are concocted by the Sun; so as though the light of the Sun comes not to them, yet the influence and virtue of it doth, and altereth and changeth them; so doth God's favour visit men's hearts in the power, heat, and vigorous influence of his grace, when the light and comfort of it doth not, but is included.

The second light which God vouchsafeth his people ordinarily to help and eke out their faith, is the sight and comfort of their own graces, unto which so many promises belong; as of their love to his people, fear of his name, desire to obey him; so that often when the Sun is set, yet star-light appears; that is, though that other the immediate presence and evidence of his favour shines not on the soul, yet his graces therein appear, as tokens of that his love; so as the soul knows that there is a Sun still that gives light to these stars, though it sees it not; as in the night, we know that there is a Sun in another horizon, because the stars, we see, have their light from it; and we are sure that it will arise again to us.

Now a soul that hath true grace in it, and goes on to obey God, may also want light to see these his graces, and look upon his own heart as empty of all; and as they in the storm, Acts xxvii. 20, so he in temptation, may come to have neither sun-light, nor star-light; no light, as in the text. Thus (Isa. lxiii.

17.) the church there complains that God had hardened them from his fear; they were afraid, feeling their hearts so hard, that the fear of God was wanting, which yet was there, for they complain of the want of it.

But yet, thirdly, Though he want the present light of God's countenance and the sight of present grace, yet he may have a comfortable remembrance of what once before he had, still left; and so long is not utterly left in darkness. Therefore, further know, that the state of one that fears God and obeys him, may be such, as he may have no *comfortable light or remembrance of what grace, &c. formerly he had*, 2 Peter i. 9. One that hath true grace in him, only lacks the exercise of them (for, I take it, that place is to be understood of a regenerate man, because *he was purged from sin*, and is now said to lack grace, because he doth not use it); for, a man is said not to have that which he doth not use when he ought to use it, especially in things whose worth lies wholly in use and employment, for it is as good as if he had it not. Now, such a man may fall into such a blindness, that he *cannot see afar off*, and so forgets his former assurance, *that he was purged from his old sins*. Yea, it may be, calls all into question. Thus David, in Psalm xxx. 6, 7, though his heart was but even now, a little before *full of joy*, and assurance of God's favour; yet God did but *hide his face*, and all was gone: *I was troubled* (says he). He was thus blind, and could not see what was but a little past him, as it is with men in a mist.

And the reason of these two last assertions is as evident as the experience thereof; for graces in us shine but with a borrowed light, as the stars do with a light borrowed from the Sun; so that, unless God will shine secretly, and give light to thy graces, and irradiate them, thy graces will not appear to comfort thee, nor be at all a witness of God's favour to assure thee; for our spirit, that is, our graces, never witness alone; but if God's Spirit joineth not in testimony therewith, it is silent. *The Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirits*, Rom. viii. 16. Now therefore, when God hath withdrawn his testimony, then the testimony of our hearts, and of our own graces hath no force in it.

But you will say, Can a man have the exercise of grace and not know it? Fear God, &c. and not discern it?

Yes, and some graces may then be as much exercised in the heart as at any other time: he may fear God as truly, and as much as ever, and yet this fear have no light in it to discover itself to him; it may be in the heart, it may have a being and a working there, when not in thy apprehension.

The reason is, because as the influence of God's favour may be really in the heart, when the sense, sight, and light of it is withdrawn (as was said before) so the power of grace may in like manner be in the heart when the light and comfort thereof is wanting; and although it is true that every man having the power of reflecting upon his own actions, can discern what thoughts are in him, and what affections, and

can tell for the matter of them, what he thinks on, that he puts his trust, and that he is grieved, &c. ; but yet so as he may still question whether those thoughts be acts of true and unfeigned faith, and whether those affections of sorrow for sin, &c. be sanctified affections, holy, genuine, and spiritual affections ; and the reason of the difference is, because though the natural *spirit, which is in a man, knows the things of a man*, as the apostle hath it, 1 Cor. ii. 11. ; that is, his own thoughts, &c. understanding them physically, as they are acts of a man, —yet, what is the true goodness of them morally ? In discerning this, *the spirit of a man is deceitful, and cannot know it*, without the supernatural light of the Spirit of God, who as he is the giver and actor of that grace in us, *so is given of God, that we might know the things which are given us of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 8, 12. *Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright*, says the Psalmist. Grace and the exercise of it is the seed, which they continually scatter ; but light and joy is the crop that is to be reaped. The seed often lies hid for a long time, though it will come up in the end. Thus light or joy may be separated from grace, and the comfort of it from the power of it.

Secondly, Let us further consider the other phrase, and what is intimated thereby to be his condition when, as it is said, he walks in darkness.

First, To walk in darkness, implies to be in doubt whither to go. *He that walks in darkness knows not whither he goeth*, John xii. 35. And thus the soul of

one that fears God may be filled with doubts, whether God will ever be merciful to him, yea or no, and not know what God means to do with him, whether he shall go to Heaven or Hell. *Will the Lord be merciful?* Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8, 9; which speeches are spoken doubtingly, for, ver. 10, he says, *this was his infirmity*, to call this into question. So Heman, Psalm lxxxviii. 5, 6, 11, 12. He thought himself as one that was in Hell, *free among the dead*; that is, as one admitted into the company of them there; ver. 5, free of that company, as you used to say, and of the number of those whom God no more remembered; in such darkness was he, ver. 6; and to raise him out of that condition, was a thing he doubted whether God would ever do. *Will thou shew wonders to the dead? shall thy wonders be declared in the grave?* (ver. 10, 11, 12.) That is, did God ever shew mercy to one that was in the same state that they in Hell are in, which is my state now; yea, so as to be out of hope. *My hope is perished from the Lord.* Lam. iii. 18.

Secondly, Those in darkness are apt to stumble at every thing; so Isa. lix. 10.—One effect of darkness mentioned there, is to stumble at noonday. So take a soul that is left in darkness, and it will stumble at all it hears out of the word, either in conference, or at sermons; all it reads, all promises it meets with, it is more discouraged by them. Oh, think they, that there should be such glorious promises, and not belong to us!—Such an one misapplies and misinterprets all God's dealings and the Scriptures against himself, and refuseth comfort, as Psalm lxxvii. 2. Yea, and,

as at the third verse, when he *remembers God he is troubled.*

Thirdly, Darkness is exceeding terrible and full of horror. When children are in the dark, they think they see fearful sights; it is therefore called the *horror of darkness.* Gen. xv. 12. So his soul here may be filled with fears and terrors from God's wrath, and of God's being an enemy to him. Heman was almost distracted, and out of his wits with terrors; so the church thought, Lam. iii. ; yea, and concluded it for certain, that God was her enemy. *Surely, he is turned against me.* ver. 3.

CHAPTER III.

The efficient Causes of this Distress:—First, The Spirit, whether he hath any Hand therein, and how far.

HAVING thus explicated and proved this, That this doth, and may befall one who truly fears the Lord,—for the more full clearing of it, I will further shew,

First, The efficient Causes.

Secondly, The Cases wherein.

Thirdly, The Ends, for which God leaves his children in such distresses.

I. For the efficient Causes of this so woeful, desperate, dark condition of God's child, they are three which have a hand in it.

1. God's Spirit.
2. A man's own guilty and fearful heart.
3. Satan.

First, For God's Spirit.—Although he hath a hand in some part of this disquietness, yet we must take heed how we put upon him any of those doubts, desperate fears, and conclusions, whereby the child of God calls his state into question ; for the Spirit is not the direct efficient, or positive cause of them.

And to this end we may consider that known place : *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage to fear again, but the spirit of adoption* (Rom. viii. 16) ; the right understanding of which will also prevent an objection ; for some have alleged this place, as if the child of God, after he had once the Spirit sealing adoption to him, could never after fall into apprehension of bondage ; that is, into fears of eternal damnation any more, or of being bound over for Hell ; and that this can befall him but once, and that at his first conversion.

But if we mark the words well,—the apostle affirmeth not that fears of bondage can never befall God's child again ; but this scope is to shew that the spirit which we have received, having been once become the spirit of adoption, that spirit is never after again the spirit of bondage to us, nor the cause of such fears. Indeed, at first conversion, and before he did witness adoption, he then revealed our estates to us, to be an estate of bondage, which he then doth in love, to drive us out of it ; and then indeed he was a spirit of bondage ; to which he had reference, when he says

To fear again ; because he was once such to them, and such the Holy Ghost then might be, and then witness to them that their estates were damnable ; for then it was a truth, in that they had lived in an estate of bondage, whereunto damnation was immediately due ; and had they died in it, had certainly fallen upon them : but when once, by making a man a Son, he hath become the spirit of adoption to him, then if ever he should put him into such apprehensions and fears again, he should witness an untruth. Therefore, for the comfort of them and all believers, he tells them that he never crosseth nor reverseth his testimony of adoption, but his office is to be ready as a witness to seal to it ; but yet though the Judge doth not condemn any more, yet the gaoler may trouble and affright us, and our own hearts may condemn us. God may give Satan leave to cast us into prison, to clap bolts upon us again, and to become a lying spirit of bondage to us, as he became a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets ; and he may give up our hearts to be fettered with *the cords of our own sins*, and to be ensnared with its own inventions, fears, and jealousies.

For a more distinct understanding of this, to manifest how it comes to pass that all this befalls God's child, I will shew how far the Holy Ghost proceedeth in it, and puts forth his hand towards it ; and what Satan's work is, where he strikes in, and our own hearts to work further and deeper distress than the Holy Ghost by himself alone intended ; for unto these three several hands is the whole to be ascribed, and the works of God's Spirit, and his concurrence therein,

carefully to be severed from Satan's, as light from darkness at the first.

Thus far then the Spirit of God may concur in this darkness that befalls his child.

I. Privatively.—He may suspend his testimony, and the execution of his office of *witnessing adoption*; he may withdraw his comfortable presence, and *hide himself for a moment*, and conceal his love, as other fathers will sometimes do; as David did when yet his heart was towards Absalom;—he may not admit him to see his face; he may shut a son out of doors, when yet he doth not cast him off; he may retain their sins (as Christ's expression is) that is, call in the patent of his pardon which he had passed under his hand and seal in earth; that is, in their own consciences; take it out of their hands and custody, and call for it home again into the pardon office in Heaven, and there keep it; and also when Satan comes and gives in a false witness and evidence, and our own hearts thereupon likewise condemn us, the Holy Ghost may stand by, as it were silent, and say nothing to the contrary, but forbear to contradict Satan by any loud testimony, or secret rebuking him, as he doth at other times, as Zech. iii. 1, 2.

II. Positively.—He may further proceed:

1. To reveal and represent God as angry with his child, for such and such sins formerly committed, and make him sensible thereof, not barely by concealing his love, but by making impressions of his wrath upon his conscience immediately, and not by outward crosses only. Thus, Isa. lvii. 17, 18. God not only *hid*

himself and was wroth ; that is, expressed his wrath by hiding himself, but I smote him and was wroth ; and verse 16, he contended and was wroth ; that is, fought against him as an enemy, as Isa. lxiii. 10 ; and this with his wrath upon his spirit ; for it follows that the spirit was ready to fail, and the soul which he had made ; so as it was the spirit which was the white God shot at and wounded, and that so deep, that it was ready to fail and come to nothing ; which Solomon calls by way of distinction, a wounded spirit, which who can bear ! and differenceth it from all other afflictions upon the outward man, which strike the spirit but through the cloths of the body immediately ; for, says he, The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity ; that is, all such outward afflictions, wherein it suffers but by way of sympathy and compassion ; but when the spirit itself is laid bare and naked, and wounded immediately by God's wrath, which can only reach and wound, Who can bear this ? Thus towards Heman, God did not only hide his face from him (Psalm lxxxviii. 14.) but his fierce wrath went over him ; and thy terrors, says he, cut me off. verse 16. Not wounded him only, but even cut him off ; and such impressions of immediate wrath, as expressions and effects of God's anger, the Holy Ghost may make upon the spirit of his child ; for it is a truth that God is angry and wroth with them when they sin ; which anger he may make known, not only by dumb signs in outward crosses and effects, but by an immediate witnessing, and plain and express speaking so much to their consciences, and making them to feel

so much by scalding drops of his hot displeasure let fall thereon ; and as other fathers shew their anger by whipping the bodies of their children (upon this ground as says the apostle) because they are the *fathers of our flesh* (Heb. xii. 9) ; so, for the like reason may God shew his anger, and chastise his children by lashing their spirits, for he is the *Father of our spirits*, as he speaks in the same place ; and likewise our spirits, and the *very bones and marrow of them do lie open and naked to him with whom we have to do ; and his word and Spirit being quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, are able to divide, and cut even to the bones and marrow*, as the same author speaks. Yet withal, so as when he expresseth his wrath thus upon their consciences, he doth not witness that this is an eternal wrath which he hath conceived against them ; for it is but a temporary displeasure, *it is but for a moment*, as Isaiah speaks, the indignation of a father ; nor is it a wrath which revenging justice hath stirred in him, but fatherly affection ; and though the spirit tells them that God is displeased, yet never that they are accursed ; that is a false collection made out of it.

2. The Holy Ghost may proceed yet further herein, so far as to bring forth and shew him, and shake over him the rod of his eternal wrath, especially when he hath provoked Christ by presumptuous sins already, and to prevent his going on frowardly in the way of his heart ; and this both by presenting to them, and setting on all those threatenings which do hypothetically and conditionally threaten, even to believers,

eternal damnation ; such as that which we find, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye, even you believers, shall die* ; for there is a truth in all such threatenings, so conditionally propounded, which reacheth God's dearest children, under a condition, and with relation to going on in sin ; to stop and prevent him in which, when he is going on frowardly in the way of his heart, the Holy Spirit may bring home such threatenings to him with respect to such a course as he is entering into, and accordingly stir up the fear of that damnation thus threatened, if he should go on in those sins he hath begun to commit ; but to apply threatenings of eternal damnation simply to his person, as that thou shalt die eternally,—this the Holy Ghost doth not speak to the heart of a believer when he is a believer :—and again, the Holy Ghost may represent to him, and remind him of all those examples of men in whom for their going on in sin, *his soul hath had no pleasure*, and of God's dealings with them ;—how he swore against many of the Israelites, for their provocations of him, *that they should never enter into his rest* ;—how he rejected Esau for the despising of his birthright, and all with this end, to startle and awaken him ; and with this intimation, that for such and such sins, God might in like manner deal with him ; for these, and the like examples, doth the Spirit of God set before the believing Hebrews, Heb. chap. iii. and chap. xii. and the believing Corinthians, 1 Cor. x. from ver. 5. to ver. 13, to keep them in fearfulness to offend ; but to apply any such examples absolutely unto them : so as to say, Thus God intends to do with

thee, for such and such sins past, and that God will never be merciful. This the Holy Ghost doth not speak to a believer's heart.

CHAPTER IV.

How Satan and our Hearts increase this Darkness by false Conclusions from the Spirit's Work, illustrated by the like in the illumination of Temporaries. The Spirit's Work in both compared.

AND now the Spirit of God having proceeded thus far himself in causing such darkness, and terrors of conscience in them that fear him, Satan and their own hearts (unto which he may and doth often further also leave them) may take occasion from these dispensations of the Holy Ghost, which are all holy, righteous, and true, to draw forth false and fearful conclusions against themselves and their estates; and start amazing doubts and fears of their utter want of grace, and lying under the curse and threatenings of eternal wrath at the present; yea, and further, of eternal rejection for the future, and that God will never be merciful; and so lay them lower, and cast them into a further darkness and bondage than the Holy Ghost was cause of, or intended. Misinterpreting and perverting all these his righteous proceedings; as interpreting that withdrawing his light and presence, and hiding himself, to be a casting them off: thus Heman, Psalm lxxxviii. 14.

So misconstruing that temporary wrath, chastising and wounding their spirits for the present, to be no other than the impressions and earnest of God's eternal vengeance, and arguing from their being under wrath, themselves to be children of wrath, and misapplying the application of all those threatenings of eternal damnation made by the Spirit, but in relation and under a condition of such and such courses for the future, to be absolute against their persons, and to speak their present estate : because such examples of men cast off are presented to them, to shew them what advantage God might take against them ; they mistaking, think they read their own destiny laid before them in them, and conclude that God will deal so with them ; and thus as the apostle says of sin, Rom. vii. 11. That *sin taking occasion by the commandment, (he misunderstanding the scope of it when a Pharisee) it deceived him, and thereby slew him ; and yet the commandment is holy, just, and good,* ver. 12. So Satan and our hearts, by occasion of these dealings of the Spirit (which are righteous and true, as himself is, who is the spirit of truth and leads into truth) do *deceive* believers, and lay them in their apprehensions *among the slain whom God remembereth no more,* as Heman speaks. Psalm lxxxviii. 5.

And as in these, so in other works and dispensations of God's Spirit, it is ordinary for Satan and our hearts to practise the like delusions and false conclusions upon them. To instance in those more common and inferior works of the Spirit on the hearts of men, not as yet savingly regenerated,—the Spirit enlightening

them, together with impressions of joy, and a taste of sweetness in the promises of the Gospel, and of salvation revealed therein ; which under a condition of true repentance and conversion, the Spirit of God doth make the offer and tender of known unto their hearts. Thus he wrought upon the stony ground, and in the Jews by John's ministry. John v. 35. ;—which light, taste, and revelation of this conditional proffer, tending in a way unto salvation, by alluring their hearts to seek it, they often, through Satan's abuse of this good work, and the self-flattery of their own hearts, do too hastily take to be that grace which *accompanies salvation*, or which hath salvation annexed to it ; from which the apostle, by that very expression, Heb. vi. in the 9th verse, doth difference those enlightenings mentioned in ver. 4. They thus mistaking these works precursory to grace, even as the Jews mistook John, that was but sent before *to prepare the way for Christ*, to be that very *true Christ* that was to come into the world ; and misunderstanding the intention of God's most blessed Spirit in such his dealings, they make up too hasty a conclusion, not meant by the Spirit in those premises.

And I instance in these the rather, because these his dispensations of desertion, (which we have in hand) towards them already *regenerated*, and those before-mentioned *visitations* towards *such* as often *attain not to regeneration*, are in an opposite way of comparison exceeding parallel, and much alike in the dispensations themselves, as well as in the differing false conclusions which are drawn from either, and do

therefore exceedingly illustrate the one by the other ; God withdrawing himself as much in their sense from those who are in covenant with him, as he draws near unto and visits their hearts from on high, who are as yet strangers to him ; the needle of God's favour and love *varying* as much (that I may so allude) towards Hell in their compass who shall be saved, as it doth Heaven-ward in the other, many of whom arrive not thither ; for as they are brought *nigh to the kingdom of Heaven*, as Christ told him, so of true believers it may be said that their souls often draw near to ^Hell, in their own sense and apprehension, *and the pains of Hell do take hold upon them* ; and as the other are enlightened as Balaam was, so they are left *to walk in darkness* and see *no light* ; and do taste of that wrath which the law threatens, as those others taste the goodness of that salvation the Gospel offereth ; God, out of a temporary anger chastising them for a moment, as with a temporary favour he shineth upon the other. That as they *for a season rejoice in that light*, John v. 35, so God's dearest children *may be for a season in much heaviness*, as the apostle speaks, 1 Pet. i. 6, *and walk in darkness* ; and as the similitude of the dealings themselves run thus far along in a parallel line of comparison, so it holds in the false apprehensions which Satan and our hearts do make out of both, and the cause of the mistake in each is also alike ; for God's dealings with those temporary believers, being so like to those dealings towards such as receive a state of adoption from him, they thence too hastily conclude their acceptance unto life. On the contrary,

God's dealings with these temporary despairers (as I may so call them) being so like in their sense to his proceedings with those he cuts off for ever, they in like manner as hastily conclude (*I said in my haste*, says David) their eternal rejection. Only in the issue they prove unlike these desertions, tending but to the present discomfort of true believers, through their frailty; but in the other, through their own willing neglect, their enlightenings turn to their destruction.

So to conclude, We must warily sever the work of God's Spirit herein from that of Satan and our own hearts, not attributing such desperate conclusions to the Spirit. Thus that depth of *sorrow* wherewith that humbled Corinthian was well nigh *swallowed up*, (2 Cor. ii. 7.) is ascribed unto Satan, when, v. 11, it is made and termed one of *his devices*; which word doth in part refer to the Corinthian's sorrow. Thus David also imputes that his questioning, Psalm lxxvii. *Whether God would be merciful to him*, ver. 7, unto his own heart, *this is my infirmity*, says he, ver. 10; so as the blame herein is to be divided between Satan and our hearts. Of which I shall speak more particularly next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

*How our own Hearts are the Causes of this Darkness.
The Principles therein are the Causes of it.*

FIRST, that our own hearts should be the causes and producers of such distress and darkness, when the Holy Ghost thus deals with us, is all no wonder, because,

I. As we are *creatures*, there is such a weakness and infirmity in us as David speaks ; by reason of which, if God doth but hide himself and withdraw his presence (which supporteth us in comfort as in being) we are ready presently to fall into these fears of ourselves. The Psalmist saith, of all the *creatures*, *Thou hidest thy face and they are troubled* ; and this by reason of their weakness and dependence upon God ; and no less, but far greater is the dependence of the *new creature* upon God's face and presence, that it cannot be alone and bear up itself, but it *fails if God hide himself*, as Isaiah speaks, chap. lvii. Especially now in this life, during the infancy thereof, whilst it is a child, as God speaks of Ephraim, Hos. xi. 1. ;—then it cannot stand, or go alone, unless God bear it up in his arms, and teach it to go, as he speaks there, ver. i. 3. ;—and then also, as children left alone in the dark are afraid of bugbears, and they know not what, and are apt to stumble and fall, which is by reason of

their weakness, so it is with the new creature in its childhood here in this life. It was *my infirmity*, says David ;—and again, *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

There is not only such a weakness in us as we are creatures, but,

II. Also an innate darkness in our spirits, as we are sinful creatures. Since the Fall, our hearts of themselves are nothing but *darkness*; and therefore no wonder, if when God draws but the curtains, and shuts up the light from us, that our hearts should engender and conceive such horrid fears and doubts. Thus in the 2 Cor. iv. 6, the apostle compareth this native darkness of our hearts unto that *chaos* and lump of *darkness* which at the first creation *covered the face of the deep*; when he says that *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness* (he referreth to the first creation, Gen. i. 1, 2.) *hath shined into our hearts* (even of us apostles) *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* So that no longer than God continues to shine, either the *light of comfort* or of *grace*, no longer do our hearts, even of us believers, retain light in them; and if at any time he withhold *that light of comfort in his face*, when yet he continueth an influence of grace,—then, so far do our hearts presently return to their former darkness; and then doth *that vast womb of darkness* conceive, and form all those fears and doubts within itself;—considering withal, that our hearts are a *great deep* also; so deep in darkness and deceitfulness, as no plummet can fathom them; *Deceitful above all*

things, who can know it? Jer. xvii. 9. Darkness covereth not the face of this deep only, but it is darkness to the bottom,—throughout darkness. No wonder then, if, when the Spirit ceaseth to *move upon* this deep with beams of light, it cast us into such *deeps* and *darkness* as Heman (complaining) speaks of, Psalm lxxxviii. 6. ; and frameth in itself such hideous apprehensions and desperate conclusions of a man's own estate ; especially seeing,

III. There is so much strength of carnal and corrupt reason in men, ready to forge and invent strong reasons and arguments to confirm those sad fears and darkened apprehensions ; and those drawn from those dealings of God's Spirit mentioned ; for as it is said of the Gentiles, that when *their foolish hearts were darkened* ; that is, when left and given over to their own natural darkness, *they became vain in their imaginations* ; or, as the original hath it, in their reasonings, Rom. i. 21. ; and this even in those things which God hath clearly revealed in his works, to the light of nature, of which that place speaks. So may it be said even of those who have been most enlightened, that their hearts are apt to become much more vain in their reasonings about, and in the judging of their own estates before God, out of his word and dealings with them, if God once leaves them unto darkness ; and so *that great warning given to professors, gives us to understand, when they are exhorted to take heed, that in hearing the word they be not found deceiving themselves by false reasonings, James i. 22.* So the original renders it ; which is as if we should say false

reasoning themselves ; as we use to say in a like phrase of speech, befooling themselves ; and this is spoken of judging of their own estates ; concerning which, men are more apt through the distempers and prejudices of self-love, to make (to speak in *that* phrase of the apostle) false syllogisms, and to misconclude, than about any other spiritual truth whatever ; and as men that want true faith, the unsound hearers of the word, of whom the apostle there speaks, are thus apt, through carnal reason misapplying the word they hear, to frame and draw from thence, as he insinuates, multitudes of false reasons to uphold and maintain to themselves a good opinion of their estates. On the contrary, in those who have true faith, all that carnal reason, which remains in a great measure unsubdued in them, is as apt to raise and forge as strong objections against the work of faith begun, and as peremptorily to conclude against their present estates by the like misapplication of the word ; but especially by misinterpreting God's dealings towards them ; and they being sometimes led by sense and reason, whilst they walk in darkness, they are apt to interpret God's mind towards them, rather by his works and dispensations, which they see and feel than by his word, which they are to believe. This we may see in Gideon, Judges vi. ; who, because God wrought not miracles as he had formerly for his people, but had delivered them into their enemies' hands, from thence reasoneth against the message of the angel (Christ himself) who had told him, *The Lord is with thee*, ver. 12. ; but he objects, O my Lord, *If the*

Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? Where be all the miracles which our fathers told us of? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, &c. This we may also see in Asaph, or what other holy pen-man of Psalm lxxiii. His heels were well nigh tript up in the dark:—*My feet were almost gone*, says he, ver. 2; that is, from keeping his standing by faith, as the apostle speaks, Rom. v.; and this by an argument framed by carnal reason, from God's dispensation of outward prosperity to wicked men; but, on the contrary, chastening of him every morning with outward afflictions, as the opposition doth there import. And how peremptory is he in his conclusion thence deduced! *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain*, ver. 13.; and what reason hath he? *For all the day long I have been plagued*, &c. ver. 14.' He thought his reason strong and irrefragable, else he would not have been so concludent; but what would this man have said and thought if he had been in Heman's condition, or in Job's, or David's, if in those shallows of outward troubles, which are *common to man*, his faith could not find footing? but he was well-nigh carried away with the common stream and error of wicked men, to have condemned himself, and the *generation of the righteous*, ver. 15. How would his faith have been overborne, *if all God's waves and billows had gone over him?* as David complains, Psalm xlii. 7. How would he have sunk in Heman's deeps. Psalm lxxxviii. or in David's, Psalm lxix. 2. *I sink in the deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*—

Speaking of such *waters as came in unto his soul*, ver. 1, even the floods of God's immediate wrath breaking in upon his conscience, overflowing the inward man, and not the outward only. How much more peremptorily would he have concluded against himself, if this had been his condition, as indeed they, and many others of the generation of God's children have done, when they have lain under, and walked in such distresses !

And the reason of all this is as evident as the experience of it.

1. In general, Reason is of itself a busy principle, that will be prying into and making false glosses upon all God's matters, as well as our own, and trying its skill in arguing upon all his dealings with us. Thus Jeremiah would needs be reasoning with God about his dispensations towards wicked men, chap. xii. 1, 2. ; and Job, of his dealings with himself, chap. xiii. 3. ; and Reason being likewise the supreme principle in us by nature, and our highest difference as we are men. Therefore, no wonder if when we are left to ourselves to walk in darkness, we walk as men, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. i. 3. ; and, to use Solomon's words, *do lean to our own wisdom*, even because it is our own, and was brought up with us ; it is our great Abitophel, and, as David says of him, *Our guide, with whom we have taken so much sweet counsel in all our worldly and politic affairs, in which only we should make use of its advice ; but we too often take it into the sanctuary with us, and walk in company with it into the house of God*, (to allude to what David says there,

Psalm lv. 13, 14.) ; that is, we suffer it to meddle in matters that pertain to the sanctuary, and to debate and conclude of our spiritual and eternal estates, as well as of our temporal ; and, which is worse, we are opinionative of its judgment therein. *I thought*, says Asaph, in that forementioned Psalm *to know this*, ver. 16 ; that is, he thought to have comprehended and reached God's mind in those his dispensations, by the discussions of reason, and so to have concluded rightly from them ; whereas, *after he had gone into the sanctuary*, ver. 17, with faith alone, and thereby consulted with the word, he confesseth his own wisdom and best reason to have been *as ignorant* of God's meaning, and of those rules he proceedeth by, in those his dispensations towards his children, *even as a beast*, ver. 22, is of those principles which men walk by, or the intentions they have in their ways. If Reason then, when it is so utterly unskilful and mistaken in the premises, will yet be exercising and trying its faculty in reasoning from them, no wonder if the conclusions thence deduced be so wide and wild ; and yet, with Asaph, we think we know this.

But more particularly :—Carnal reason is the most desperate enemy to faith of all other principles in man ; for until faith be wrought, it is the most supreme principle ; but then faith deposeth and subjecteth it, and afterwards doth often contradict it ; yea, excludes it, as unskilful in its matters, from being of its counsel ; —and so deep and desperate is this enmity against faith, that look what is the most especial work and business of faith (which is to alter our estates before

God, put us into a state of justification, and to assure us of it) therein it shews a more peculiar enmity against faith, by opposing it in that work more than in any other. This enmity shews itself both before and after faith is wrought; and the one illustrates the other; for before faith was wrought, carnal reason shews its opposition, by using the utmost of its strength to persuade a man of the goodness of his estate, though without faith, thereby to prevent the entrance of faith and our seeking after it at all, as not needful to change our estates or to justify us, and thus would keep it wholly out; and, therefore, in the *first working of faith*, the Holy Ghost brings faith in by force of open arms, as a conqueror *casting down all those strong holds and reasonings* (as the word is, in 2 Cor. x. 4.) which Carnal Reason had been long building and fortifying, and so erecteth Faith a throne upon the ruins of them all. Thus, in like manner, after faith is thus wrought, all that carnal reason which is left unsubdued, doth, out of a further revenge of such an overthrow, and with a greater degree of enmity, oppose faith still, only it diverts the war, now mustering up new forces, and turneth all the great ordinance a quite contrary way, namely, to persuade a man, by all the objections it can raise, of the badness of his estate now, as before of the goodness of it: hereby to blaspheme the great work of faith in justifying of us;—and also because that next to justifying of us, the office and errand of Faith is to settle in our hearts peace with God, and a persuasion of our being in his favour, as in Rom. v. 1. Therefore doth Carnal

Reason bend the utmost of its power and acumen to persuade, upon all occasions, by all the most specious and seeming arguments it can start and suggest, that God is not at peace with us, nor as yet reconciled to us, merely to contradict Faith in what is the principal point it would persuade us of.

So that, as in men, whilst unregenerate Carnal Reason endeavours, by false reasonings, to preserve a good opinion of their estates in them,—in like manner the very same principle of carnal reason continuing its opposition to faith, doth as much persuade to a bad opinion of their estates when they are once regenerated.

To conclude this, if in any condition that befalls God's child, Carnal Reason hath the advantage and upper ground of Faith, it is now when it is in the *valley of the shadow of death*, as David speaks,—when *it walks in darkness and hath no light* : a condition that doth afford a most complete topic for Carnal Reason to frame objections out of. When, in respect of God's dealings with him, there is a seeming conjunction of all bad aspects threatening perdition and destruction ;—when Faith is under so great an eclipse, and is left to fight it out alone in darkness, and hath no second ;—when, on the contrary, carnal reason and our dark hearts (which are led by sense) are possessed with the sense, the deepest and most exquisite, and impressions of that which the heart is most jealous of, God's sorest wrath and displeasure, and that felt and argued, not mediately and afar off, by consequence from outward afflictions ; but immediately from God's

own hand. Thou always hast suspected, says Carnal Reason, that thou wert a child of wrath, and that thou and God were enemies; but now thou findest it put out of question, and that from God's own mouth, *who speaketh grievous things against thee*. Thou hast it also under his own hand: for lo! he *writeth bitter things against thee*; that is, in thy conscience, as Job speaks, and *holdeth thee for an enemy* (v. 24.); and whips thee with the same rod of his immediate wrath and displeasure, wherewith he lasheth those that are cut from his hand, and whom he remembereth no more, but are now in hell, as Heman speaks. A time also this is when this present sense of wrath so distempers and (to use Heman's words) distracts the mind, that it cannot listen to Faith, which speaks of nothing too, but what it sees not, even as the people of Israel could not attend to Moses's message of deliverance through the anguish of their present bondage. *Exod. vi. 9*. No wonder then if Carnal Reason be most busy, and takes this advantage to frame and suggest the strongest objections to the soul whilst it is in this distemper.

Add unto all this, that as there is such strength of corrupt reason which is thus opposite to Faith;—so there are many other principles of corrupt affections in the heart, which join and take part with carnal reason in all this its opposition against faith, and which set it to work and do back it as much in persuading God's children that their estates are nought, as in securing men unregenerate that their estates are good; and the hand of Self-Love, which bribeth and

biaseth Carnal Reason, especially in judging of our estates, is found as deep in the one as in the other ; and this doth yet give further light to this point in hand ; — for before faith is wrought, Self-Flattery (which is one branch of self-love) bribeth and setteth Carnal Reason at work to plead the goodness of their estates to men unregenerate, and causeth all such false reasons to take with them which tend to persuade them to think well of themselves ; so when once faith is wrought, jealousy, suspiciousness, and incredulity (which are other as great sprigs of pride and self-love in us as the former, which doth begin to sprout and shew themselves, when that other is lopped off, and which do grow up together with the work of faith) these do edge and sharpen the wit of Carnal Reason, to argue and wrangle against the work of faith and grace begun ; and all such objections as Carnal Reason doth find out against it, are pleasing and plausible to these corrupt principles, for they are thereby nourished and strengthened.

The reason why such jealousies, suspicions, &c. which are such contrary dispositions unto self-flattery which swayed our opinions of our estates before, should thus arise, and be started up in the heart upon the work of faith, and be apt rather to prevail now after faith, is, because in the work of humiliation (which prepares for faith) all those strong holds of Carnal Reason being demolished, which upheld self-flattery, and that false good opinion of a man's estate, and those mountainous thoughts of presumption as then laid low, a man is for ever put out of conceit

with himself as of himself. At which time also he was so thoroughly and feelingly convinced of the heinousness of sin (which before he slighted) and of the greatness and multitude of his sins, that he is apt now, instead of presuming as before, to be jealous of God, lest he might have been so provoked as never to pardon him, and is accordingly apt to draw a misinterpretation of all God's dealings with him to strengthen that conceit; and having, through the same conviction, the infinite error and deceitfulness of his heart before, in flattering him and judging his estate good, when it was most accursed, so clearly discovered and discerned, he thereby becomes exceeding jealous, and afraid of erring on that hand still, and so is apt to lend an ear to any doubt and scruple that is suggested; especially, he being made apprehensive both of that infinite danger to his eternal salvation there may be in nourishing a false opinion of the goodness of his estate, if it should prove otherwise; because such a false conceit keeps a man from saving faith; whereas to cherish the contrary error in judging his estate bad, when it is in truth good, tends but to his present discomfort; so as he thinks it safer to err on that hand than the other; and being also sensible of what transcendent concern his eternal salvation is of, which he before slighted, this rouseth suspicion (which, in all matters of great consequence and moment, is always doubting and inquisitive) and also keeps it waking, which before lay asleep. All these being now started and stirred up, do not only provoke Carnal Reason, unsatisfied to pry into all things that may seem to

argue God's disfavour, or the unsoundness of our hearts, but also do give entertainment too, and applaud all such objections as are found out, and makes up too hastily false conclusions from them.

Last of all, As there are these corrupt principles of carnal reason and suspiciousness in us, to raise and foment these doubts and fears from God's dealings towards us, so there is an abundance of guilt within us of our false dealings towards him ; and we have consciences, which remain in part defiled, which may further join with all these, and increase our fears and doubtings ; and as we are dark and weak creatures, so guilty creatures also. This guilt, like the waves of the sea, or the swellings of Jordan, do begin upon these terrible storms from God, to rise, swell, and overflow in our consciences. As in David (Psalm xxxviii.) when God's wrath was sore upon him (ver. 1, 2.) then also he complains, *Mine iniquities are gone over my head*, ver. 4.—There is much guile and falseness of heart, which, in those distempers (when our consciences do boil within us, and are stirred and heated to the bottom) doth, like the scum, come up and float aloft. Thus in David, when he was under the rod for his sin of murder, as the guilt of his sin, so *the guile of his spirit* came up, and he calls for *truth in the inward parts* (Psalm li. 6.) ; for as *his sin* (ver. 2.) so his falseness of heart *was ever before him* ; and with an eye to this, he spake that speech, *Oh, blessed is that man in whose spirit is no guile, and to whom the Lord imputeth no sin.* Psalm xxxii. Thus he spake when God had charged upon him the guilt

of his sin, and discovered to him the guile of his spirit (ver. 4, 5.); and this guile doth oftentimes so appear, that our consciences can hardly discern any thing else to be in us: it lies uppermost, and covers our graces from our view; and, like the chaff when the wheat is tossed in the fan, comes up to the top,—so in these commotions and winnowings of spirit, do our corruptions float in our consciences, whilst the graces that are in us lie covered under them out of sight; and the dark side of our hearts, as of the cloud, is turned towards us, and the light side from us. Indeed, there are in the best of us humours enough, which, if they be stirred and congregated in our consciences, may alone cast us into these burning fits of trouble and distress; so as whilst God's Spirit shall withhold from us the light of our own graces, and our own consciences represent to us the guilt and corruptions that are in our best performances, our hearts may conclude ourselves hypocrites, as Mr. Bradford, in some of his Letters, doth of himself, and others of the saints have done; yea, so as even our own consciences, which are the only principle now left in us, which should take part with and encourage faith, and witness to us (as the office of it is) the goodness of our estates, in this may join with the former corruptions against us, and bring in a false evidence, and pronounce a false judgment. Even conscience itself, which is ordained as the urine of the body to shew the estate of the whole; and, therefore, is accordingly called good or evil, as the man's estate is; this is apt in such distempers to change and turn colour, and look to a man's own view as foul as the state of a very hypocrite.

The reason of this is also as evident as is the experience of it ; even because conscience remains in part defiled in a man that is regenerate ; and though *we are sprinkled from an evil conscience* in part, yet not wholly ; so as though *our persons* are fully discharged from the guilt of our sins, *through the sprinkling of Christ's blood* before God,—yet the sprinkling of that blood upon our consciences whereby we apprehend this, is imperfect ; and the reason is, because this very sprinkling of conscience, whereby it testifies the sprinkling of Christ's blood, and our justification thereby, is but part of the sanctification of conscience, as it is a faculty whose office and duty is to testify and witness our estates ; and, therefore, as the sanctification of all other faculties is imperfect, so of conscience also herein ; and hence it is that when God's Spirit forbearth to witness with conscience the goodness of our estates, and ceaseth to embolden and encourage conscience by his presence, and the sprinkling of Christ's blood upon it against the remaining defilement,—that then our consciences are as apt to fall into fears, doubts, and self-condemnings, even as much as when he withdraws the assistance of his grace, those other faculties are to fall into any other sin ; and, therefore, as the *law of sin* in the other members may be up in arms and prevail so far as to lead us captive unto sin, so may the guilt of sin in our consciences remaining in part defiled, by the same reason prevail against us, and get the upper hand, lead us captive to fears and doubtings, and cast us into bondage.

CHAPTER VI.

The Third efficient Cause, Satan;—his special Malice in this Temptation, Commission; Access to and advantage over us in this Temptation, by reason of the Darkness in us.

THUS far our own hearts, upon the Holy Ghost's deserting, become authors unto us of this darkness.

But herein believers wrestle not alone with flesh and blood, and the darkness thereof; but do further conflict also with those *spiritual wickednesses*, the Princes of Darkness (Ephes. vi. 12.) about their interest in those *heavenly privileges* (as the phrase there used may be well interpreted) even with Satan and his angels, who the apostle compares to a *roaring lion, that seeks whom he may devour* (1 Pet. v. 8.); and like as when *God makes this natural darkness, and it is night, then the young lions creep forth, and roar after their prey*, as the Psalmist says in Psalm civ. 20, 21. So do these roaring lions now, when God hath withdrawn the light of his countenance, and night comes on, and those damps and fogs of jealousies and guilt begin to arise out of a man's own heart, then come these forth, and say, as David's enemies said in his distress, *Come, let us now take him, for God hath forsaken him*; let us now devour him, and swallow him up with sorrow and despair;—and as God says

of those enemies of his church, *I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction, Zech. i. 15*; so when God is *angry* with his child, and *but a little*, and doth hide his face but *for a moment*, yet Satan watcheth that *hour of darkness* (as Christ calls it, in Luke xxii. 53.) and joins his power of darkness to this our natural darkness, to cause if possible, *blackness of darkness*, even utter despair in us.

Now, concerning Satan's working herein, we will, as in the former, more distinctly treat thereof, by way of explication of it:—1. More generally;—2. More particularly.

1. *In general*:—First, Satan hath a special inclination, and a more peculiar malicious desire to vex and molest the saints with this sort of temptations,—of doubts and disquietness that God is not their God; so as all other his temptations unto sin are but as the laying in and barrelling up the gunpowder, and making of the train for this great plot of blowing up all. He tempteth Peter to deny his Master, *Satan desires to winnow you*; but he hath a further reach,—a design upon his faith, which Christ foresaw, and, therefore, did mainly bend his prayer against it; *but I have prayed that thy faith fail not*. Satan hoped by that gross sin, to have drawn him into despair. We may likewise observe how he did place this temptation in the forefront of those three assaults which he made upon Christ, who, as in his obedience, so in his temptations, is made a complete example unto us; for he was tempted *in all things*; that is, with all sorts of temptations, and also *like us* for the manner, *only*

without sin. Heb. iv. 15. Now he tempted him not only to vain hopes, when he shewed him the glory of the whole world, and to presumption to throw himself headlong from an unwarrantable ground; but first and primarily to jealousies and distrusts between him and his Father, and between his human nature and the divine; for when Christ had newly received that testimony from all the Three Persons, the Father proclaiming him to be his Son from Heaven;—the Spirit descending on him at his baptism (it being the special grace and institution of that ordinance to seal up adoption and regeneration) then comes Satan and tempts him to question that voice, that it might be but a delusion;—and Christ's human nature never having done any outward miracle as yet, as appears in John ii. 11, he would now have had him taken this occasion in the extremity of his hunger, by *commanding stones to become bread*, to make trial whether he was the Son of God or no, and hypostatically united to the Second Person; which, if God should not do for him, then to question his Son-ship, and think all this to be but a delusion. This was the meaning of it, *If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread, &c.*; withal insinuating, that God, leaving him even destitute of daily bread (which *parents that are evil give unto their children, and not a stone instead of bread*) might seem to occasion an *if* whether he was the Son of God or no.

The reasons of this are, 1st. Above all graces in us, he is the greatest enemy to faith; therefore (1 Thess. iii. 5.) the apostle was jealous of Satan, in nothing

more than in this, lest he had been dealing and tampering with, and perverting their faith, I sent to know of your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you; for faith in God is the greatest enemy unto Satan: *it quencheth all his darts* (Eph. vi. 16.); *by standing stedfast in which, we resist him, so that he flies from us.* 1 Peter v. 9. As therewith, faith is that work of God and the master-grace, so despair and doubting is the master-piece of Satan; and in faith he is envious, especially at the *joy of our faith*. As comfort is the most proper work of the Spirit, and most pleasing work to him, so is discomfort and distress the proper work of this evil spirit.

And again, 2d, As he is most opposite to the Holy Spirit, so he delights to blaspheme his work in our hearts to us, by persuading us that all is counterfeit.

3d. He is called that *envious one*; and the main object and mark of his envy is this:—*That God should be our God, who hath cast off him*; and therefore when he sees he cannot separate between God and us really, he will endeavour to cast and raise up jealousies that he is not our God in our apprehensions. He endeavoured to raise jealousies between God and our first parents:—*God knows you shall be as gods, &c.* As if God had forbidden them that fruit out of an envy towards them of a better condition: and the like he endeavoured between Christ's human nature and the divine, though hypostatically united.

And likewise, 4th, *That God hath given us eternal life, and that life is in his Son*;—this being that great truth of the Gospel, so as a Christian that *believes it*

not, maketh God a liar. 1 John v. 10, 11. Therefore, Satan being that great *liar*, opposeth this great truth and our faith therein, above all other. His envy at the advancement of our nature in Christ, according to that truth, is thought by some to have been his fall and ruin; so understanding that in John viii. *He abode not in the truth.* However, he doth now delight to make God a liar to us in our apprehensions, by questioning his promises, and especially, to enforce the persuasion thereof, out of God's own dealing with us, *perverting his righteous ways.*

And, secondly, As Satan hath such a desire, so God may give his child up into Satan's hand for a while, thus to afflict and terrify his spirit. His last commission over Job seemeth to extend thus far; for his life only was excepted, Job ii. 6; *He is in thy hand, only save his life*; and therefore after that leave given, we hear Job, although never brought to question his estate, yet crying, out of terror, and of the sins of his youth; for Satan then as he smote his body with boils, so buffeted his spirit; and though Satan hath a will of himself, and a desire to it, and power physical enough, and abilities to inflict this at all times, yet he must further have power moral, or leave and commission from God:—and God sometimes gives to Satan power over the sons and *daughters of Abraham*, Luke xiii., even as well as others; and as their bodies to be vexed by him, so their spirits; and as to provoke them unto sin, so much more to terrify for sin, there being more of punishment than of sin in that. Thus he left David to Satan, to provoke

him unto sin, as well as Judas. Therefore, that provocation to number the people, as it is imputed to Satan and his malice (1 Chron. xxi. 1.) so also to God and his anger, in giving leave first to Satan, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. ; and as an *evil Spirit from the Lord* troubled Saul's mind (1 Sam. xvi. 14.) so a *messenger of Satan was sent to buffet Paul's spirit*, 2 Cor. xii. ; wherein yet God doth no way help Satan with any further power, than what, as an angel, he furnished him with at his creation ; nor with any assistance or information of our secret sins against us, to enable him the more to assault us (this I find not in Scripture) but permissive power only ; which is either obtained and given at Satan's motion and request first made ; so that phrase, Luke xxii. 31, *Satan hath requested and petitioned to winnow you* ; and that also, Job ii. 3, *Thou movedst me against him*, doth imply ; and as it may seem, by singling out him and calling forth some one for this combat, as he did him more especially, to whom therefore Christ addresseth that premonition, and the Greek word implies as much ; so also Job was singled out for this duel both by God and Satan ;—or else this is done through the ordinance of excommunication and censures of the church duly administered, for gross and scandalous sins. The proper inward effect that accompanies that ordinance (which casts men out of the church) being inward affliction, and distress of conscience by Satan (which, of all afflictions, is the greatest punishment, as the apostle calls it, 2 Cor. ii. 6.) thereby to bring a man to repentance. Even as on the contrary, the special work of baptism

to such as were *fideles adulti*, and believers already, was by joy in the Holy Ghost, to seal up their adoption and regeneration unto him, as to the Eunuch, Acts viii. 39. This we may see in the excommunication of the incestuous Corinthian, whose excommunication is therefore expressed to be *a delivering him up unto Satan in the name of the Lord Jesus*, 1 Cor. v. 9; that is, he was to be cast out by a commission from Christ; which, going forth in his name, when they published it on earth, he signed it in Heaven. Upon which rightly administered doth ensue, first, That as the church doth cut them off from communion with them, so God cuts them off from communication with himself, and hides and withdraws the light of his countenance, the witness of his Spirit, and his comfortable presence; and not only so, but *delivereth them up to Satan*; that being the consequence of it (which, therefore, because it implies the former, is put to express the whole proceeding); which delivery of him unto Satan was not a giving him a commission to carry him on to more sin (though that often be indeed the effect of it in hypocrites, as in Alexander, 1 Tim. i. 19.); for the end propounded by the apostle was to *destroy the flesh*; that is, corruption and the body of sin, and that *the spirit might be saved*, ver. 5; that is, that contrary principle of grace which yet remained, but was ready to die, as in Rev. iii. 2, might be saved and kept from death and destruction; but it was to terrify and afflict his conscience, and to stir up in him the guilt of his sin with terrors for it, which God sanctifieth, to humble and to mortify the flesh; and thus,

when that Corinthian was excommunicated, did Satan accordingly deal with him; for in the next epistle, 2 Cor. ii, 7, we find him *well nigh swallowed up of sorrow*, which was Satan's doing, for, ver. 11, *We are not ignorant* (saith the apostle, in reference partly to this) *of his devices*; and thus Satan continued still to handle him, even now when he began to be truly humbled, and was a fit subject to receive forgiveness and comfort, ver. 7; when, though he feared God and obeyed him, yet he walked in darkness, till the church received him. Or else, when this ordinance is not in the case of such sins administered, then God himself (who works without an ordinance sometimes the same effects as with it) doth excommunicate men's spirits from his presence, and gives them up to Satan, by terrors, to whip them home to himself. So that God gives him leave to exercise power over both godly men and wicked men: only with this difference: Wicked men God gives up unto him, as unto their ruler and their head; they are therefore called the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, Eph. vi. 12. Who therefore *work effectually in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. Or else as captives to a prince, he taking them *captive at his will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26.; so as they are captived and *led away*, 1 Cor. xii. 2. But his own, God gives up to him but as prisoners to a gaoler; as a magistrate may do his child, to commit him, who hath not a power over his prisoner to do any thing with him, but only by appointment for a time, with a limited commission, and therefore cannot put him upon the rack, or into the dungeon, but when and how far God

pleaseth ; even as when Satan is said to have *cast them into prison*, Rev. ii. 10 ; his commission was but for ten days, and then God rebukes him.

Satan having thus obtained leave now to shew how able and powerful he is to work darkness in us, I need not much insist on. His physical and natural power to work upon our spirits, by his creation, as he is an angel, is exceeding great. We are a middle sort of creatures between them and beasts ; beasts being merely corporeal, they merely spiritual ; man between both : *He made us a little inferior to the angels*, Heb. ii. ; though but a little, yet inferior ; and in respect of that inferiority we are exposed to their working and crafty wiles. The great advantage they have hereby over us, the apostle insinuates when he says, *We have not to do with flesh and blood, but spiritual wickednesses* ; that is, with spirits, in abilities transcending the power of flesh and blood ; for flesh is used to express weakness when it is thus compared with spirit ; so Isa. xxxi. 3. Therefore, they are there also called as principalities for their authority ; so powers for their natural abilities, and that to work upon us ; for it is spoken in that relation. All which power, how great soever in him at his first creation, is now become the *power of darkness*, and so called because most powerful that way, namely, to cause and work darkness in us ; and though he can for a need *transform himself into an angel of light*, by deluding his deceived enthusiasts with false joys, yet therein he doth but act a part, it is but forced : but to shew himself an *angel of darkness*, by terrifying and affrighten-

ing weak consciences, this is natural now to him ; his power lies most in this. Therefore, his title further, is the *Ruler of Darkness* ; and also he is called *that Strong Man* ; *strong as to keep peace*, Luke xi. 21, in those he deceives with a false peace ; so to make war and commotions in us when he is cast out. We are bidden therefore to stand upon our guard, and to look that *we have on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against his wiles*. Eph. vi. 11.

Only, in the fourth place, though Satan hath ever so much power, yet the advantage and exercise of this his power to work those disquietments in us, is by reason of that sinful darkness which is in us. We may say that, as unless he had power from above, that is, from God ; so nor unless he had furtherance from beneath, even from those principles of guilt and darkness in us before-mentioned, he could not disquiet us. *Satan cometh*, saith Christ, *but hath nothing in me* ; a commission he had, and therefore came ; but he had nothing of his image, or of the guilt of any of his works, to work upon in Christ ; and therefore could affect nothing at all upon his spirit. That, therefore, which gives him privilege, scope, and matter to work thus upon us, is something within us ; there being even in the best, something which doth belong to his jurisdiction, which maketh their spirits fit subjects for his temptations to take upon. In the 6th chapter to the Ephesians, verse 12, they are called the *Rulers of the Darkness of this world* ; and Coloss. i. 12, 13, their power is called the *Power of darkness* ; so as darkness is his territories, dominion, and jurisdiction ; for it is

his work and his image, without which he could have no power at all with us : but by reason of this remaining darkness, he hath a double advantage over us.

I. An advantage of more near intimate and immediate access to our spirits to close with them, to suggest unto them, and work upon them ; and to tempt, not only as one man tempts another, by the outward senses, but by the inward also, which is an exceeding great advantage ; and though it is true that, as he is an angel, he hath naturally by creation ability thus to do,—yet as he is now a devil, and an unclean spirit, were we but perfectly holy, as in innocency, he should be debarred all such near communication to us. To this purpose it may be observed, that in that his temptation of Adam in innocency, he was not permitted in his first assault, till he had sinned, to come within him to work upon his fancy and affections indiscernibly,—but only mediately and externally, by an audible voice in the body of a serpent :—and likewise, as touching the second Adam, we read not that he had access to his inward senses and spirit, but only by an external suggestion by voice, and by visible representations, as when he shewed him the glory of the world in visible landscapes of his own making, which were represented to the eye. What else was the reason why he took the advantage of a mountain ? If it had been by working on his inward senses, any place would have served for that ; but the devil then appeared in a visible shape, and so tempted him, for he would have had him to fall down and worship him. Another time, we find him crept into one of his apostles,

to assault our Saviour by him:—*Master, spare thyself*, says he; therefore *Christ says to him, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me*. So as still Satan was kept at a distance, and could come no nearer; and that he should yet come thus near to him, made Christ also in that great temptation in the wilderness, with so much vehemency and indignation, at last say to him, *Avoid Satan*, Mat. iv. 10; as loathing the nearness of so foul a spirit; for what fellowship (that is, such thus near) should Light have with this Angel of Darkness? Nor should he have such more near and inward access to our spirits, but for that darkness in us; by reason of which he thus comes within us; and as darkness mingleth with darkness, so he with our spirits. So that as the light of grace in us begun, doth fit us for God's drawing nigh to us: so this darkness remaining in part unexpelled, exposeth us to Satan, his drawing nigh, so near as to mingle with our spirits, and, as it were, to become one spirit with us.

II. As hereby he hath this advantage of access to get within us, so this darkness in us is also as fit fuel, and as tinder to his fiery temptations, that presently enkindleth and enflameth. So as all those effects of the principles of darkness mentioned, he can both increase and augment; and so add blackness to that darkness in us; and darkness being his dominion, therefore so much darkness as is in us, so great a party he hath in us to work upon. Hence, therefore, all the effects that he worketh in unregenerate men, who are nothing but darkness, he may work in regenerate men, according to the proportion of the remainder of dark-

ness in them, to a certain degree, and for a limited season; as to delude their reason, falsely accuse, and terrify their consciences, &c. Only final despair and revenge against God, which is *that sin unto death*, this the apostle excepteth; for having occasionally mentioned that sin, 1 John v. 16, he adds, ver. 17, *That he that is born of God sinneth not*; that is, not that sin; and he subjoineth, *But keeps himself that that evil one touch him not*; that is, not with the least infusion of the venom of that sin, which is properly *his sin*, John viii. 44, and which he toucheth their spirits with, who became the Serpent's seed; and therefore all such instances as we find, that shew how he hath wrought on the spirits of carnal men by reason of their total darkness, may be alleged, to shew in a proportion what he may also work on regenerate men for a season, by reason of their darkness in part remaining. *All things happening alike to all.* Thus in general.

CHAPTER VII.

More particularly,—How Satan works upon those three Principles in us;—First, on Carnal Reason.

SEEING therefore the exercise of his power lies in that darkness which is in us, let us more particularly see how able and powerful he is to work upon those several principles of *Carnal Reason, Guilt of Conscience, Jealousies, and Fears.*

First, on Carnal Reason, om which he chiefly worketh in this sort of temptations, the strength whereof lies in false reasonings; wherein, if in any thing, he hath the advantage.

1. His abilities to forge and invent false reasonings and arguments to overthrow our faith, are (as they must needs be conceived to be) exceeding great; who for this knowledge is called in the Greek *dæimon*, as well as Satan, for his malice; and for his subtilty in outreaching us, a Serpent, who when young, outwitted our first parents. *He beguiled Eve through his subtilty*, says the apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 3, then when their reason was not depraved; but now he is grown that Old Serpent, Rev. xvii. 9; *and we are become children, apt to be tossed to and fro*, Eph. iv. 14. He hath had time enough to improve his knowledge in; a student he is of 5000 years standing, that hath lost no time; but as he is said to *accuse day and night*, Rev. xii. 10, so is able to study both *day and night*; and he hath made it his chief, if not whole study, to enable himself to tempt, and plead against us. It is his trade. Therefore, as men are called Lawyers, or Divines, from their callings, so he the Tempter and the Accuser, from his employment; and by this his long experience and observation, he hath his devices, 2 Cor. ii. 11, his set and composed machinations; his wiles, Ephes. vi. 11, his methods of temptations, which are studied and artificially moulded, and ordered; even such systems and methods of them, as tutors and professors of arts and sciences have, and do read over again and again to their auditors. The apostle calls

them darts, ver. 16; and he hath a whole shop and armory of them, ready-made and forged; which for the acuteness and subtle sophistry that is in them, are called *the depths of Satan*, Rev. ii. 24; which depths, if in any point, are most to be found in this; for he is more especially versed in this great question and dispute, Whether a man be the child of God or no? more than in any other: all other controversies he hath had to deal in but in particular ages, as occasionally they were started; but this hath been the standing controversy in all ages, since God hath had any children on earth:—with every one of whom, more or less, he hath at one time or another had solemn disputes about it; so as he knows all the advantages, windings, and turnings in this debate; all the objections, and answers, and discussions in it; and, as other controversies, the longer they are on foot, and the further they have been carried along, the more they are enlarged, improved, and grow more subtle; so must this needs also, especially in this latter knowing age of the world; and by reason also of that seeming near similitude which hypocrisy holds unto the truth and power of grace, which hath foiled and entangled this controversy. The objections and difficulties which a believer meets with in beating out a right judgment of his estate, are greater than in any controversy the world ever knew, and afford stronger knots, and require as acute distinctions to dissolve them as the school knows of; and indeed such as, did not the Holy Ghost sometimes cut, sometimes untie them for believers, by witnessing with our spirits that we are the sons of God, bare reason alone

could never determine in it. Now Satan, through long experience and observation, hath all these at his finger ends; and hath reduced them all to common places long since. He hath still observed and laid up what answers have relieved the spirits of believers in such and such a doubt cast in by him; and then studies a further reply against the next time, or for the next believer he shall have to do with.

Secondly, As he hath thus thoroughly studied this controversy, and knows all the windings and false reasonings in it; so withal, by his daily studying and considering men, he knows how best to suit, and make use of those reasonings, both to persons and seasons. It [is] the sole business of those evil spirits to study men: for this end they *go up and down the earth*; and he hath common places of men, and their several frames and temper of spirit, as well as temptations; he knows all the several ranks and classes of men in the state of grace, and according to their ranks, with what sort of temptations to encounter them; for men's *temptations are various and manifold*, 1 Peter ii. 6, even as the *gifts and operations of the Spirit are*, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5. Now he having beaten out this controversy with all sorts, knows how to lay the dispute, how to order, marshal, and apply objections, and wield his blows with most success and advantage. That as physicians, having observed the several workings of medicines upon all sorts, upon several ages and constitutions, and what several issues and effects they have had, do therefore accordingly prescribe and apply several medicines, according to the several and

differing conditions of their patients, though sick of the same disease. Thus Satan, by observation, finding the hearts of some men answering to some others, even *as face to face in the water*, as Solomon says, and withal remembering what reasonings have always taken most with such a sort or train of Christians, whose corruptions and whose graces were much alike unto those in this or that man he hath now to deal with,—accordingly he makes use and application of these reasonings again.

The tempers of men's spirits we know are divers, and so are capable of diversity of suggestions. Again, The operations of graces, as of sin, are various in those several tempers; and God's dealings with and workings upon his children, are as various as either: some he humbleth much, some are led on with comfort, some he works on with a sudden and marvellous light, as if the Sun should rise on the sudden at midnight; and on others insensibly, and by degrees, as when the dawning steals upon the day; some have had a false and a counterfeit work before, some were never enlightened until savingly; and this variety affords rise and occasion for several temptations. So as what kind of work any other Christian hath had, is apt to be made an exception to another that wants it. I was never thus humbled, says one; nor I thus comforted, says another; I had a sudden violent work indeed, which came in like a spring tide; but now the tide is fallen, and my first love abated, says a third; I had some workings and enlightenings heretofore, says a fourth, and I was deceived then, and I may be so

now also; and so he hath that vast task set him, to compare a counterfeit work with a true. Thus every several way of working lies open to several exceptions; and as we say that every calling earthly hath its several and proper temptations, so the several ways and manner of effecting this calling heavenly, have their several veins and currents of temptations:—all which Satan knows, and hath often traced; and accordingly knows how to fit them to men, and to prosecute them the most advantageous way.

So in like manner he takes the compass of every man's knowledge, notions, and apprehensions; according unto which, as our knowledge is more or less, we are also capable of several temptations. Many reasonings and objections, which, like small hail-shot, could not reach, or make any dint at all upon men of parts and knowledge, both because they, by reason of their knowledge, do soar high out of the gun-shot of them, and have also on the whole armour of God, as the apostle speaks, Eph. 6; that is to say, are in complete armour, abounding in all faith and knowledge; yet such reasonings may be fittest to level with at such as are more ignorant, and fly low, and have but some few broken pieces of that armour to defend some parts with; but, on the contrary, those other of his great shot, which he dischargeth on men of knowledge, they would quite fly over the others' heads, and not come near such smaller vessels. All in Thyatira knew not Satan's depths, nor were capable of them, Rev. ii. 24. Thus the ignorance, and the want of knowledge of the meaning of the Scriptures, and of the ways of

grace chalked forth therein, how doth Satan abuse, to the disquieting of many poor and good souls that want much knowledge, by putting false glosses upon hem! how many weak souls do stick in shallows, and are sometimes a long time terrified with gross mistakes, and like small birds are held long under with limed straws of frivolous objections, which great ones fly away with! That great apostle being a man of knowledge, was not easily taken with such chaff. *We are not ignorant of his devices*, says he, 2 Cor. ii. 11; and therefore Satan takes another course with him, and comes with downright blows, and falls a buffeting him, 2 Cor. xii. Thus doth Satan take measure of the bore (as I may so speak) of every man's understanding, and fits them with objections proportionable, of several sizes; and as the apostle, in his sermons, prepared milk for babes, but strong meat for strong men,—so doth Satan, in his temptations, apply and suit them to men's notions and apprehensions, still framing objections according to their reading.

Thirdly, He is able indiscernibly to communicate all his false reasonings, although ever so spiritual, which he doth forge and invent; and that in such a manner as to deceive us by them, and to make them alike with us.

1. He is able not only to put into the heart suggestions and solicitations unto sensual and worldly objects, such as that into Judas's heart, to betray his master for money, John xiii. 2; and to tempt married couples to separate, by incontinency, 1 Cor. vii. 5,—but also the most subtil and abstracted reasonings concerning

things spiritual, which are utterly remote from sense : he can insinuate and impart according to the measure and the capacity of men's apprehensions. Therefore we are said to wrestle with them about things heavenly, and our interest therein is often made the matter of the contention, and the subject of the question ; so that phrase, Eph. vi. 12, where it is said *We wrestle with spiritual wickednesses in heavenly*, is rather to be understood of heavenly things, than of heavenly places ; the word signifying rather super-celestial in the highest heavens ; whether, if rendered of places, the devils never came since their fall ; and it being used elsewhere for heavenly things, as Heb. viii. 5 ; and the preposition **IN** being likewise sometimes put to express the object matter about which a thing is conversant, as Matt. xi. 6 : *Blessed is he that is not offended in me* ; that is, with or about me, and for my sake. It may congruously be so here meant, as noting to us, that the price, the stake, about which we wrestle with Satan, are not things worldly, as honours, riches, and the like ; but things heavenly, which concern our souls and estates hereafter. Now the contention being about heavenly things and spiritual blessings, it cannot be transacted but by reasonings suitable ; that is, spiritual false reasonings abstracted from sense and fancy, and in this respect they are termed spiritual wickednesses ; because in such wickednesses they deal and trade in especially, or as much as in those that are sensual, as tempting to unbelief, despair, blasphemy against God ; of which sort are all those temptations we have now in hand ; and that he is able to convey

and suggest such spiritual thoughts and reasonings of what sort soever, appeareth many ways: as by injecting blasphemous thoughts against God, such as do sometimes transcend the wit and capacity of the receiver of them; and is manifest likewise by Saul's prophecying, even from the immediate dictating and suggestion of an evil spirit, as is expressly said, 1 Sam. xviii. 10. In the like manner to which, happily the Sibyls also prophecyed; but more evident it is in all those damnable heresies which have been broached in all ages; as in the primitive times among the Romans, the broachers whereof are made the emissaries of Satan, therefore Rom. xvi. 16, he having branded them unto the Romans, that taught false doctrines among them; and having instructed them against them, he gives this encouragement about them, ver. 20, *That God should tread down Satan under their feet shortly*, having respect to Satan's work in those errors mentioned ver. 16, Satan being the main author of them. Thus in the church of Thyatira, those cursed heretics who applauded themselves, and were admired by their followers for the depths and profoundness of the learning shewn in those heresies they broached, *Depths as they speak*, Rev. ii. 24; but if they call them depths, says the apostle, *I will call them Depths of Satan (Depths of Satan as they speak)* for the Devil was the master, and the author, and suggester of them; so in after-times, apostacy is ascribed to spirits of error, that is, devils, which he foretelleth *men should give heed unto*, 1 Tim. iv. 1; and *to the working of Satan*, 2 Thess. ii. 9; it was he that sharpened their wits and

pens. Now then, by the same reason, there is no reasoning about our estates, though ever so spiritual ; but he can suggest it as well as he did those depths of heresy to the broachers of them. So as Satan cannot only make those false reasonings which our own hearts forge, more specious, and probable, and suggest further confirmations of them, which are enough to add unto this darkness ; but he is also able to put in new, which himself invents, of what kind soever they be.

2. He is not simply able to suggest them, but to insinuate them in such a manner as to take with us, and deceive us ; and often to set them on with a deep impression. Therefore, in those places before mentioned, it is not simply said That there should be spirits which should suggest errors,—but to suggest them as that *men should give heed unto them*. Thus 1 Tim. iv. 1 ; and 2 Thess. ii. (where the working of those very same spirits is set forth, ver. 9.) it is not only said That they were sent as from God, to delude,—but with strong delusions ; such as should have a strength put into them to prevail ; so as that men should believe them ;—so also that lying spirit which God sent, and who persuaded Ahab by a lie in the mouths of his false prophets, commission was not simply given to him to suggest a lie, but so as it should prevail with Ahab ; so in 2 Chron. xviii. 21, *And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail* ; and as he is thus able, when God gives leave, to delude wicked men's understandings with false reasonings in matters of heresy and false doctrine, by reason of that total darkness that is in

them ; so he is able (if God give leave, as sometimes he doth) to bring strong delusions upon the minds of God's children also, through false reasonings about their own estates, by reason of that darkness which in part remains in them ; by means of which he may work the same effects for a time, and in a certain degree, in a godly man, which is done in another, as was observed. Thus the believing Galatians, especially some of them, were so far bewitched (as his word is) as for a time to assent to that great error in point of justification ; and this by reason of that folly and darkness which remaineth in them, as he intimates, when he says, *O ye foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth ?* (Gal. iii. 1.) and if in the very doctrine of Justification itself, believers were thus for a time deluded, which is rare, then much more may they, and ordinarily are they misled in the application of faith, in the believing their own personal justification, which is the point in hand.

Only this is to be added here for caution's sake, that it is true that Satan cannot enforce an act of assent to any falsehood upon the understanding of any man ;—for how then should they *all have been damned for believing that lie ?*—2 Thess. ii. 11, 12 ; which should not have been, unless it were their own sin, which is as true of all other temptations as that. Though Satan put the thought into Judas's heart (John xiii. 2) yet his own conscience owns it wholly as his own act : *I have sinned, &c.* Matt. xxvii. 4.

Neither yet doth he so immediately concur to pro-

duce such an act of assent in us as God doth when he worketh faith in us ; for then God's power and assistance in working good should be no more than Satan's in working evil.

And yet the Scripture phrases go far in ascribing unto Satan herein, when it says of those that believed not the gospel, that *the god of this world hath blinded their minds that believe not* (2 Cor. iv.) ; which notes out a superadded working of blindness unto their own natural blindness. As also, when he says that the *prince of the air is he that works effectually, &c.* (Eph. ii. 2) ; and also that of the Corinthians, whilst unregenerate, who as then are said to be *carried and led away after dumb idols* (1 Cor. xii. 2) ; all which phrases would seem to argue, not only a further power of working upon men's judgments, than when one man doth endeavour to corrupt and persuade another man in a moral way ; because he suggesteth indiscernibly, and with more frequency and importunity, holdeth the mind more to the object, and presenteth an army of confirmations at once, and is able so to marshal them as the mind can scarce resist, and puts all these upon the spirit with a violent and imperious affirmation : but further also, they would seem to imply some kind of physical working, though not immediately on the spring of the clock, yet upon the wheels and weights of it : I mean the passions in the body and the images in the fancy, though not upon the understanding immediately ; all which, what influence they have to sway the judgment and pervert it, experience shews.

Fourthly, He is further able to follow and continue

his reasonings as occasion is, and to keep up the dispute, and hold out arguments with us, and out-reason us, by putting in new replies to our answers, and so to maintain, manage, and carry along the dispute, and to come up with fresh supplies, which, in this respect, is called Wrestling. *We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers*; (Eph. vi. 12.) it being, as the bodily wrestling, transacted by reiterated assaults and attempts to overcome and get the victory; he, as it were, going about to strike up our heels, as wrestlers do; that is, to take away from under us those reasonings which supported us, by cavilling objections,—which kind of spiritual wrestlings, how often have we experience of in spiritual agonies! In the hour of temptation, believers find conflicts and bandying of disputes, rationally carried along, and pertinent objections brought in against those answers which they secretly meditate of; in which case, therefore, divines bid men not to dispute with that cunning sophister. Thus many, when death hath approached, have found that they have had their reasonings for their estates; and those evidences they have had recourse unto, taken away and confuted as fast as they have thought of them; and that Satan hath this dexterity and skill thus to manage such kind of disputes with us, is further evident in the framing of heresies, wherein he assists the contrivers of them with pertinent considerations to back and confirm their notions in their private meditations, studies, and contrivances; and indeed if Satan were not able and skilful thus to oppose and reply, these kind of temptations, which consist in dis-

putes, could not at all be managed ; for otherwise in them Satan disputed with us but as if one of us should reason with a dumb man that can hear, but his answers cannot be known, and so he knows no way what reply to make. Therefore, surely, Satan hath often some way, more or less, a guess and inkling what may be the answers of the heart again ; which, were it otherwise, the glory also which God hath, by the victory gotten over Satan in these temptations, were much obscured, and Satan's confusion less ; for the victory of our faith in these disputes, and the resistance it makes, lies chiefly in those replies which are made, whereby it quencheth all his darts ;—whereof the Devil, when he is once sensible and perceives it, he is confounded ; for then, when he is once sensible and apprehensive that he is resisted, doth he fly from us, as the apostle speaks, in James iv. 7 ; and that of his own accord, as the expression there imports, even as a foiled and disgraced soldier ; and this we may see in his carriage in those his temptations of Christ, which were managed by mutual disputes ; and wherein the foiling of Satan was by the answers out of Scripture which Christ gave ; by which being confounded, he left him, as the text says, as out of pride, ashamed that he was foiled ; so that Satan, some way or other, is able to guess at, and discerns the replies in our hearts to his objections, as well as to make and cast in adverse arguments.

CHAPTER VIII.

That Satan is able to work upon that other corrupt Principle in us, Guilt of Conscience.—How many ways Satan is able to know matter by us to object against us ; as also to set it on, and work upon the Guilt and Erroneousness of the Conscience.

THUS we see how able Satan is to join with and assist Carnal Reason in us against ourselves. We will now further consider what power and working he may exercise upon that other principle in us, our consciences ; in joining with the filth and defilement thereof, in accusing us and laying particulars to our charge ; in which consisteth the greatest of his strength, even in an army of accusations of us to ourselves, which, in this warfare, he musters up against us. This sort of temptation we have in hand consists either of false majors or false minors ; which are like the two wings of an army. His false majors, they are such as misapprehensions of the ways and of the work of grace, or misunderstanding of sayings of Scripture, &c. which, by reason of that darkness of ignorance that is in us, he puts upon us wrested and perverted. As that to relapse into the same sin again and again, is not compatible with grace, and many the like ; for the opinions whereby some do measure what strictness is essential to the being in the state of grace, are often

too severe and rigid; as in others too loose. The measure of some is too scant, not giving allowance to failings; as of others too large, taking in such gross corruptions, and the constant practice of them, as cannot stand with grace; and Satan deceives with both. As the one sort of profane men, to flatter themselves to be in a good condition when they are not, so the other of weak and tender consciences, that they are not in a good estate when they are; and in like manner places of Scripture misunderstood, do oft prove matter of great temptation to many, as that in Heb. vi. unto one, who having fallen from his first love, concluded he could never be saved, because it is there said, *That they which are once enlightened, if they fall away, it is impossible they should be renewed to repentance*; whereas it is only to be understood of a revengeful total apostacy. Thus as Elymas perverted the right ways of the Lord, so doth Satan also. Elymas being therefore there called Child of the Devil, because he did the work of his father therein. Now all such false reasonings as are founded upon such mistakes of the things, and of the rule itself whereby we should judge of our estates, false majors do properly belong to the former head of Carnal Reason; but he hath another wing of forces to join to these, and they are false accusations of a man to himself, from the guilt of his own heart and ways, misconceits of a man's self, and misapplications to a man's self; another sort of arguments, wherein the minors are false. So as although a man be full of knowledge, and through the light thereof hath a right judgment

both of the Scriptures and of the ways and work of grace by which men's estates are to be judged, and so therein Satan cannot be too hard for him with all his sophistry, yet, by misrepresenting a man to himself, and by perverting his own ways to him, making *that which is straight seem crooked*, and all in him to be hypocrisy, a man is brought to pass a false sentence upon himself. So, as if this subtile pleader cannot deceive the judge (as I may so speak) with false rules and mistakes in the law itself, then he endeavours it by misrepresenting the case of the party, and puts in a false bill of accusation, so ordered and coloured, as to procure a judgment against him ; laying before the eyes of men's consciences their bye-ends, deadness, and hardness of heart, and falseness in such and such turnings of their lives, excepting against what is good in them ; aggravating what is evil, and all to enforce from thence a false conclusion. To instance in some one false reasoning of this latter sort, Satan often argueth and chargeth the conscience of one distressed, in this or the like manner :—

Those in whom any sin reigneth, or in whose hearts hypocrisy and self-love is the predominant principle, are not in the state of grace.

But such an one art thou, &c.—For the proof of which minor, he musters up and sets in order in the view of conscience, a multitude of instances of sins committed thus heinously, thus oft ; of duties omitted, and if performed, yet with such and such pride of heart, self-aims, &c. in which sort of reasoning, the major and first proposition is true ; but the minor, the

assumption *such an one art thou* ; that is, most false ; and although there be a truth in the instances alleged to prove it, that such sins have been committed, and that in performance of duties such particular by-ends, &c. do arise, and are found in the heart, yet not in that manner as he would lay the charge, not as reigning, not as the swaying and prevailing principle in a man's whole course. That hypocrisy is there, cannot be denied ; but that hypocrisy rules there, and is predominant, and that nothing but hypocrisy ; that is it is false ; which yet Satan amazeth the conscience with, to bring forth this conclusion out of all, Therefore thou art an hypocrite :—which conclusion likewise, how able he is to set on with terrors and affrightments, we shall shew anon. That which we have now in hand, is to shew how able he is for those kind of false reasonings, the deceit of which lies chiefly in the assumption and minor proposition ; that is, in misapplication to a man's self, in which he hath principally to deal with conscience ; for the guilt of a man's particular ways, actions, and corruptions, the seat whereof is the conscience, is made the matter of the evidence, and the proofs of those minors ; and the defilement and erroneousness of the conscience is that principle in us which he works upon when he enforceth such a misapprehension from those evidences.

Wherein by the way we may take notice of a difference between the Holy Ghost's dealing with a believer, when at any time he comes with the word, and searcheth and tries his heart, and discovers corruptions to us, viz. such a searching as David prayed for :—

Examine me, O Lord, and try my heart, &c. Psalm xxvi. 23. Psalm cxxxix. 23; convincing and reprov- ing us, and that sometimes with some sharpness, for our bye-ends, hypocrisies, &c.; when also he *opens the ear, and shews wherein we have exceeded*, as Elihu speaks; and between these other siftings and winnow- ings of Satan, as Christ's phrase is, Luke xxii. 31; the difference is, That the Holy Ghost dealeth sweetly herein; but as a father that rebukes and convinceth his child of his misdemeanours, but without putting in any such sting in the conclusion, that therefore we are hypocrites; nor to any such meaning, or purpose thence inferred, that therefore sin reigns in us, &c.; but in 'these of Satan, that is, the issue he mainly drives all to, and it is made the foot, the burthen of all those his accusations, and is as the scope and argu- ment that runs through the whole of that his charge against us.

And in respect to this his misrepresenting our estates and false aggravations of our sins unto us, he is called as the Tempter, which is in a general relation to all sorts of temptations; so the accuser, Rev. xii. 20, or impleader against us; and as the accuser of us to God, in God's court, and before his tribunal (for to accuse in a court the word may seem to import) so in the court of our own consciences; and as he tempts us unto sin, so also for sin and by sin; that is, the guilt of it, to draw us to despair. He that accused Job unto God, would surely accuse Job unto himself much more.

And though it may be truly affirmed that neither

Satan nor our own consciences can ever aggravate unto us too much the intrinsical sinfulness, the heinousness, and vileness of our sins in their due and proper colours, and true aggravations of them, which we can never come to see enough, as not to hate nor loth, and mourn for as we ought, yet Satan and our own consciences may, in the representation of our sins, put such false apprehensions and such aggravations upon them, as may make us apprehend too much about them; as when it is suggested that they are such as are not compatible with the state of grace; or that they are utterly unpardonable; he may likewise use them as inductions to prove a false conclusion; and also, although our sins if truly can never be enough represented, if it be in order to drive a man more to God's free grace and unto Christ,—yet, to present them singly, and alone, and to hold the mind and intention of it so to them as to cause us to *forget our own mercies*, and in such a manner as thereby God's mercies and all comforts are hidden and concealed from us; this is that which is Satan's practice, and is the cause of this deep bondage we thus here speak of.

And in this respect that name, The Accuser, is given this evil spirit in a direct and full opposition to that special name and office of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter or Pleader for us; because as the *Holy Ghost maketh intercession* in our own hearts *unto God for us*, and upon true repentance helpeth us to make apologies for ourselves, as the word is, 2 Cor. vii. 11; and comforteth us by discovering *our graces given us of God*, as 1 Cor. ii. 12, and by pleading our evi-

dences, and witnessing with our spirits that we are the sons of God, so, on the contrary, Satan is an Accuser, by laying to our charge the guilt of our sins, by impleading our evidences, misrepresenting our estates, thereby to deject us, and *swallow us up with sorrow*, as 2 Cor. ii. 7; and further, because in these accusations his scope is to misrepresent our estates to us, and falsely to disquiet us, therefore he is yet more especially called a Slanderer as one that falsely and lyingly calumniateth and slandereth all our graces,—all God's dealings towards us,—all our dealings towards him, slandering our persons, our estates to us, charging us to be hypocrites, unsound, carnal, and counterfeit Christians, still misconstruing all unto the worst;—which false calumnies and charges of his, I take most properly to be those darts mentioned in Ephes. vi. 11, which are there said more especially to oppose our faith, and therefore faith is there said to quench them. From which trade of his forging darts of calumnies, he hath his name a Slanderer, from a Metaphor it is, from casting darts; for the slanderous calumnies of the tongue *are as a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*, as Solomon speaks; *their teeth spears and arrows*;—and such are these kind of Satan's temptations and accusations against us, even as darts and arrows that wound and pierce, and run through the passions and affections that strike the soul through and through with fears. His name, the Tempter, is from the Greek, to *pierce*; because such are his darts, so sharpened, and flung with that force, as they are fitted to pierce, and enabled to run through; and be-

sides the sharpness of the darts themselves, they are said to be fiery, as making double way for themselves; for a piece of iron, though blunt, yet if fired red hot, it runs through without resistance.

Satan, he is that great general of the whole powers of darkness in us; and therefore even the forces of the guilt of sin (the proper seat of which is the conscience) he hath some command over, as well as of the power of sin in other members; and therefore as he can muster up and set on fleshly lusts which fight against the soul, and provoke and back them in their assaults upon us,—so he can clap on the chains of guilt and bondage upon our consciences.

And as he can stir up that guilt that is in us, so also work upon that injudiciousness and erroneous defilement that is in the conscience, to judge of a man's own estate, this Satan works upon and abuseth; for as he hath a power to work upon the corruption in the rest of the faculties, so also over the defilement and pollution of the conscience, misleading it in its verdict of our estates, as cunning pleaders do a silly jury. The wards of conscience are of themselves loose, and naturally misplaced, but he with his false keys wrings and perverts them much more; it naturally gives an uncertain sound, but he by his false alarms and panic fears cast in, doth much more confound the testimony of it; and how easy is it to trouble a soul disquieted already, and to work upon jealousies which are raised! We see how far a cunning man can insinuate with jealous natures, to increase suspicions and surmises. When an humour is stirred, how easily it

is wrought on! and thus often when the Spirit hath already read us a sharp lecture, and examined our consciences, then Satan he strikes in, and descants upon it all to deeper terrors and distress.

But the more full and distinct explication of Satan's work of accusation of us herein, requires a further search and inquiry, and a larger demonstration how Satan should come, and how far, to know matter by us thus to accuse us of? For if he doth accuse, he must, as he said (Acts xxviii.) *Have aught against us whereof to accuse*, else it were in vain; and there is this difference between these kind of temptations wherein we are exercised about the guilt of sin, and those other unto sin. That the object matter of other temptations is what is without ourselves; but in these, that which is in us and from us, and hath been committed by us, is made matter of objection against, and disquietment unto us. *That which is from within the man, disquiets the man.*

But ere I enter upon this inquiry, I must premise a general caution, to set limits to our discourse therein.

And the caution is this, that we are to reserve and maintain this, both as an undoubted truth, and as God's sole and royal prerogative—that he can alone both search and know the heart and conscience. As in like manner—that he can only by his wrath immediately make those deep and killing wounds and gashes with which men's souls are often here and hereafter eternally wounded; of which, by way of caution,—also in the next chapter:—which two glorious and incommunicable attributes of his, that *elogium of the*

word of God, Heb. iv. 12, 13, seems fully to hold forth unto us ; where, as at the gate of Paradise was set a cherubim with a flaming sword, to keep our fallen parents from ever entering in again, so there Christ is represented as that Supreme Judge with whom, as at the 13th verse *we are eternally to have to do* ; or as the original is, Rom. xiv. 12, and elsewhere taken ; and he there stands with that dreadful sword of his word ready drawn and brandished,—that word by which he will judge men at the latter day, John xii. 48 ; and which therefore is called (ver. 12.) *a Judge of the thoughts, &c.* ; and this to the end that, by the awful terror thereof, he might compel and drive those that hear the Gospel *to enter into that rest* to which he had exhorted (ver. 11.) which is set open by him for men now fallen to come into ; which sword, as it hath a double edge, as there, so in his hand (who alone can wield it) it serves to a double use. That whereas in a judge two things are requisite to the complete performance of his office :—1. Skill and knowledge to find out and examine the fact.—2. Power to execute and torture the malefactor when found guilty. He shews how both these do transcendently and solely meet in him, by relating what power is found to be in his word, which is the ensign of his justice, and instrument of his power in judging ; which is said to be a *discerner of the thoughts*, and a sword that pierceth and woundeth the soul and spirit with unutterable anguish :—which wounding power of the word is distinctly set forth (as some) from the beginning of the 12th verse to those last words, *and is a*

discerner of the thoughts, from whence to the end of the 13th verse that other, the searching and all-judging property of God, and his word is laid forth to us ; but rather, as I conceive the apostle, in one continued metaphor, carries along the expression of both, throughout the whole, though more eminently ; the one in that former part of the words, and the other in the latter ; yet so as both are alike made the royalty of God ; which is the thing we have in hand. Neither needs it stumble any that this is there attributed only to the word of God, of which, he only seems to speak ; for that is all one, and to ascribe it unto God ; for as *where the word of a king is, there is power*, says Solomon, Eccles. viii. 4 ; so, where the word of God is, there is the power of God, and so is it here to be understood ; and therefore, as in other Scriptures, his word is said to create, and *by it the Heavens to be established, &c.* and also, Gal. iii. 8, in the like phrase of speech, the Scripture is said to foresee ; that is, God foresaw, who writ the Scripture ; so also here, to know and wound the heart ;—which to be the apostle's express intention here, appears by the connexion of the 12th and 13th verses. For whereas, ver. 12, he begins with attributing this power unto the word ; yet in the end he closeth his speech with transferring all that was said thereof upon God himself, ver. 13, *with whom we have to do.*

To open the words a little more largely, so as to clear this assertion out of them, which it is necessary to premise. The words are, *For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged*

sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

And first, of that sole searching power of the soul in this chapter; and of that other, the sole wounding power of the conscience, in the next chapter we shall have the like occasion to premise.

For the present, that searching, examining, and judging power of the word now in hand, he expresseth by an illusion to the anatomy of bodies; which then, though not so frequently as now, was yet in use; or else to the cutting up of the sacrifices, whether those of the Jews, or as it was used among the heathen, especially by the soothsayers, who curiously searched into every inward part, as we find in the prophet, Ezekiel xxi. 21; and his similitude stands then, that look what the entrails are to a sharp sword, or sacrificer's knife, or the like instruments of anatomy in a strong and skilful hand; such are all the most inward and secret parts of the heart, even those which are most difficult to be divided, unto this sword in God's hand, when he is pleased to use it to search the heart and reins, and to discover and bring forth to judgment the secrets thereof. He can use this sword, not only to unrip and strip off the outward clothes of outward and formal actions, and so present the soul naked, as his expression is, ver. 13; nor only to flay off all the skin, to excoriate, and so to see what lies under it, as

the next word there, which is translated *opened*, doth sometimes signify; but further to cleave and cut up to the back-bone, for even so deep doth the signification of that word reach, that so all the inwards may appear, and this so curiously divided and laid asunder, as to see and view apart what is in each. *It pierceth to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.* By which grace and corruption are not so properly here to be understood; for then he would have rather said flesh and spirit: and besides, the persons he speaks this of are principally those who shall be found secret unbelievers, who have not spirit in that sense at all in them; but they are here used to express those two main powers of the heart. The soul, that is the inferior part, that more sensual part, wherein the affections are (as 1 Thess. v. 20, it is also used) which it divides by discovering how close and inordinately all those affections cleave to sin; and then, 2nd, Of the Spirit; that is the superior part of the understanding conscience, &c., which it rips up, by discovering how these plot and contrive the accomplishment of sin; dividing; that is, discovering apart, with difference, how things are carried severally in each; and withal, what correspondency and intercourse there is between these; how sin and all our actions pass through them from the one to the other, even as blood and spirits do through the veins and arteries, in all the parts from each to other; and, as in the body, there are several regions (as anatomists call them) divided by partitions; the vital parts in the upper loft next the neck, in which are lodged the heart and lungs;—the natural parts in

that lower, and these divided by the midriff, as by a floor between them ;—so in the soul (to which perhaps Solomon alludes, when, Prov. xix. 27, he calls the several powers of it the chambers of the belly, as some read it) there is the sensual part of the affections. The soul, &c. which is, as it were, in a distinct room from that more sublime and spiritual part, the spirit ; and as the spirit of man ; that is, the conscience and understanding of a man, *searcheth all those chambers*, as it is there ; that is, *knows what is in man*, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. ii. 11 ; which yet when it doth so, it is not by an innate light, but with God's candle, as Solomon's expression there is ; that is, by the word and the light thereof set up by him in it ; so here, the word, under another similitude, namely, of a sword, is said to cut up, and to discover all within those several regions ; and in the spirit, it is said to discover what can be imagined most retired and withdrawn, and so locked up as no eye could find it out, which he expresseth by mentioning such parts as are most inwardly seated of all other ; the marrow, which we know is enclosed within the bones ; and the joints, or ligaments, by which the joints are knit, and move ; these it bares and discovers also ;—both which he interprets in the next words : and is a *discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart* ; which are a more plain interpretation of what he had expressed by those two metaphors. The utmost intention and end in all our actions, that is, as the marrow, because as the marrow gives moisture to the bones,—so by these our ends, all our purposes and resolutions, by which

we are supported in all our actions, are strengthened and confirmed; and then our devising thoughts or plottings, our contrivements and machinations, those by which we artificially do connect, and hang together many joints of means, to accomplish and bring to pass our intentions (which thoughts of all other we strive to hide and conceal) these are the joints, or (as the word rather implies) as the ligaments, and the sinews, and the tendons, by which the joints do move; so these are they upon which our designs do move and turn. Even all those plotting thoughts, the word, it discovers and cuts up, and also judgeth, and examineth and passeth sentence upon them; yea, and that so exactly, as not the smallest fault can pass uncensured by it: it is a curious critic in this review, it judgeth exactly as critics use to do;—so as by this anatomy which the word makes, all things in man, every creature, even the least fibre, the smallest string in the heart which would escape the sight of the most exact anatomist, are all *naked*, and *opened*, and cut up *before the eyes of him with whom we have to do*.

The reasons why God hath reserved this to himself, are, I. It was for the glory of God that he should have one private cabinet among the creatures, which he alone should know and keep the key of, which might argue his Omniscience; as also one place to be sanctified in, whither no creature's eye could pierce; that so the greatness of his glory might appear, namely, in this, that he is not worshipped outwardly only, as great ones are, but inwardly *in spirit and truth*; and that his glory is such as commands

the inward parts, which no eye seeth but his own, so as a man will respect God so much as to sanctify him in secret when no creature looks upon him.

II. That God alone might be the Judge and Rewarder of men's ways, and so looked at by them, to whom alone men must give an account; which would draw the creature's eye alone upon him, when the strength and first-born of all our actions are his subjects alone, and do come under his eye and view. Therefore it is said that he *rewards men according to their works, whose hearts he knows*. It was fit that he only should take upon him to reward, who only could know the principles of all actions, in which the chief of the good or evil in the action lies. This is the great glory of God and Christ at the day of judgment, that *they will discover the secrets of all hearts*, 1 Cor. iv. 5. It is not said so much of men's actions that they shall be then discovered, as that the secrets of their hearts will; for therein lies God's glory, which he will not give to any other.

This premised, as a most necessary caution, I come to the disquisition of that query mentioned,—How, and how far Satan may come to know so much matter against us whereof to accuse us?

First, In general, it may be considered,

1. That he knows what ends, intentions, thoughts, and lusts, such corrupt hearts as ours usually produce, and bring forth in all men; and therefore can imagine what bye-ends, &c. may be stirring in such and such actions, and so lay them to our charge; and so often hit right therein, and speak a man's heart thus at

random ; for our natures are apt to bring forth all concupiscence, as the apostle says, Rom. vii. Therefore, if there were no more than that he knows all temptations common to man's nature, he might go far in accusing every man ; he having keys of all sorts, sorted to all men's spirits, tries with every one which will enter ; and as David's elder brother charged David, when he came into the wars, *This is the pride and the naughtiness of thy heart*, guessing at his bye-ends in it ; so doth Satan : he often in like manner charges us by guess. Thus he did Job :—*Doth Job serve God for nought ?* he knew such bye-ends were in some men's hearts, and so ventures to lay them to Job's charge also.

2. Though he should know very little of us, yet he may from some one particular which he doth know or suspect, cast in a suspicious thought about a man's estate, and so set the jealous heart to work itself, to search out more matter against itself ;—as in case of treason, the least hint given by some one, sets the State to work to examine the bottom of the business, and so to get all out. So as Satan often gives, and casts in but a scruple, which proves as a theme for the heart itself to dilate upon, and the conscience upon enquiry finds matter against itself to prove and increase that surmise. Thus in general.

But he may more particularly know much against us to accuse us of, and so frame bills against us out of what he knows ; and this first, supposing he had no access to our inward parts, and that he had no further way of knowing of us than men have one with

another, it being made the limits of man's knowledge by God to Samuel, to judge by outward appearance; yet all those advantages which men have to know one another by, he hath over us, more than any other man can have, and all more eminently.

For those spirits can discern all corporeal actions, though not of all men at once (for then why should Satan travel up and down the earth to review all in it?) yet in that distance is proportioned unto them; they understand not only by innate inbred species, but some things *per species acceptas à rebus*. They learn daily. Thus by the church the good angels are said to learn what they never knew before of the *mysteries of the Gospel*, Eph. iii. 10; and though these species in them, and their manner of knowing corporeal things differs from ours, yet they are analogical with ours, and we no more know the manner how they should receive the images of all things done by bodily substances, than a blind man can imagine how men that see should receive in colours; yet this we may be sure of, that all that the senses or mind of man can know, that they can also; for natural things are all *debita objecta*, due objects made for them; for they were therefore made to be discerned by intelligent creatures; and if by any, then by the most supreme and intellectual natures.

They make it their business to study men; it is their trade to go up and down and consider men;—*Hast thou not considered*, says God to Satan, *my servant Job?* Satan useth to consider and study men; and, as the apostle exhorts to *consider one another*, to

provoke to love,—so Satan considers men to provoke to sin, and to tempt for sin unto despair.

III. He may be privy to our vocal confessions of sins to God or men,—unto our laying open our own hearts to God in private prayers, or to others in trouble of conscience ; therefore, so much of the heart as is this way discovered, he can and doth know ; and why may not God permit him, and give him the liberty and advantage to accuse us, even of that which he comes to know by this means,—it being for the trial of his servants, especially in case they have returned again to those sins which they confessed, and yet have not forsaken ? It is just that then, as the guilt of former sins returns on us in such a case, so that Satan should be permitted afresh to charge us with them ; and that in this case a man should lose the privilege of the secrecy and seal of confession, as I may so speak ; and if God may permit a man to whom we have confessed, according to God's own ordinance, yet to tell things confessed, and to cast them in our teeth, as sometimes it hath fallen out, why may not Satan, the accuser of the brethren, sometimes be permitted to lay that to our charge, which he only knew this way ?

IV. He is and can be present at all our more retired actions, and is privy to them, being with us at bed, board, and in all companies. By means of this he can accuse us,—

1st. Of all gross actions done that are obvious to sense ; which indeed are usually the greatest matter of accusation, and do lie upon us most heavily in such

temptations, as David's murder and adultery did on him. *My sin*, says he, *is ever before me*. These having pulled a man down, put him into prison, and clapped him up, our own consciences then may come in, with all our more privy corruptions, as lesser creditors used to do; and when once the soul hath by means of the accusing of one foul act, given way to doubting, then all other privy corruptions join and offer themselves to accuse us also;—for *they lie at the door*, (as God told Cain) ready for such an occasion.

2. Also, he may by this be able to accuse us of all deadness, drowsiness, and neglect in the performance of holy duties; as want of attention and quickness in them (for these are easily discerned by any one that is observant) and of the want of stirring affections, and also of neglect of holy conference in all companies, and the like. If a godly man were to follow a man up and down in all companies, how much might he know of a man, and be able to accuse him of!

3. By such observations he may know a man's bosom sins; so he knew and observed Judas's bosom sin to be covetousness; and accordingly sorted his temptation to it.

V. By what he sees outwardly of our actions, he can many ways guess at inward corruptions, which are the principles of them. He hath all the ways which a wise discerning man hath (who should always watch a man, set himself to study a man, and that hath opportunity to suggest when he pleaseth, on purpose for trial and discovery); all the ways such a man hath to know the heart Satan hath; and that

which Solomon says of a wise man, That though the heart of man be deep, yet a man of understanding will fetch it out, holds true of Satan much more. As, 1. By comparing one action with another, or one speech with another, so wise men guess at men's ends in things, and their respects that move them.— 2. By gestures. By a cast of a man's countenance and behaviour, men are often discerned ;—by the like may Satan see into us. Thus Joab discerned David's pride in his command for numbering the people, so as it was loathsome in his eyes ; and if Joab discerned this by the outward carriage of the matter, how much more might Satan, that put in the motives to persuade him to it ! The Jesuits bid those of their followers, who are to deal with men, when they talk with any whose minds they would discern, still to observe their eye, to see what alterations are in their countenances, as through which the mind is transparent. Now Satan is a good physiognomist, and he eyes a man. 3. Further : He himself suggesting many motives, and reasons in businesses this way and that way, casting in many bye-ends and motives to be considered by us, he observes how the heart comes off at such and such suggestions, or where it stuck, and what suggestion it was that turned a man this way or that way, and fetched him off. The Jews might see what moved Pilate to crucify Christ ; because at that saying, as the text notes, *that else he was an enemy to Cæsar*, he gave sentence ; so Satan, when he stirred up David by proud arguments to number the people, he must needs know what pride was in his heart.

VI. Besides all this, how far he may have an insight into the fancy and the images therein, which follow and imitate the inward thoughts of the mind, as the shadow doth the body; and also into the passions, which are but the flowing and the reflowing of corporeal spirits, and in which the affections of the will discover themselves,—this I leave to others to determine. For the present this is certain,—that though all the powers of the reasonable soul be fast locked up from him (as we shall shew) and the immediate acts which are imminent in the soul itself, utterly hidden from him; and that, take the soul as it is the immediate subject and root of them, so, intuitive, no devil can discern them, no more than one angel can discern the thoughts of another; yet argumentative, and as they do transpire and appear, and are put forth in the body and corporeal organs outwardly in actions, or inwardly in the images of the fancy or the passions, and so (*quasi in alio*) and mediately they may be very far discerned, and looked into by angels; which yet will nothing at all prejudice that prerogative which is given to God, when he is said alone to know and search the heart, but give its full allowance; nor that privilege which is given to the soul itself to enjoy; namely, that *none should know the things of a man, but the Spirit that is in man*; as we shall have occasion to shew in the Appendix to this discourse.

Besides, therefore, these advantages and ways of knowledge, somewhat common to us men, each of other, they have a further and more near way of knowing the acts of the reasonable powers, the un-

derstanding and will, than we men can have, even as they have also a way of communicating their thoughts to us in a more intimate, close, secret manner; yet still such as fall short of an intuitive knowledge of them, they can go into a room further than we,—and into a room which is next the privy chamber, which yet remains fast locked up unto them. As their power in all other things reacheth a degree higher than ours, so in this also. To open this a little:—

Those reasonable powers and faculties in us, the understanding and the will, the immediate imminent acts of which are thus in themselves fast locked up, being yet in this life drenched in the body and bodily organs, upon which their working doth depend. As, 1. The understanding is joined to the fancy, which makes resemblances and shadows of those thoughts which the mind secretly conceives and forms, so that scarce any thoughts do stir but the fancy imitates them, and acts on them as far as it is able;—and, 2. The will also is conjoined with the affections which are drenched, and shew themselves in bodily organs and spirits, so as not any motion of the will puts itself forth, but more or less some affections of the body do stir with it; and, therefore, affections are as well defined by their motion in the body as by their seat in the will itself. As when anger is defined “a boiling of blood about the heart;” and affections are but the flowings and reflowings of spirits to and from the heart.

Now both these, being phantasms and passions, all divines do grant that the devils may know; and that

to know them they have a nearer access to us than men can have to each other; yea, and that they may discern them intuitive, as we do things which are present before us, how else should they work upon fancy? and otherwise, there were no diabolical dreams, nor angelic neither, caused by good angels; but we find that a good angel dictated to Joseph a great article of faith (Christ's divinity and nativity); it was done in a dream, and therefore to his fancy; so they inspired the Sybils and dictated prophecies, as was said; and so the evil angels prompted Saul's fancy. This they do, not by creating new species and images, but by calling forth the images there already; for the images of things in the fancy being corporeal species, they can no more beget a new corporeal image than they can make a body new; and, therefore, all the power of the angels cannot cause a blind man to dream of colours.

Therefore their only way in communicating their suggestions to us herein, must be by discerning the species; to wit, of all words heard or read, that lie in the fancy already; and so by ordering and composing them, even as a compositor in printing doth arrange the letters that lie confused before him, into words and sentences, to represent to the reader's eye what he would have read by him,—so he to the understanding, which doth naturally print and take the impression off from the fancy of whatever is in it, as fast as he doth set them; and by the like reason, that he can call these phantasms forth, and so view the species and images laid up there already, to set them thus as he pleaseth; by

the same reason it must be supposed, that he is as able to discern any of them in the fancy at any time, as when reason itself calls up any of them, and maketh use of them, as it doth whenever it sets itself to think or muse; and these, and all other operations of the sensitive powers, they may view and see as truly, for aught I know, and as intuitively even as we see the colours and species of things in the eye of a man; so that these evil angels may, when God permits, get into the head, and see all the images and species in the fancy, and those that are in direct conjunction with the understanding, which it is then thinking and musing on, even as a man doth what images are in the apple of the eye of another man; and so by discerning those phantasms which the understanding actually then vieweth and maketh use of, he may then judge what the mind is musing upon.

Again:—As we discern men's passions when they dye and affect the outward parts, as if shame dyes the face red, or fear paints it white,—so may the angels more secretly discern the motion of them within us, which is the cause of this alteration without; they can go farther than we men can, they can see the inward commotion of the spirits in our inward parts, even in their channels and springs, as in that bodily heart we carry within us, and in the veins and arteries, and so know what affections are stirring: and this is evident by this,—in that they are able to work upon the passions also. Now their power of working upon these affections ariseth from their knowing them, and skill to move and stir those spirits and humours effectively,

wherein these passions are seated; and herein their power of discerning us exceeds that in us men in discerning other men, as that of communicating their minds to us also doth; for as they can communicate secretly by fancy itself,—we but by outward words and signs to the outward senses of others, so they can discern more secretly what is in the fancy, and not only what appears in the outward parts, which is yet but a room farther that they get into, which we men cannot come to; so in like manner their power over our passions doth exceed also; they can see into the passions and discern the least rising of the tide, the least turn of the stream of affections in our veins; and in the corporeal heart Satan can discern those lesser aguish fits of passion that accompany any act of the will which men discern not; as also they can stir those passions by working upon the humours and spirits they float in, which men cannot come to do. But of this great and necessary query, as also how by means of this he communicates all his temptations to us, is more largely described in an Appendix, to be annexed to this treatise.

CHAPTER IX.

How able Satan is to work upon that third Principle, the Passions and corrupt Affections, and bring home his false Conclusions with Terrors.

THUS we have seen how able Satan is to work upon those two beforementioned principles, of carnal reason, and abuse it with false majors, and also upon conscience, in laying our sins to our charge, with misrepresentations of our estates. It remains now only that we shew how he can stir, and work upon the passions and corrupt affections in us, and make use of them : and so set on all those false conclusions, that we are hypocrites thence deduced, with hideous and horrid fears and terrors.

And in respect to these terrors, as he is called a Serpent, as was said for slights, and cunning reasonings, and wiles,—so likewise a lion, of all beasts the strongest. A roaring lion, of all the terriblest, and most terrible in his roaring ; whose roaring is therefore often in Scripture put to express the working of dreadfulness and horror : *The lion roars, who will not tremble!* Amos iii. 8. ; and (as some have observed, and the Psalmist seems to intimate it) by his roaring he strikes such horror and amazement into all other beasts, that they stand still as inanimated, and so he seizeth and preys upon them as he pleaseth ; and in t^his respect

also, of his working on the passions, is it that those darts beforementioned are principally called fiery; namely, for that dolour, and anguish, and inflammation, and combustion they cause through distempering the affections. Those fears which our own hearts engendered within us, were but as smoke; these darts of his put a fire into them, and do cause them to flame and blaze. The allusion is to the poisoned darts which the Scythians of old, and other nations now use in war, dipt in the blood and gall of asps and vipers; the venomous heat of which, like a fire in their flesh, killed the wounded by them, with torments the likeliest Hell of any other:—which Job also alludes to, Job vi. 4: *The arrows of the Almighty are within me. The poison, or as others read it, the heat and fervour* (we may use both,) and read: The hot poison thereof drinks up my spirit, even as fire preying upon moisture: and what were those arrows he speaks of there but terrors; so it follows, *The terrors of God, &c.* In the same phrase of which that Corinthian is said to have been in danger to have been drank up (as the word signifies) with overmuch sorrow, when Satan had to do with him, 2 Cor. ii. 7; and the like expression is again used of the Devil, 1 Pet. v. 8,—*Seeking whom to drink up.* So that as Satan inflames other members, and the inordinate lusts in them, with a superadded natural vehemency and violence, as the tongue which (though of itself full of poison) is said to be *set on fire from Hell*; that is, from Satan, who is called Hell, as in that speech, *The gates of Hell*; as the good angels, the noblest creatures, are called

Heavens, Heb. vii. 26 ; the inflaming men's tongues with an overplus of venom and malice, to wound men's names with ; even as, on the contrary, the Holy Ghost did not set on fire the apostles' tongues with zeal. As I say, he doth thus inflame other members, so in like manner he can, and doth put fire into those darts he wounds the conscience with ; and thereby augments our fears and griefs, and causeth such disquietments and pangs, as that Hell-fire, as it were, begins to flame in a man's conscience. As Christ is that *Brazen Serpent*, so Satan is that *Fiery Serpent*, that can sting us by the guilt of sin.

And here I must bring in the like caution as I used in the former chapter ; namely, that he works not these terrors by immediate impressions upon the conscience, which in that respect is subject to God's stroke alone, as to its knowledge alone, which, as I intimated, I take to be that other principal part of the drift of those words, Heb. iv. 11, 12, *The word of God is quick and powerful, &c.* ; for there he sets forth Christ to us (as was shewn) as a judge, completely enabled for vengeance against us, not only in respect of an omniscieny to find us out in all our shiftings, but also, because a judge would not be much feared, if he had only skill and knowledge, though ever so much, to search and find out the guile and guilt of malefactors, if he were not armed with power to avenge and torture them ; therefore withal, the apostle's scope is to strike terror into their hearts, in respect of that vengeance he can execute ; and therefore his aim is to exhort them not to dally with God, or with his word,

in which he had sworn of those that believed not, *they should not enter into his rest*, in the former verse; so that the purport of the words must necessarily also be supposed to be, to shew the dreadful power of God, and of his word, in avenging itself upon the contemners of him and it, and not merely to describe his omniscience and knowledge of the heart, but as joined also with power to pierce-as deep in wounding of the soul as in knowing of it. Yea, and that so large an illustration of his knowledge is brought in but as a clearer demonstration of his power to punish, who can dive so deep into our hearts? As from whence we might argue, and fear the stroke of that sword in his hand, whose eyes are so piercing; and accordingly to set forth the dreadfulness of this his power, all those his expressions there used to do as fully tend as to set forth the other; and he likewise useth such a comparison, as both in the nature of the things and according to the more usual phrase of Scripture, doth more properly and abundantly intimate this slaying and wounding of men's souls that should be disobedient, by this his sword, than that other of searching the soul and spirit. As, 1st, This word, says he, *is quick and lively*, so called not in respect of duration only, as abiding ever,—but in respect to working and execution. Things that are exceeding operative, though inanimate, we call quick; so quicksilver, which ruus through a man's bowels like hail-shot; and so oppositely, drugs and driuks that have lost their virtue, and are ineffectual, we call dead; and in respect to this energy and power to work upon men's hearts, is that

in John vi. 63, to be understood. *The words I speak*, says Christ, *are spirit and life* ; that is, are full of an operative principle ; for an active working principle we use to call spirit, as the spirit of wine, &c. In that therefore, he says the word is quick, he notes out that that word is inspired with a principle most quick, spiritul, and active, and fit to work as occasion is ; that is, even with the Holy Spirit, who is as the internal form of it ; and therefore, having thus intimated this internal form of working, he adds,—powerful and mighty in operation ; as noting out that power which flows from thence ; that ability to produce strange effects upon the soul. These expressions carry report of more than of a skill and dexterity to search and know the heart only ; and then he further instanceth in such operations of it as the effects of that power which are most dreadful, as the comparisons he useth do import :—*More piercing than any two-edged sword*. Now, as elsewhere the word is compared to an armory of all sorts of weapons and engines for war and vengeance, *the weapons of our warfare are mighty*, &c. 1 Cor. x. 4 ; in like manner, here he more particularly resembles it to a sword, the most usual, and most terrible of all the instruments of death which were then in use ; the brandishing of which, strikes paleness and horror into a man ere the stroke comes at him ;—which is usually put in Scripture to express vengeance, and more especially in the prophecy of Ezekiel ; as also in Ps. vii. 13. *If he turn not, God hath whet his sword, and prepared his instruments of death* ; that is, to inflict torments and eternal torments

also, as Deut. xxxii. 42.; and indeed, whatsoever doth torment, or cause dolour and anguish, is in Scripture called a sword; and the piercing with a sword, is used to express the most exquisite dolours, as Luke ii. 35; *Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy soul also*,—speaking to the blessed mother of Christ, and of that severe anguish and grief wherewith she should be cut even to the heart, when she should behold her Son upon the cross. Of whose dolours upon the cross likewise, the same expression is used, Ps. xxii. 21, when he prays,—*Deliver my soul from the sword*; and in this respect the word in Christ's hand is still, when he is spoken of as a Judge, compared to a sword, and so here; and we may further observe, how thus to strike the more terror into their hearts in respect of the wounds and torments it inflicts, he goes further on to exaggerate the dread thereof;—he says not only that it is as sharp, but more sharp; not than a sword of one edge, but that a two-edged sword; nor than some, but than any two-edged sword. And further, to shew that he speaks it in relation unto wounding, and anguish, and torment it causeth in the soul, he mentioneth the division of such parts as are not only most hid and inward, in relation to discovery (for such the marrow is, being covered with the bones, and the ligaments covered with flesh) but which are also of most exquisite sense, and the wounding of which causeth the greatest pain. He saith, it pierceth to the dividing the marrow, and therefore cuts through the bones; for so it must needs be supposed to do, when it is said to reach unto the marrow.—Now the breaking of the bones is still put

to express those exquisite and unsupportable terrors and dolours of conscience, and woundings of the Spirit, which a man cannot bear or sustain; for when the bones are broken, a man cannot stand nor support himself; and the like is also the cutting of the ligaments, the nerves, sinews, and arteries, those that knit the joints, which are the organs of sense and motion. Again, he says it divideth not only the soul; that is, the sensual part, the passions of the mind, as wounding them; which creatures, as men and angels, can torment and excruciate, but the spirit also, which is with an emphasis expressed; and his meaning is not so much that it divideth the soul from the spirit, as some have understood it, but the soul and spirit also. It is a two-edged sword, and can at one blow strike through both; this *axe strikes at the root*, at the spirit, which when *wounded, who can bear?* says Solomon; and then he concludes, ver. 13, that, *As before him all things are naked*, so they lie with their throats cut, if he but strike them dead and speechless at his feet, as Theodoret expounds that word, which is translated opened. Now thus far, that is, to this spirit, in man, no created sword can reach; they turn edge at it; but even this the word reacheth, and that alone. So as the summary drift of all herein is the same which Christ expressed elsewhere in other words, to exhort them to fear that God, whose sword and powerful word is able thus alone to wound; and *not to fear those who can only* wound and kill the body, and but reach to the sensual soul that is drenched in it, but cannot wound or kill the spirit, which God alone can

do, and no mere creature whatever ; and therefore in all our thoughts and fears of Satan's power of knowing our sins, or troubling or disquieting our spirits, as also throughout this discourse, we are to set such bounds, as that this incommunicable royalty of God, and of his word, may be reserved unentrenched upon ; namely, that he alone knows, and can immediately wound the spirit and conscience ; both which, at once this place held out unto us, which made me the largelier to insist upon the opening of it.

But yet, although Satan cannot immediately wound the conscience, and make impressions of God's wrath upon it : for as no creature can shed abroad God's love, and cause the creature to taste the sweetness of it, so neither the bitterness of his wrath ; but God is his own reporter of both.

Yet, when the Holy Ghost hath lashed and whipped the conscience, and made it tender once, and fetched off the skin, Satan then may fret it more and more, and be still rubbing upon the sore, by his horrid suggestions and false fears cast in.

And he can, by renewing the experimental remembrance of those lashes which the soul hath had from the Spirit, amaze the soul with fears of an infinitely sorer vengeance yet to come ; and flash representations of Hell-fire in their consciences, from those real glimpses they have already felt in such a manner, as to bewilder the soul into vast and unthought-of horrors.

And then he can bring home all the threatenings that are thundered forth in the word against hypocrites

and men unregenerate, and discharge them all with much violence and noise upon the poor doubting soul. He can and doth present and shew his prisoners those terrible chains and racks, and other instruments of death, as the Psalmist calls them, which God hath prepared against sinners, and hath stored up in that great armory of his word, *which he hath in a readiness to revenge all disobedience*, 2 Cor. x. 6; with the rattling of which chains. Satan can make a noise in the conscience of a poor sinner to affright him; which he is the more enabled to do, out of experience of such terrors in himself:—*Being bound up in chains everlasting, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day*, Jude 6.: and as a son of consolation and child of light is enabled *to comfort others the more, by the comfort wherewith he hath been comforted of God*, of this prince of darkness is the more powerful to terrify weak consciences that are ensnared with the cords of their own sins, by reason of the terrors which he hath received from the Lord; and therefore, in Scripture, as a power in sin is attributed to him, so the *power of death*, as Heb. ii. 14.; where, by death is meant not so much that bodily as that eternal death, to which, as the proper punishment of sin, the guilt of it doth bind us over;—which power of his is not that of the Judge in sentencing to death, or casting men to Hell, which is a special flower of Christ's crown, who (Rev. i. 18.) *hath the keys of Hell and Death* at his girdle; and of God's who is therefore only to be feared, because *he only can cast body and soul into Hell*. Nor is it as if he were the main tormentor and executioner

of men's souls after that great day, seeing that they are to be tormented by that fire which in common *was prepared for the devils themselves*. And who is it that doth torment them? It is therefore principally meant of that power and advantage he obtained over sinners when he had seduced them; so as to come boldly as a pleader against them, enabled with authority to urge God's righteous law and word, and to call upon, and to provoke his justice to condemn poor sinners, and adjudge them unto death, until Christ, that righteous advocate despoiled him of those his pleas and power, by that satisfaction of his, which before the law had put into his hands; and so *He destroyed him that had the power of death*; enervating all his pleas and terrors;—and the meaning is, That as he hath this power in God's court over the sentence of death upon poor sinners, so also in our consciences, to urge the law upon us, and to plead all that the *Law says against them that are under the Law*, and to put us into the fears of that death threatened therein; and to increase in us the fears of that death, by presenting to us the terrors of the law, unto which, in respect of natural conscience, men of themselves are *subject all their life long*; and unto this latter power hath that power of death there especial reference for those words,—*and deliver them who, through fear of death, were subject to bondage all their life long*, follow in the next ver. 15.; and because the children of God, whilst in this life, as they *know but in part*, so they *love but in part*; and so far as love remains imperfect, so far *fear which hath torment*, keeps possession, 1 John iv. 18. *For it is*

perfect love (only) that casteth out (all) fear. Hence, therefore, so far as slavish fear remains, so far they may be subject to be terrified by him that hath power of death, and that over all those that are in any degree subject to the fear of it whilst in this life,

And he can immediately, by his own power, stir the passions of fear and grief, &c.—excite them beyond nature, as the winds can raise the billows in the sea, and cause the floods to make a noise; so can he a tumult in the affections, and put all the soul into an hurry and violent perturbation. He is the prince of the airy part of the little world in man, as well as of that elementary region in the great world; and so can raise unnatural storms and vapours that shall darken reason; and cause such thunders and lightnings as shall hurl all into a black confusion; such as if Hell and the soul would presently come together; and though it is true that he cannot turn the stream and current of our affections back (God only can turn this Jordan back) yet he can drive them faster, and cause them to swell above their natural channels; that as a man possest hath the strength of ten men in him; as that man, Luke viii. 19; so shall the affections have that are blown up by him; as we may see in David: what a strong mind do we find in him, so needlessly to number the people, 2 Sam. xxiv.—against all reason as well as religion, and the persuasion, yea opposition, not of Joab only, but others also of his counsellors, *the captains of the hosts.* A man would wonder that a person so holy and wise should be so transported to do an act so foolish (as himself saw afterwards: *I have*

done very foolishly, says he, ver. 10.) yea, and so grossly sinful, as that it was abominable in the eyes of Joab, 1 Chron. xxi. 6. (one that seemeth by his other carriages to have had but nature in him); but the devil was in it; so ver. 1, *Satan provoked David to number the people*, by raising up such an affection and inclination in him. The like appears in the affection of love, which how strongly hath Satan drawn forth in some, even to madness, towards such as before, and also after his fascination was overpast, they have loathed and hated above all others, is evident in stories by many instances; and as he can raise up other passions in us, so also *fears and terrors, jealousies and distrusts, to fear where no fear is*; and thus he handled Saul (when God left him to him): *An evil spirit from the Lord troubled him*, or (as most read it, and our Bible-margins vary it) *terrified him*, 1 Sam. xvi. 15. And in the raising up of these affections of fear, and the like, he works more than simply morally; that is, than by barely propounding such objects as shall move them, which men only can do; but further also, physically, by stirring such humours in the body which such passions do act and stir in; and so those humours in the body, which shall put a man into a timorous and trembling disposition, he can effectively work upon as he pleaseth; and then also he can disturb the phantasms in the head, the organs of the understanding, as in him, Luke viii. 35; who, through Satan's working, is intimated *not to have been in his right mind*; and when he hath thus distempered and disordered all in a man, and put him into such dispositions to fears, &c.

then he comes with his suggestions, and speaks nothing but of wrath, and terrors, and of the threatenings, and of the heinousness of a man's sins, the fearfulness of God's wrath unto that conscience that is troubled; and then (just as when a man's choler is up, every small thing provokes him; so now when fear and melancholy are excited) every suggestion, every surmise, doth strike the soul through and through with most horrid fears and jealousies; and thus, though not immediately, yet through the means of these mists and vapours, and fogs raised, which environ and darken this sun, he works upon the conscience; and therefore we see by experience that he prevails most in this sort of temptations, with melancholy tempers; who dwelling in dark shops, he much deceives with false colours and glosses; and when once affections are up, and do cloud the mind, then multitudes of troublesome thoughts arise, and every suggestion suitable to that passion, takes, and prevails with a man's spirit; as appears by that speech of Christ, Luke xxiv. 38, *Why are you troubled or afraid, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?* Passions, like too heavy weights hung upon a clock, do not only make the wheels, the thoughts move faster, but also perverts them, and wrests them the wrong way; so to a heart thus distempered, all things come to be presented amiss, even as to a bloodshot eye all things seem red. In a word, as he deludes his enthusiasts by setting on and backing their false opinions and illusions with joys and ravishments of spirit, which differ as much from the joys of the Holy Ghost which are unspeakable and glorious, as heaven from

earth, so he can, and doth back his false reasonings and accusations to holy men about their estates, with abundance of terror and disturbance; which also differs as much from the impressions of God's wrath made immediately by the Spirit upon the conscience, as those joys are found to do.

CHAPTER X.

The Conclusion of this Discourse about Satan; Seven advantages in common that Satan hath over us, in all those beforementioned dealings.

AND for a general conclusion to this, and all the rest of this discourse about Satan's working on us, I will but only mention some of those great and many advantages he hath in all these his false reasonings and accusations over us,—to set them on, and to fasten his slanders and false conclusions thence deduced, and to persuade the mind of them, which I therefore bring in here, as being common to all those particulars which have been related.

First, It is no small-advantage that he can familiarly and frequently suggest them again and again unto us. The frequency of any thought that comes in again and again, that lies by us, and haunts us, hath secretly the force of an argument to persuade us to think it is so. We used to say, I have thought so again and again. A cunning flatterer, that is continually suggesting,

and taking all hints and occasions so to do, may at last be hard put to work out a near and a dear friend, and to make one jealous of him; as the Judge yielded to her importunity, Luke xviii. 5. So is the mind apt to yield to a suggestion that haunts it, and importunately presents itself, yea though it be to pass a false sentence against a man's self.

And he can also, and doth represent a multitude of reasonings and considerations together at once, all tending to confirm the same persuasion. He will sometimes bring in a cloud of witnesses, and instances to prove us hypocrites; and environ the mind round about with them, that, look which way it will, it sees nothing else; as he represented to Christ *all the glory of the world in the twinkling of an eye*;—so he can do a man's sins, that a man shall so have a general prospect of them, and see nothing else, look which way he will; and what force this must needs have to prevail with the mind and judgment to assent, experience shews; as when a man doubting of a truth in a thing controverted, reads an opposite party, presenting all that can be said for the other side alone, it often staggers him, and for the present wins and gains his opinion to that side, till he reads and considers what is said to the contrary; yea, though a man is confirmed and settled in the truth, yet sometimes a man shall have an army of arguments on the other side come in upon him, so ranked and ordered, as for the present shall shake and stagger him; and so it must needs be in the agitation of this great controversy about a man's estate, when Satan shall muster and

marshal up an army of objections at once together, and not scatteredly, as he is able to do.

And he is able to hold the intention of the mind so to them, as to keep off all that which should any way comfort; he can turn down that column in the leaves of our hearts, wherein grace, or any thing that may comfort is written, and turn over only, and hold our eyes fixed to read nothing but that other wherein our erratas and sins are written; so as to cause a man's soul to forget all good, as (Lam. iii. 17.) the church in desertion is said to do; and to *forget his own mercies*, as Jonah speaks;—he can multiply suggestions so fast, and come in with such a tempest, that (as Job complains, ix. 17.) he will not suffer them to take breath; and therefore the apostle calls them the buffetings of Satan, 2 Cor. xii.; because, like unto buffetings, they come in thick and threefold upon a man's spirit, so as a man's spirit cannot take breath;—he rains down temptations sometimes, not by drops, as in ordinary rains, but by spouts, as mariners call them, when a cloud melts (as in hot countries) suddenly, and falls by wholesale, and often sinks a ship. *He breaks me with a tempest*, says Job, in the place beforementioned. He speaks it of God; but such like tempests Satan also raiseth.

He adds weight to his lying accusations and false reasonings, by an imperious and obstreperous affirmation, that so it is he suggests not reasons only that are fitted to persuade, but sets them on with words of affirmation therewithal suggested: and so, like as in reasoning, a weak spirit is oftentimes borne down by a

stronger, not by force of argument so much, as by strength and violence of spirit ; for many, when the iron is blunt, and their arguments want edge, put to the more strength, as Solomon speaks, Eccles. x. 10, and so prevail ; and so doth Satan, he being a spirit of greater strength than ours by creation, and guilt also ; further weakening us in arguing with him. Cunning pleaders may so argue the case, with such violence and confidence, that as Socrates said when his accusers had done, that if he had not been very innocent, he should have suspected himself guilty ; how much more, when the accusation shall fall upon persons that are so guilty, as we all are, and the thing also impleaded be that which we are already suspicious of ! What a man already fears, he easily believes, as what a man hopes, *quod metuunt, facile credunt*. We see that there falls out often in opinions a conceit which exceedingly sways the mind, a giving of mind that such a thing is so or so ; and in such a case Satan can strike in exceedingly to strengthen such a conceit. This I take to be implied in that phrase, 2 Thess. ii. 1, where the apostle gives warning they should not be troubled, *neither by spirit nor by word, to think the day of judgment was at hand*. By spirit, he means a pretence and opinion of some revelation, concerning something which a man's own private conceit and imagination inclined him so to think : thus 1 John iv. 1, Spirit is also taken ; and thus oftentimes when Satan perceives the mind inclined to think so or so, he adds weight unto the balance, and so a man is given up to the efficacy of delusion ; as we see in

those false prophets which the apostle there speaks of, when he says *Believe not every spirit, because many false prophets are gone out into the world*. Thus likewise those false prophets in Micah became confident of the truth of their prophecies:—*that walk in the spirit, and in falsehood*, says the prophet, Micah ii. 11: they took up such conceits, and the devil he joined therewith, and confirmed them in them. Now as Satan by such false revelations confirms enthusiasts in their opinions and conceits, so he joins with the jealousies of believers, and puts weight into the balance, strongly swaying them to judge amiss of their estates.

And in that he as was said, backeth his false conclusions thence deduced, with terrors, &c. this becomes an argument to sense; and such arguments do exceedingly carry on the judgment in our opinion of things. A conceit that comes in with joy, we are apt to conclude is true; and so in like manner what comes in with terror; such impressions are, as it were, a scale to what is suggested, to confirm it; and as the Holy Ghost *scaleth his instructions* (Job xxxiii. 16.) with impressions of joy, &c. so doth Satan his temptations with impressions of fear and disquietment. If a man hath a dream with any strong impression, he is apt to give heed to it, to think there is something in it:—that which made Nebuchadnezzar think there must needs be something in that of his, Dan. chap. ii. and chap. iv. when yet he had forgot what it was, was, that it made *him afraid, and his thoughts troubled him*, verse 5.

One advantage is, that he suggests and works all

these impressions undiscerned at all by us to be from him, so as we know not but that they are our own thoughts; yea, sometimes think that they be from the Holy Ghost, working as the spirit of bondage in us. This is also an exceeding great advantage; as it would be to an enemy to have gotten the opposite's own watchword, their own colours; this causeth us readily to yield and open the gates to him; and though when the temptation is over we perceive his delusion in it, yet still, because we cannot discern his suggestions from our own thoughts when upon us, when we are in the mist and eclipse, therefore he can come again and again with the same temptation to-day, and to-morrow, and the next day, and we perceive it not; which, if we did, we should not listen to it, any more than we would to one who had formerly deceived us. Thus Ahab's prophets knew not that Satan was a lying spirit in them; for, says one of them unto Micaiah, *When went the Spirit of God from me to you?* Those strong delusions, 2 Thess. ii. 10, could not have prevailed upon their minds to have believed a lie, had it been discerned by them that Satan had suggested them. Peter knew not that Satan did by him tempt his Master to spare himself; which yet Christ perceived, and therefore called him Satan.

Last of all: A man can no way avoid his suggestions, nor subduce himself from them; neither can any take Satan off from a man, but God; he must rebuke him, none else can. A poor soul fights with Satan in this darkness, like unto a man that is as-

saulted by one that carries a dark lantern, who can see the assaulted, and how to buffet him, and follows him wherever he goes ; whereas the poor man cannot see him, nor who it is that strikes him, nor be aware how to award the blow. Therefore the Apostle, when buffeted by Satan, knew not what to do, but only to have recourse to God by prayer ; for he could no more avoid or run away from those suggestions, than from himself ; nor could all the saints on earth any other way have freed him ; none, till God should cause him to depart.

CHAPTER XI.

The Second General Head:—The cases wherein God leaves his children unto this darkness. First, Three Cases extraordinary.

HAVING dispatched the efficient causes of this darkness,—the causes physical, I now proceed to the cases wherein, and ends for which, God leaves his children to such a condition.—The causes moral. The cases, they were the second general head I propounded to be handled : and they are either extraordinary or ordinary.

- I. Extraordinary ; as,
 1. Out of his prerogative.
 2. In case he means to make a man eminently wise, and able to comfort others.

3. In case of extraordinary comforts and revelations.

First, What if God will use his absoluteness and prerogative in this his dealing with his child, and proceed therein according to no ruled case or precedent? This he may do; and as it is thought, in Job's case he did;—who is thought by some to be set up as a type among the Gentiles of Christ at his crucifying, who was to be left by his apostles, forsaken of God, &c. and though Job's desertion began but with his estate, children and body, yet it pierced further in the end, and seized upon his spirit, though not so far as to question God's love to him: this we read nowhere of him, yet was seen in God's withdrawing himself in the comfort of his presence, and in Satan's making him a butt to spend his arrows on; and yet although the Lord had cause enough against him, still no cause, as I remember, is pleaded; but it is resolved into an extraordinary dealing, wherein God took a liberty to glorify himself, by singling out one of his stoutest, valiantest champions, and setting him hand to hand to wrestle with the powers of darkness; and because Satan was, as it were, not hard enough for him, *he turned enemy himself*, Job xiii. 21. None more just than he before,—the Lord you know, glories in him; none ever led a stricter life, (read chap. xxxi,) no man kept more in awe, and that by fearing such a desertion beforehand, which was the only way to prevent it; for what a man fears he prays much against, which he expresses when complaining; he says, chap. iv. 25, *That though he feared it, yet it came*; implying that it was not ordinary, nor in-

deed is it so ; and although Job justifies himself too far, yet this was it which made him so stoutly to plead his own cause, that he could find no precedent, no ruled case of the like proceeding ; and therefore Elihu, who took both God's part and Job's, and stept up as a moderator, and as one in God's stead to decide the matter, resolves it most of all into God's prerogative, though not without Job's desert (yet not such as according to which God ordinarily proceedeth, not so severely with others) as appears by the 34th chapter, and to that end he set forth God's greatness, in the 36th and 37th chapters ;—and thus also God himself when he came to plead with Job about it, and to shew him a reason of it, he only tells him how great a God he was, and therefore might do as he pleased ; and useth no other arguments in the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st chapters. God indeed never wants a cause, nor doth he deal thus where sin is not ; yet, as is said of the young man, that he was blind, not *for his sin nor his parents* (yet not without it) *but for the glory of God* ;—it was an act of God's prerogative ; so here. God hath higher ends of glorifying himself in the patience, the victory, and the conquest of such a champion as Job was ; and of confuting the devil, who accused him of serving God for nought, the falseness of which to demonstrate, God tries conclusions with him : as also to confute the opinions which in those days were generally received, as may seem by his friend's arguings, and also by the 73rd Psalm,—That godly men did prosper and flourish outwardly, according to their godliness ; for

these and the like reasons God did it. However, Elihu gives Job this good and seasonable counsel, to make this use of it, to *search into his sins*, chap. xxxiv. 31, 32; and God might well take liberty to deal thus with Job, because he could make him amends, as afterward he did, in restoring double to him; and indeed it was but the concealing a while of his love, as many parents love to do by their children, and yet to shew it the more in real effects, as God even then did,—in making him more than a conqueror.

A second case extraordinary is, When he intends to make a man a wise, able, skilful, and a strong christian;—Wise, namely in this, which is the greatest learning and wisdom in the world, experimentally to comfort others.

This may seem to be the reason of this his dealing with Heman:—Heman was brought up in this school of temptation, and kept in this form from a youth, Psalm lxxxviii. 15. He was put soon to it; and so deep lessons had he set him, as he had like to have lost his wits, as he says there; yet in the end, when God raised him up again, this Heman (who lived about David and Solomon's time,) is reckoned among the wisest of his time, and one of the four that were next to Solomon for wisdom, 1 Kings iv. 31. So that great apostle was a man exposed to the same combats that others were; *he was buffeted by Satan*, 2 Cor. xii.; filled with inward terrors, as well as those without:—what was this for? Not so much for any personal cause of his own, as to make him able to comfort others, 2 Cor. i. 4, 5; for that com-

fort which answers a temptation in one man's heart, will answer the same in another's; when temptations have the same wards, that key which unlocked one man's bolts, will serve and answer to another's. It is not every word that will comfort a weary soul, but only *a word in season*, ver. 4 of chap. 1. of Isaiah; that is, which is fitted to the party's case; now, who are they that are furnished with such apt, and fit, and seasonable considerations to comfort such, but those who have had the same temptations, and have been in the like distresses? This art of speaking peace, and words of comfort in season, is the greatest wisdom in the world, and is not learnt but in Heman's school. Temptation was one of Luther's masters; and therefore of all abilities of the ministry, Christ in this chapter instanceth in ver. 4, and calleth the tongue of him that is able to speak seasonably to weary souls, the tongue of the learned; and therefore (Job xxxiii. 23.), to raise up one whose soul draws nigh to the grave, is said to be the work of one of a thousand; which is easily granted, if you consider the danger of such a distress. In Scripture it is called the *breaking of the bones*, Psalm li. because the strength of a man's spirit that should uphold it, as the bones, the body, sinks within him:—now to be a bone-setter is not every man's skill, he must have special art and cunning, and withal a lady's hand (as we used to say) that is, meekness and pity; which also are never kindly but when we have tasted the like, or may fear the like, Gal. vi. 1. The apostle commands them to set such an one in joint again (as the word signifies) lest thou

also be tempted ; and it is the work of one that is spiritual : *You that are spiritual, restore such an one.* It requires skill to get out every shiver, to meet with every scruple, and set all straight again. It is also called the wounding of the spirit : so saith Solomon : *A wounded spirit who can bear ?* Prov. xviii. 14. As the power of sin wounds, so the guilt also ; and the one as incurably as the other ; and it being the spirit of a man which is wounded, that which must heal it, must be something dropt into the heart, that may come at the spirit ; and there are to be peculiar elective plaisters to heal these wounds, because these wounds are often differing : some objections there are, that often the most learned men never met with in books ; and Satan hath devised methods (Ephes. vi.) of tempting souls deserted, which he useth again and again ; and a man shall not know those depths and fathom them, unless he hath been in the depths himself, as Heman speaks ; and then he shall see such wonders of God in those deeps, which none else ever saw, and thereby gain such wisdom, as to be able to encourage others, by his example, to trust in God and call upon him : so David, Psalm xxxii. ver. 5, 6.

The third case extraordinary. God doth desert, in case a man hath had, or is to have, from God an abundance of revelations and comforts.

First, in case he hath already had abundance of revelations from God. As after that glorious testimony given to Christ at his baptism : *This is my beloved Son, &c.* Matt. iii. 17. *Then was Jesus led aside to be tempted,* Matt. iv. 1. He points out the

time to this very purpose. In like manner doth God often deal with the members of Christ for the season and time of their desertions and temptations. This was also that great apostle's case, 2 Cor. xii. 7: *Lest I should be exalted above measure, through abundance of revelations, a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet me.* That which he calls there *the thorn in the flesh* that pricked him, is meant rather I think of a desertion, and leaving him to distress of spirit, than of a lust; for his scope is *to glory in his afflictions*, verses 9, 10. Now, if it had been a lust, it had not been a thing to have been gloried in. Again, it was a *messenger of Satan*; which imports something external, and it buffeted him; he was as a mere patient in it, as a man is buffeted in the exercise of lusts; our spirits are active; and besides, he prayed it might depart; which phrase would seem to note out something external. God had taken him aside into Heaven, and spoken wonderful things to him; and when he comes down again, Satan must take him to task and batter him: the flesh would have grown proud, if it had not been thus beaten black and blue. He had been in Heaven, and heard the language of angels and saints, things not to be uttered; and now he must hear by devils the language of Hell. This buffeting, I take it, was by Satanical injections.

Secondly, before God doth dispense great revelations and comforts, he doth sometimes desert; and as before great distresses, which he means to lead his children into, he fills their hearts with joy unspeakable and glorious, to strengthen them against the approach-

ing conflict (thus God to hearten his Son against that great agony in the garden and combat on the cross, transfigureth him on the mount first); so, on the contrary, sometimes before great revelations and comforts, to make them sweet and the more welcome, God useth to withdraw himself then most, thereby preparing the heart for them, as physicians do the body for cordials. The greatest spring-tide of comfort comes in upon the lowest ebb of distress. Distress enlargeth the heart, and makes it thirst after comfort the more, whereby it is made more capable of consolation; for that rule holds usually true, 2 Cor. v. *That as sufferings abound, so comforts shall abound also.*

CHAPTER XII.

The Cases ordinary, wherein God doth leave his Children in Darkness.

Now, secondly,—We come to the more ordinary cases, wherein God dispenseth this darkness. Ere I name particulars, I will premise concerning them this general rule:—We shall find that God goes not constantly by the same rule in the dispensation of them; so as no man can say that in such and such cases God wills and doth certainly desert men, or that he always doth so,—but is various in his dealings herein; for some men he leaves for a while in darkness, in and upon, and immediately after their conversion; their

sun riseth in an eclipse, and continueth so till noon ; yea till their night. On the contrary, towards others, sometimes he never shines in more comforts on them than at their first conversion. Again : some he deserts upon a gross sin committed ; to others he never reveals himself more at any time than after a gross sin humbled for and repented of ; thereby to shew the freeness of his grace ; —so likewise, some that have less grace, and have lived more loosely, he fills their sails at death, and they have abundant entrance, with full sail into the kingdom of Christ. Others that have walked more strictly with God, and whose ends you would expect should be most glorious, he leaves to fears and doubts ; and their sun doth set in a cloud.

And the reasons why God is thus various in these his dealings, are both because spiritual comforts tend not simply *ad esse*, but *bene esse* ; not to the absolute being of a Christian, but his comfortable well-being ; and also because, in respect of their dispensation, they are to be reckoned in the rank of temporal rewards ; and though light and assurance is not an earthly but an heavenly blessing, yet it is but a temporary blessing ; and therefore as the promises of other temporal good things are not absolute, no more are the promises to give assurance to a believer absolute, as those to give him Heaven and salvation are. Therefore, likewise, on the contrary, darkness and distress of conscience is but a temporal chastisement, as outward crosses are ; differing from them only in the matter of them ; the one being conversant about things of the outward man ; this of the inward, namely, a man's

spiritual estate. Hence, therefore, in the dispensation of both, though God always goes by some rule, as in all other dealings of his, yet so as he varies and deals differently with his children therein, as he doth in dispensing outward prosperity and adversity, *setting the one against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him*, as Solomon says, Eccles. vii. 14; that is, gives such cross and contrary opposite instances in both kinds, that men might not find him out in these ways, or trace him as the phrase is, Rom. ix. 33. not so as to say certainly and infallibly what he means to do in such and such cases. Indeed, in the world to come he makes even with all the world, how differing soever his dispensations of rewards or punishments have been here; and what is behind hand to any one, he then pays with respect to what they have received. Thus, in matter of spiritual joy and assurance, God may vouchsafe it to one that hath not feared and obeyed him so much, as one that walks in darkness; but then, if any one hath received more earnest pennies beforehand, and hath not walked answerably, God considers it as an aggravation of his sin, as he did in Solomon, whose sin is aggravated by this, 1 Kings xi. 9, 10; that he sinned against God, who had appeared to him twice. Otherwise, if these comforts make a man in any proportion to such cost more fruitful than others are, I see not but that God, who crowns his own graces, will reward them the more; this being one means sanctified to some, to work more grace, as afflictions are to others. Thus it is in like manner in desertings and distress of mind, they being a temporal

punishment, God is as various in them,—so as one of more grace, or whom God intends more grace unto, shall be afflicted and forsaken, when one of less shall reign as a king, as it is said of the Corinthians, in case of worldly prosperity ; so he shall have peace and liberty of mind, triumph over Satan and Hell, and discomfort ; when apostles in comparison, that is, men eminent in grace, are in respect of spiritual conflicts made spectacles to angels and men.

This rule premised, the ordinary cases follow :—

First, In case of carnal confidence, this Psalm xxx. David had been in great distress of mind for a while, as appears by what is said verse 3 and 5, that *though heaviness be over-night, yet joy cometh in the morning ;* and in this sunshine David looks about him, and sees never a cloud appear in view that might again eclipse his comfort ; then he grew confident upon no other ground but present sense, thinking it would always be so with him, and so trusted in that comfort he had at present, as if now he could never have been troubled so again (as in such cases good souls are apt to think . *Now, I shall never be removed,* says David. This was carnal confidence ; and God, to confound it, hides himself again, verse 7.

Now carnal confidence is either,—

1. When we trust to false signs shuffled in among true, which is incident even to believers that are in a state of grace, and have good evidences to shew for it ; who yet, together with those sound evidences, do often rake together many other signs that are but probable ; yea, and which are deceitful, and but common

to hypocrites. This we are apt to do ; to take many things as infallible signs which are not. As many are said in Daniel to cleave to the better side by flattery, so in a man's heart, many false signs will come in and flatter a man, and give their testimony, and speak the same thing as true evidences do. Now God, to discover which are false and which are not, leaves a man, and then he will find all his false signs to leave him as flatterers use to do, and to be but as broken teeth among those which are sound and whole, to fail and disquiet him,—like reeds that break when any stress is put to them, and so to run into his hand.

Or, 2dly, When we put too much of our confidence upon signs, though true, and trust too much to comforts and former revelations, and witnesses of God's Spirit, and to our graces, which are all but creatures, acts of God upon us and in us ; when therefore we let all the weight of our support to hang on these, God in this case often leaves us, *That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

Or, 3dly, When we think graces and comforts are so rooted in ourselves, that we neglect God and Christ for the upholding, increase, and exercise of them, then God withdraws the light of these, that we may have recourse to the spring and well-head. As too much confidence in the power of inherent grace caused Christ to leave Peter to the power of sin, so the like confidence also in the power of grace, causeth God to leave us to the guilt and terrors that come by sin.

The second case:—For neglecting such precious opportunities of comforts and refreshings as God hath

vouchsafed. As for the neglect of holy duties, wherein God did offer to draw nigh to us, the sacraments, prayer, &c., so Cant. v. 4, 5, 6, 7, Christ stood at the door and knocked; that is, moved the heart of the church there to pray, or perform the like duty in which he useth to come into the heart and visit it; he offered to assist her, and began to enlarge and prepare her heart; but she made excuses; upon this, Christ went presently away, only he left behind him an impression, a scent of himself in her heart, verse 4, 5, 6, enough to stir her up to seek him, in the sense of the want of him, as in desertion God useth to do.

Thirdly, in case of not exercising the graces which a man hath; not stirring them up, when Christians are, as it were, between sleeping and waking, which was the church's condition in that of Cant. v. 2, then also Christ deserts. To perform duties with the inward man half awake, as it were, and half asleep; *to pray as if we prayed not*: as on the contrary, we are to *use the world as if we used it not*. Thus, to do the work of the Lord negligently, this provoketh God to absent himself, as he did there, Cant. v. 2;—and so 2 Pet. i. 9, *He that lacketh these things*, that is, useth them not, neglecting to add grace to grace, as the former words expound that phrase, and it agrees with the like elsewhere used, as Matt. xxv. 29, *He that useth not his talent, is said not to have it. To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, &c.* A blindness soon falls on such a man, and he forgetteth all that ever he had, as was opened before; and indeed there is no reason that a man should have present

comfort of future grace, when he neglects the use of present grace, Isa. lxiv. 7. God complains that there was *none that stirred up himself*; and for this *God was wroth*; whereas, otherwise, as verse 5, *God meets with him that worketh righteousness*, and rejoiceth in him that rejoiceth to work righteousness; God meets such, and rejoiceth with, and draws nigh unto them; but others that stir not up themselves, God rouseth and stirs them up by terrors. *He that walks according to this rule, peace be on him*, Col. vi. 16, not else. Though comfort is not always the present necessary fruit of righteousness, yet it is never without it.

Fourthly. In case of some gross sin committed against light unhumiliated for,—or proving scandalous,—or of old sins long forgotten,—I will give instances of each particular.

First, For some gross sin committed against light. An instance of this is David, who, though he was a man after God's heart, yet we meet with him often complaining, as one that was frequently in these deserts; amongst other times, once in Psalm cxix. 25, 23, where *his soul cleaveth unto the dust*, and is even at Death's door; for he says *Quicken me*: he means it in regard of the sense of God's favour, which is better than life; which also is the meaning of that phrase, that his soul did cleave unto the dust; that is, was brought to the apprehension of death, therefore (Psalm xxii. 15.) Christ upon the cross (of whom the Psalm is made) cries out, That God had forsaken him, and brought his soul to the dust of death; and David says here also, That his soul melted and

was dissolved ; even all the powers of it were loosened, and failed within him at the sense of God's wrath, even as wax melts before the fire. Ordinarily we find in Scripture no such eminent desertion ; but we find the cause of it not far off, if we read on : so here, in ver. 29, *Remove from me*, says David, *the way of lying*. He points to the sore of his heart, and wherein his grief lay. David among other corruptions, had a lying spirit. In 1 Sam. xxi. 2, David very roundly telleth two or three lies together, when he fled from Saul and came to Ahimelech ; who, fearing to harbour him because of Saul, asked him why he was alone : it being a suspicious thing that he, so great a man, should have no greater train to attend him ; and did argue that he fled as a proscribed person, and then it would be dangerous to foster him. To this he answers roundly *That the king had commanded him a business*. There is one lie ; and that *the king had commanded him secrecy in it* ;—there is another ;—and because *my servants should not know it, I have sent them away* to several places ;—there is a third ;—and again, at ver. 8, *I have not brought my sword, because the king's business required haste* ;—there is a fourth lie. David went on here in a way of lying : they were all made and deliberate lies. Other such like speeches of his, as that in 1 Sam. ii. 8, 10, where he told Achish that he went against the south of Judah and against the south of the Kenites (ver. 10.) ; when as he went against the Geshurites and the Amalekites (ver. 8.) some excuse, because those nations bordered over against the south of Judah and the south of the Kenites ; and so make

out a truth in that his speech ; but yet the last verse, which says that Achish believed David, implies that as he understood it, so David indeed meant it, as if he had gone up against his own countrymen, and then it can no way be excused. These, therefore, being gross sins, sins against light (as of all sins lying must needs be supposed to be, because it is against that truth which riseth up in the mind) and is a sin wherein a man's mind shews art, cunning, and wit ; and a sin which, when the truth is discovered, proves exceeding shameful and scandalous ; therefore this sin, especially when it had been some while gone on in by him, which therefore he calls a 'way of lying,' lay heavy on him long after. Therefore, he intreats God to take the load of it off :—*Remove from me the way of lying.* It was the load hereof which did lie so heavy on him, as it pressed his soul to the dust of death, as he had before complained.

So for the second particular, in case a sin be not thoroughly humbled for and confessed ; or if when we committed it, we had shifts to keep us from thinking it to be sin, or not so heinous ; or where doubtful whether it were a sin or no, and so were loth to acknowledge it to be a sin, and to burden ourselves with it in our confessions, but our hearts stood out rather to clear ourselves in it ; as it is likely David did in the case of his murder of Uriah : he had done it so cunningly, as he thought he could clear himself, and wash his hands of it ; for it was but the chance of war, says he, that did cut him off,—the sword devoureth one as well as another ; and so he excaseth it, 2 Sam. xi. 25. God

in this case brings him to the rack, Psalm xxxii.—It is thought that Psalm was made, as well as the 51st Psalm, upon that occasion of his murder; and indeed it may seem so, they are tuned so near together, as might be shewn in many particulars.—These sins being known and become scandalous, David was to confess publicly; as in the end he did, when, in making the 51st Psalm, he stood to do penance in a white sheet, if I may so speak. Now David was loth to come to this, that murder being done so cunningly, he could hardly be brought to confess it, so much as in secret, much less publicly: God in this case lays his hand so sorely on him, that his natural moisture was dried up, as that Psalm tells us; for in men troubled in conscience, their trouble of mind casts their bodies often into as great heats, as men that are in burning fevers; so Psalm cii. 3, in the like fit, he says *his bones were burnt like an hearth*; and this was without intermission, *day and night*; and thus he lay roaring (so he expresseth his carriage in his torture) like a malefactor on the rack, though happily he cried out for mercy to God; yet because not with a broken heart, God therefore accounted it but as roaring; that is, the voice of a beast, as it were, rather than the voice of a man humbled for his sin; and why was David put to the rack thus? He would not confess and humble himself for his sin: *I was silent, and yet roared*, ver. 3. A still broken-hearted confession might have saved all this torment: but when in the end, *I said I would confess my sin* (ver. 5.) and in his heart he resolved once to lay open all that sin of murder and adultery in the

circumstances of them, then God pardoned him, as you know he did; for Nathan coming to him, told him, as soon as but a word of confession began to fall from him, that his sins were pardoned; and yet after that, as appears in Psalm li, God did not yet restore comfort and the joy of his salvation to him (for there he prays for it in the sense of the want of it) not until he had publicly confessed it also, and thoroughly humbled himself, it having caused *the enemies of God to blaspheme*,—God would have a public satisfaction given.

So when the incestuous person had committed that sin (1 Cor. v. 1. 9.) for which, as then he was not humbled (for afterwards, in 2 Cor. ii. 7, when he was humbled indeed, he bids them comfort him) yet till that his humiliation was apparent, he bids them to deliver such an one to Satan, to the goaler, to the tormentor with him,—to the prince of darkness, to terrify him and afflict his spirit. Now the meaning of that delivering him up to Satan was, that he should be solemnly excommunicated, which, when it is performed as it ought to be, *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, and with the power of the Lord Jesus, then, as the Church cuts them off from communion with them, so God from communion with himself; and he withdraws all fellowship with their spirits, as was before declared, and so leaves them alone in darkness and to desertions; and not only so, but delivereth them up to Satan, not with a commission to carry them on to more sin (for the end propounded by the apostle was thereby to destroy the flesh, (ver. 5.) not to nourish it by provoking him

to more sin), but to terrify and afflict his conscience, and to stir up therein the guilt of sin and terrors for it; which God sanctifies to humble a man and to mortify the flesh: and thus when that Corinthian was excommunicated, and given up to him, did Satan deal with him; for (2 Cor. ii. 7.) he was nigh being *swallowed up of too much sorrow*; and this occasioned by Satan, *whose devices we are not ignorant of*, says the apostle ver. 11.—Now, as every ordinance hath the peculiar work it is appointed for,—an inward effect to accompany it in a man's spirit; so this, and that proper effect, and inward working and event of this great ordinance of excommunication, is terror, sorrow, and desertion of spirit, thereby to humble a man, even as it is the proper effect of the sacraments to convey comfort and assurance and to convey the seal of the Spirit: and when this ordinance is neglected or omitted, when yet gross and scandalous sins require it, then a man belonging to God, God himself often works thus, and inflicts this on him without that ordinance. Thus he dealt with David and others after gross sins. God inwardly excommunicates and casts them out of his presence, and from all comforts found in his ordinances, although they are not refused by men to come to them; dealing herein as a father that is a public magistrate with an unruly child, after some great misdemeanor, though he cast him not off; yet he may send him to the gaol, to be, for example's sake, imprisoned; for the gaoler to take him, and to clap irons on him,—to have him put down into the dungeon, where he sees no light,—and into the Little Ease, where he is in so strait a condition as

he can neither sit, nor stand, nor lie, as Elihu expresseth it, in Job xxxvi. 16 : he calleth it *bringing into a strait place, binding them in fetters and cords of affliction ; and then he shews them their transgression, and wherein they have exceeded.*—Ver. 8, 9.

Yea, and thirdly, this God doth not only presently after the sins were committed, but sometimes a long while after, and that when they have been often confessed ; yea, and after that God hath pardoned them also in our consciences, as well as in Heaven ; yet the guilt may return again and leave us in darkness.—Thus Job xiii. 26, for *the sins of his youth* (which questionless he had humbled himself for, and had assurance of the pardon of, yet) God did *write bitter things against him* for them many years after ; and made him possess them, as himself speaks. God gave him over to the gaoler, and put him into the Little Ease in prison. *Thou puttest my feet into the stocks,* he says, ver. 27. For as the power of sin and the law of sin is but in part done away in our members, so in our consciences the guilt of sin is likewise but in part done away, in regard of our apprehensions of the pardon of them ; and, therefore, as those lusts we had thought dead, and that they would never have risen again, do sometimes revive and trouble us afresh, coming with new assaults, — so in like manner may the guilt of those sins revive which we thought long before had been pardoned ; and after the commission of some new act, or forgetfulness of the old, and security about them, God may let them loose upon us afresh, that we shall look upon them as if they never had been pardoned.

Now the reason of all these particulars, both why gross sins, especially if against light, when not confessed thoroughly, should yet after many years cast us into such fits of desertion is,

Because therein we rebel against God's Spirit ; and that Spirit doth deal with us as we with him. If you grieve him, he grieves you ;—if you rebel against him he fights against you as an enemy ; so Isaiah lxii. 10, *They rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.* Now to sin against light is called *Rebellion*, so Job xxiv. 11. When men go about to extinguish and darken the Light of Direction, which God had set up in their hearts to guide their paths by, God puts out the Light of Comfort, and so leaves them to darkness ; but especially then, when our hearts are so full of guile as we plead that they are no sins : or extenuate them, as David in all likelihood did (Psalm xxxii.) ; in reference to which he says, in ver, 2 of that Psalm, that *that man is a blessed man, in whom is no guile* ; and in Psalm li. 6, *Thou desirest truth in the inward parts*, David had dealt guilefully and deceitfully in that sin. If man keeps a sin under his tongue, and will not be convinced of it, nor bring it forth by confession, God in that case brings him to the rack, as they do traitors, to confess ; and if it be that any of our old sins revive, and cause these terrors, it is because we began to look on them as past and gone, and though we needed not go on to humble ourselves any more for them, making account they are so buried, as that they will never rise again ; whereas the remembrance of them should keep

us low, and humble us all our days. It is laid to the charge of them, in Ezek. xxvi. 22, *That they remembered not that they lay in their blood.* We are apt to think that time wears out the guilt of sins; but to God they are as fresh as if they had been committed yesterday; and, therefore, nothing wears them out but repentance. Great sins forgiven must not be forgotten.

Fifthly, In case of a stubborn stiff spirit under outward afflictions,—when we will not mend nor stoop to God. This may be part of the case mentioned in Isaiah lvii. 16, where God, alleging the reason why he contended with a poor soul of his gives an account of it, ver. 17. You shall see where the quarrel began:—*For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth*; that is, for some inordinate affection, which we call Concupiscense; he mentioneth not a gross act of sin committed, so much as some lust harboured, for which God began to be angry, to shew the effects of his anger in thus smiting him,—perhaps with some outward cross first: *I was wroth and smote him*; and when that did no good, God began to be more angry, and to hide himself. *I hid my face*; and this he speaks of inward affliction, which he also calleth (ver. 16) *contending with the soul*; and so far leaving it, as that the spirit was ready to fail:—it came to inward affliction in the end; and he further intimates the cause of all this; *He went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* When lighter and outward strokes will not take us off, God leaves and deserts our spirits, and wounds them; and the reason is (for in this case what course else should God take?) for either he must give him up to hardness of

heart, and leave him to his stubbornness, and so he should have lost his child; but that God is resolved he will not do. *I will heal him*, saith he, ver. 18. When, therefore, the heart remains stubborn under other strokes, he hath no way left in his ordinary course and progress, in the way of means, but to lay strokes upon his spirit, and wound that; and this yoke is like to break and tame him, if any; for this he cannot bear. Other outward afflictions, man's natural spirit, stoutness, and stubbornness, may bear, and hath borne, even in Heathen men: they have endured any thing rather than be put out of their way. *The spirit of man will sustain its infirmities*; but in this, *the spirit fails in them*, ver. 16. Other afflictions are but particular; but as taking some stars of comfort out of the firmament, when others are still left to shine to them; but when God's countenance is hid, the sun itself, the fountain of light, is darkened, and so a general darkness befalls them; and, therefore, then the heart is driven to God, and broken off from all things else; and then God delights to restore and to comfort a man again:—*I will restore comfort to him*, ver. 18.

Sixthly, In case of deserting his truth, and not professing it, and appearing for it when he calls us to do it. In this case he left many of the martyrs; many of whom, especially until those in Queen Mary's days (when with the Gospel's increase, and the light of it, God gave more strength also); and some then also did desert the truth for a while; and then God, in respect of comfort, deserted them; and then they recovering God's favour again, upon repentance and a new

resolution taken, to stick to the profession of the truth whatever came of it, that their desertion made them the more bold and resolute; and this was in part Jonah's case, who having a commission sealed him to go to Nineveh, with a message from God, he withdrew himself and went another way; and God, in the midst of his security, casts him into a whale's belly; and when he was there, God withdraws himself from him, as if he meant never to own him more; insomuch that Jonah says (chap. ii. 4) *Then I said, I am cast out of thy presence*; and there is this equity in this dealing of God thus with us:—That as when we are ashamed of Christ, the punishment fitted to it is, that Christ will be ashamed of us; so when we will not witness for God, there is no reason his Spirit should witness to us; and so when we seem to evade persecution for the cross of Christ, then it is meet God should meet with us, and take us in hand himself,—which is far worse.

Seventhly, In case of unthankfulness, and too common an esteem had of assurance and light of God's countenance, and of freedom from those terrors and doubtings which others are in, which is a sin Christians are apt to run into; for as the light of the sun, because it is ordinary, is not regarded, none mind it, or look at the sun, but, as he said, when it is in the eclipse—so a continual sunshine of God's favour enjoyed, occasioneth but a common esteem of it; and in this case God withdraws those comforts and assurance, because they are the greatest and sweetest comforts of all other; and which to abuse, or not to value, of all other, provokes, most; therefore in this case God takes them

away ; for, as Hosea ii. 9, in case of being unthankful in outward mercies, God took them away, and restored them not again till they esteemed them better, and acknowledged whence they had them ; so also in spiritual assurance, light, and comfort, doth God in like manner deal.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Third General Head, The Ends for which God leaveth his Children unto this Darkness. First. Such as are drawn from God, his faithfulness, &c.

NOW let us come to those ends which God may have in this his dealing with one that fears and obeys him, which are many and holy ones.

First, To shew his power and faithfulness in upholding, raising up, and healing such a spirit again as hath been long and deadly wounded with inward terrors, which is as great an evidence of his power as any other ; and therefore, saith Heman (Psalm lxxxviii. 10.) *Wilt thou skew wonders to the dead ? Shall thy faithfulness be declared in destruction ?* ver. 11 ; that is, in raising my soul up again to joy and comfort, which is as much as to raise up a dead man ; nay more, as much as to raise up a soul already in Hell ;-- “ for the same terrors,” says he, “ that destroy them, do in like manner seize on me.” In Eph. i. 19, it is said, *That the exceeding greatness of God’s power was*

seen in raising Christ from death to life; and wherein lay principally the demonstration of that power?—not simply in raising his body up again; that was no more than he did to others: but in Acts ii. 24, the power is said to be shewn in this, That he having loosed the pains of death, wherewith it was impossible he should be held, he was raised up again,—his soul was heavy unto death with terrors; and those pains in themselves were deadly, though not to him, in that he being God as well as man, it was impossible for him to sink under them. Now, therefore, to raise up and glorify his soul that was so bruised, wounded, and pierced through and through, herein lay the wonder; and such a wonder God sheweth in recovering Heman; and to shew the greatness of this work, let us consider a little the depth and deadliness of this kind of distress: it is compared to the bruising of a reed; which, when it is bruised, who can make it stand upright again? It is called *the wounding of the Spirit* (Prov. xxviii.) which no creature knows how to come at to heal, none but God, who is the Father of Spirits, who made them, and knows how to mend them. It is not only called the Sickness of the Spirit, as Isaiah xxxiii. 24. (where the want of the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, makes poor souls to say I am sick; which to heal is made the prerogative of *the Sun of Righteousness, arising with healing in his wings*, Mal. iv. 2.); but also it is called Death and Destruction; for so in Psa. lxxxviii, Heman calls that distress that he was in; and the reason is, God's favour is our life, by which we live and are upheld; which, therefore, being with-

drawn, the soul is ready to fail and faint, to come to nothing, and sink into destruction (Isaiah lvii. 16.); and again, The pains of those terrors are more violent and more powerful to hold us under, than are the pangs of death; the wounds of the guilt of sin being as deadly and as strong as the lusts of the power of it; and it requires as great a power to dissolve and scatter them; for all the strength that the law and God's justice hath, sin also hath to back it; *for the strength of sin is the law.*—1 Cor. xv. 56.

Secondly, As to know the power of Christ's resurrection, so the fellowship of his sufferings, that thereby the soul may be made more conformable to him, as it is in Phil. iii. 10. As there are the sufferings for Christ, so the sufferings of Christ; and God makes his people partakers of both,—persecutions without, and terrors within, with which Christ's soul was filled; then when, as the text says, *He was heard in that he feared, and his soul was heavy to death; and My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*—and so in Isaiah liii. *It pleased God to bruise and wound him.* Now then, to conform us to his image, we that are his brethren, and are the persons guilty, must suffer somewhat in spirit as well as he, and have a portion therein also; and, therefore, as Christ did suffer both inwardly and outwardly, so do many of his members. *If you have suffered with him, ye shall also be glorified with him.* The sons of Zebedee would have been glorified in Christ's kingdom more than the rest of the apostles; but, says Christ, *Are ye able to drink of the cup whereof I shall drink?* Matt. xx. 22, 23.—He means

that *cup* delivered to him at his crucifying, let this cup pass, the bitter cup of God's anger; and are ye able to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? namely, outward afflictions and persecutions for the name of God, which are called Baptism; because they set God's mark on us that we are God's—as baptism doth seal to us that we are his; and because then the Church owns us, and takes notice of us as sincere, when we have believed and suffered, as at baptism the church receives us; and of this baptism Christ speaks in the present tense, because that he was already baptized with outward persecutions; but the cup, which was inward affliction of his spirit,—this he was to drink off at his agony, which I shall drink of in the future;—which cup cast him into that sweat ere he came to the bottom.

This, though no creature was able to drink off to the bottom, yet taste they might: and he tells them they should (ver. 23.): *Ye shall drink of it, &c.*; that is, taste of inward affliction and desertion, as well as of outward persecution,—terrors within and without; and all to make us conformable to him, and so come to know in part what he endured for us.

Thirdly, To put the greater difference between the estate of God's children here and that hereafter in Heaven: to which very purpose is that speech of the apostle, in 2 Cor. v. 7, that here *we walk by faith, not by sight*: he had said before that the estate of believers in this life is an estate of absence from the Lord, wherein we want his presence, and so enjoy not the sight of him; and, therefore, are to exercise faith the

more, which is peculiar to this estate, and a grace given on purpose for us to walk by, whilst we live here; and though sometimes here we have some light and glimpses of him and his presence, yet we walk not by sight always; for we walk by faith, not by sight. We shall have enough of the sight of God hereafter, when we shall see him as we are seen *face to face*, and be *evermore with the Lord, when in his light we shall see light, and be satisfied with his image*. We may therefore be content to want it here sometimes; you may well endure overcloudings here, and sometimes that all sight should be taken away; for in the world to come there will not be one cloud to all eternity. *Your inheritance is light*. Col. i. 12, 13. Light is your portion; but now is the seed-time, and *light is sown* (Psalm xcvi. 11.) *for the righteous*. You must be content to let it lie under ground; the longer it doth so, the greater crop and harvest will come up in the end;—you must endure the vicissitude of day and night here,—“Sorrow” over night, and joy in the “morning;” for hereafter you shall have continual day, and no night.

This difference is put between Earth and Heaven, to make Heaven the sweeter, and to exercise faith. The estate in Heaven is as a state of perfect and continual health; which, though we may prize, we are ever and anon sick here, and qualms come over our consciences, for fear our sins are not forgiven; but when we come thither, “The inhabitants there shall be no more sick; but their sins shall be forgiven them.” Isaiah xxxiii. 24.

The fourth end is, To let us see whence spiritual

comforts and refreshings come : that God alone keeps the keys of that cupboard, and alone dispenseth them how and when he pleaseth : that we may know, as it is in Isaiah xlv. 6, 7, that it is the " Lord that formeth the light, and creates darkness, evil, and peace ;" and that as " affliction riseth not out of the dust," as Job speaks, so nor comfort out of our hearts ; whereas, if continually we enjoyed comfort, we should be apt so to think. God will let us see that our hearts are nothing but darkness ; and that to cause any spiritual comfort is as much as to create light at first ; therefore, he says, " I create the fruit of the lips, peace " (Isaiah lvii.) ; and that he it is that doth " command light to shine into our hearts, who commanded light at first to shine out of darkness " (2 Cor. iv. 4) ; which can no way more fully be manifested than by withdrawing that light sometimes, and leaving us to darkness. As why doth he sometimes assist us in prayer, and fill the sails, and again at other times leave our hearts empty ? It is not that we may learn that lesson (Rom. viii. 26.) " That it is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities ? " and that we of ourselves know not what, nor how to ask ; which lesson, although he sometimes strengthens us, yet we are difficult in learning, nor are easily brought to acknowledge our dependence on him for his assistance. In like manner, for the same end doth he sometimes hide, and then again sometimes reveal himself, to shew that he is the immediate Fountain of Comfort, *The God of all comforts* (2 Cor. i. 4) that so we might know whom to thank, whom to depend on, whom to go to for com-

fort : it being as difficult a thing for us to go out of ourselves and from the creatures for comfort to God alone, as to go out of ourselves to Christ alone for righteousness. Hereby also we see, that though we have ever so many outward comforts, that yet the comforts of our spirits do depend on God alone ; —for if he, in the midst of them, withdraw himself, they all prove but miserable comforters.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Second Sort of Ends, for the Trial and Discovery of Graces, especially of Faith.

OTHER ends God hath to make trial of our graces, and a discovery of them. The same end that God had in leading his people through the “ great wilderness, where no water was, where scorpions stung them ” (Deut. viii. 16.) which was to prove them, —the same ends hath God in suffering his people to go through this desert,—barrenness, and darkness, where no light is, and where terrors of the law do sting them (for all those his dealings then were types of God’s dealings with his people now) even to prove them, and to make trial of their hearts ; for the same ends as he left Hezekiah to the power of sin, in the point of sanctification ; namely, *To know what was in his heart*, doth he also leave others of his children to the guilt of sin, in the point of justification, to discover

also what is in their hearts. This is conceived to have been his end in deserting Job, to shew what strong patience and unconquered faith was in him. There be many gracious dispositions, which actually have not opportunity to discover themselves, but in case of this kind of desertion; some of those which are the highest acts of grace and purest fruits of it, and which are the surest evidences of the truth of grace, would never appear but in case of such desertion. For instance, then it is known whether a man loves God for himself, and for those excellences of wisdom, holiness, and goodness that are in him, when yet he knows not whether he himself shall be ever the better for them, yet or no;—then also it is manifested to be pure, sincere, and unfeigned obedience; then it is seen if his repentance is true, when he repents not of it, then when he is out of hopes of any reward for it; then it is seen his sorrow is godly sorrow, when, though the sentence of condemnation is read to him in his own apprehension and conscience, and he verily thinks he is taking his leave of God for ever, and going to execution, yet he can down on his kness, ask him forgiveness, and mourn that ever he wronged him;—is angry and displeased with himself that a God so good, so just, should have so just cause to be angry and displeased with him; and he finds he could have some rest and contentment that God is glorified upon one who hath so much dishonoured him. Such dispositions as these would never see the light, if it were not for this darkness. Nature, when conclusions are tried upon it, and it is put out of its course, then it discovers itself (even as anger discovers itself when

a man is vexed) as if you would know the properties that are in herbs, you must try conclusions with them ; so also here doth God with a man's graces,—and then they discover their most occult and hidden properties.

It were endless to go over all particular graces :—I will but more distinctly instance in that glorious grace of faith, which in this trial deserves more than all graces else ; and though in all the varieties of conditions we pass through, it stands us in stead, yet in deserts it alone doth many wonders. Standing like Samson, encountering and conquering alone, when there is none to help ; because, likewise, it is that grace which is called for in the text, *Let him trust in the name of the Lord* ; as being that grace, which God principally tries, to discover the truth, and magnify the power thereof in such deserts.

1st. This is certain, there is no grace God tries more than this grace of faith. Therefore, 1 Peter i. 7 : *Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, being tried in the fire, might be found to glory, praise, and honour ; that is, both to the honour of God who is believed in, and also of faith itself, which is the most glorious grace a Christian hath ; which God loves to try, to that end the glory of it may appear. In the fifth verse he having said, that we are kept by the power of God to salvation ;—if any now should ask, Wherein is that power of keeping us most shewn ? He answers, In and through faith ; Ye are kept by the power of God through faith :—and if you ask when and wherein is the power of God*

through faith seen most? He instanceth *in manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, &c.*

Now then, as of all graces, God would have faith tried,—

2ndly. So of all temptations, none try it more than desertion of God's countenance, this of darkness and of terrors; other temptations strike but obliquely at faith, but these lay direct battery to our faith; for they strike at that which is the immediate aim and object of it, namely, That God is a man's God. These speak the direct contrary to what faith endeavours to apprehend, and that directly, and not by consequence only. Again: other temptations are easily borne with and answered, whilst the assurance of God's favour remains unshaken; it answers them all, and shakes them off, as he the viper off his hand; but when that shall begin to be questioned (as in this case it is) who is able to stand!—and what is able to strengthen a man then, but the power of faith! as Solomon says of the spirit of a man, that it will bear all kind of infirmities, if itself be whole; but if it be wounded, who can bear it?—so I say of assurance; if it be weakened and battered, the very foundations thereby are shaken; a man's freehold touched, the root struck, now in such a case it is faith's peculiar office to stand a man in stead, when nothing else can; therefore, he says, let him trust, because it helps thus at this dead lift.

3rdly. Again:—In these conflicts of faith with desertions, consisteth the height of our Christian warfare. This is the highest pitched battle, the greatest, and, as it were, the last brunt, upon which all is either

won or lost ; for in these a man encounters with God himself, apprehended as an enemy. God called out Job, to try him by fighting a single combat with Satan ; and he became, as I may so say, too hard for Satan alone ; and God joins against him also : now then, to bear the brunt and shock of his wrath, and yet to stand upon a man's feet,—this to the utmost argueth the strength of faith. Hosea xii. 3. It is said of Jacob, *That by strength he had power with God ;* it argued strength indeed ; and this is done by faith, by the power whereof (God's power rather supporting it) a man relies on God, when all his dealings would argue he had forsaken a man ; that though God puts on ever so angry a countenance, looks ever so sternly, yet faith is not dashed out of countenance, but can read love in his angry looks, and trust God beyond what he sees, it being the evidence of things not seen ; —then faith goes wholly out of itself, and seeing nothing in itself but barely a capacity of mercy, and plenteous redemption, which it knows to be in God. This faith is a miracle of miracles, for it is founded as the earth, upon mere nothing in itself, and yet bears the weight and stress of sins, devil, yea of God himself ; and this is the faith ye are converted by, in *believing then on him that justifies the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5, and that which we must live by when all comforts fail ; and this is that faith which must stand you in stead at death, when the king of fears comes and besiegeth you ; and this is the faith *that is to honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*.

CHAPTER XV.

*Six Ends more.—For the increasing of several Graces,
and destroying Corruptions.*

SIXTHLY. As it makes for the trial and discovery of graces, so it is a means sanctified to increase them, and to eat our corruptions.

1st. It is a means to destroy the flesh. The incestuous Corinthian was to be delivered to Satan; that is, to be terrified; to destroy the flesh. As corrosives eat out dead flesh, so these terrors the dead corruptions; and the reviving of the guilt of old sins doth kill the seeds of those that remain in the heart; for if an outward affliction, which crosseth but the satisfaction of a lust, is a means sanctified by God to kill a lust, then much more the inward terror, which the conscience feels, and which ariseth immediately from the guilt of a sin, must needs be a means much more.

2ndly. It is a means to humble; so Deut. viii. 16. The end of the biting of the Israelites by scorpions, which were the types of these stings and terrors, were, as to prove, so to humble them; and for this end was that buffeting by Satan (we have so often mentioned, 2 Cor. xii. 7.) to keep down being exalted above measure; so also, *Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God*; and if in any other affliction his mighty hand lays hardest on, surely in these.

3dly. It is a means to bring you in more assurance and establishment. 1 Peter v. 10, *The God of all grace, after you have suffered a while, stablish and strengthen you.* He knew they could not be settled till they had suffered in this or some other kind. The tree roots itself the more it is shaken. Comforts abound the more that sufferings do abound. That light is clearest and strongest that ariseth out of darkness, because God creates it. Those things which men doubt of most, God gives the greatest evidence of it in the end.

4thly, It trains you up to fear God more, and to obey him. Therefore in the text, these are added as the concomitant dispositions of the soul in such a case; for of all other, these of fearing God, and obeying him, do most eminently and sensibly appear in that estate. *Christ himself learnt obedience by what he suffered,* Heb. v. 8. The yoke tames the wanton wildness in beasts, and makes them serviceable, breaks them; and so do these the stubbornness of a man's spirit.

5thly. To set believers' hearts to work to pray more and more earnestly. So the apostle's buffetings (2 Cor. xii.) made him pray thrice; that is, often; so Christ (Luke xxii. 44.) being *in an agony*, he *prayed more earnestly*; and being in fears, he did lift up strong cries, Heb. v. 7; so Heman, by reason of his terrors, was a man much in prayers. *I have cried day and night before thee,* Psalm lxxxviii. 1. Christians that enjoy not communion with God, yet if they think they have not lost him, they are secure and lazy in

prayers ; but if they apprehend once that their beloved is gone, or that they are in danger to lose him, then they will seek him all the world over, but they will find him, and make hue and cry after him, as the church did there, Cant. v. 6, 7, 8.

6thly. It causeth them to prize the light of God's countenance the more when they again obtain it ; and to set a higher price upon it, and to endeavour by close walking with God, as children of light, to keep it, to prize it more than corn and oil. Cant. iii. at the 2nd verse, she loseth him ; but at the 4th verse, she finds him again, and then she holds him, and will not let him go.

ISAIAH L. 10.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no Light?

FIRST USE.—IF those that fear God and obey him are exposed to such a condition as hath been described, then, *Who is among you that feareth [not] the Lord, that obeyeth [not] the voice of his servants?* You that live in known sins, and in omission of known duties, which God's servants, your ministers, tell you you ought to perform; that pray not with your families, who make not conscience of your speeches, nor dealings, &c.—where shall you appear if the righteous be scarcely saved? If they, whom God hath loved with a love as great and unchangeable as himself, yet suffer his terrors here, what shall you do whom he hath set himself to hate, and to shew the power of his wrath upon without repentance? If these things are done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry? which is fitted for wrath and the fire, even as stubble fully dry, as the prophet speaketh. If such an estate of darkness and horror befall them that are children of light, whose inheritance is light, then what is reserved for you that are in darkness, and love darkness more than light? and if this befalls them for not stirring up the grace which they already have, what to you that

are utterly devoid of it? and not only so, but despise and scoff it? If this befalls them for not humbling themselves for old sins, though long since committed, what will befall you for going on to add new to the old with greediness? if to them for neglecting the opportunities of drawing nigher to God, what to you for neglecting the offer of grace, and trampling under foot the blood of Christ? All you that think there is no Hell; or if there be, that it is not so dark as it is usually painted, look upon Heman, ready to run distracted through terrors, and to give up the ghost every moment, (Psalm lxxxviii.) when yet his body was strong, and outward estate whole! look upon David lying upon the wheel, and the Spirit of God breaking his bones, when as otherwise, he being a king, had all outward things at will. Look upon holy Job, chap. vi:—*O that my grief were weighed! it is heavier than the sand, and my words are swallowed up; just as if he had said, I am not able to express and utter my grief! The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinketh up my spirit, the terrors of God do set themselves in battle array against me,* verse 4. insomuch that, at the 8th verse, he wisheth God would cut him off; and, *Is my strength the strength of stones, says he, or my flesh brass? as he complains that he should be able to hold out against such fierce encounters. My brethren, God's people find pains beyond those of the stone, or gout, and tooth-ache; the falling of God's wrath on the conscience is more than the dropping a little scalding rheum on a tooth;*

and yet these, which Job and David felt, are but a taste of that cup, which you that obey not, must drink off to the bottom ; and it is eternity to the bottom : *There is a cup in the hand of the Lord, and it is full of mixture*, Psalm lxxv. 8 ; that is, all the bitter ingredients in the world are in it ; the quintessence of evils are strained into it, and here indeed God pours out of the same, as it follows there ; that is, in this life some few sprinklings of it fall from the top of the cup, which his own do taste and drink of ; but the bottom, the *dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall drink thereof, and wring them out* ; that is, leave none behind ; but the vials of it, which will never be emptied, shall be poured forth even to the utmost drop. And if God's people do begin to taste of it, as Christ himself did, it could not pass him ; and Zebedee's sons were to pledge him, as was observed ; then as God says by Jeremiah, ch. xxv. xxvii. xxviii. xxix. If my people have drank of it, and begun to you, and *I have brought evil upon the city that is called by my name, then certainly you shall drink of it and be drunk, and spue, and fall, and never rise again*. If God's people be thus shut up in darkness, what darkness is reserved for you ? even as Jude says, (ver. 13.) *Blackness of darkness.—Darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth*, Matt. xxii. 13. *Blackness of darkness*, because there is not a cranny of light, nor one beam of comfort that shines in to all eternity. And this is not for a moment or a few years, but for ever. You that live many days in pleasure here, and rejoice in them

all,—*remember the days of darkness, for they are many*, says Solomon, Eccles. xi. 8; many indeed! —days!—an eternal night that shall know no end,—which no day shall follow!

SECOND USE.—Who is among you that fears the Lord, and is translated out of the state of darkness, and yet never was in this darkness of desertion which I have described unto you? You that have been free from those terrors of conscience, which are beyond all the miseries the world hath (for as the joy of the Holy Ghost is unspeakable and glorious, so these terrors are unutterable, and insupportably grievous) which yet souls that fear God, and have obeyed him more than you, have been made the anvils of. You that have been nursed and indulged, and fed with sweetmeats, handed into the wine-cellar, and have had all the Trinity to sup with you, when others have eaten gall and wormwood, as it is in Lam. iii. 19; and likewise you, who though you enjoy not much ravishing joy and peace which *passeth understanding*, yet *being justified by faith*, you have a solid peace with God; and so walk in freedom of spirit, in the use of God's ordinances, and the performance of holy duties,—let me out of this doctrine give all such this great instruction:—To take notice that such kind of troubles there are that do befall God's people, beyond what they have experience of,—many there are that think not so; Job's friends did not, and therefore censured him. And this is a necessary instruction.

1. For this very knowledge of it doth prepare men

for such a condition, if it should befall them; and therefore beforehand to prepare them, he wrote too for afflictions; the apostle bids them *not think it strange concerning the fiery trial*, 1 Pet. iv. 12; for if they be strange to any, then if they befall them at any time, they are the more grievous. As if some strange disease befall a man which he had never heard of before, no physician hath skill in; it amazeth a man, and makes him desperate; but if he hath heard that such and such have had it as well as himself, and have been recovered, this something helps to assuage the bitterness of it to him. Job's trial was a strange trial to his friends, and therefore you see how unskillfully they go about to heal it; and so left the sore worse than they found it;—so that to prepare you for it, it is good to take notice that such a condition there is. In like manner also, in 1 Cor. xiii. 10, for the same end, the apostle says of other kind of trials, that *nothing had befallen them but what is common to man*;—there is a great relief in that, that it is common, and others have been in the like.

Secondly also, Take notice of it, that you may be kept more in dependence upon God, and that you may fear him more whilst you live in this world: men that know not any afflictions in this life beyond what they see with their eyes, and feel in the outward man; nothing beyond loss of friends and credit, these do often fear God, though truly; and when they come to part with any of these for God, are less willing; as when they must endure a cross rather than sin, are apter to *chuse affliction rather than sin*, as Job says:

but when they shall hear and know that God's wrath is beyond Pharaoh's wrath, as Moses knew it; who yet in the vast apprehension of the greatness of it, cries out, *Who hath known the power of thy wrath?* Psalm xc. then they will obey God, and fear him more than they would all the kings of the earth, as Moses did, *not fearing the wrath of Pharaoh*, Heb. xi. 27. When men enjoy a confluence of all carnal worldly comforts, and think their mountain strong, well built, with wife and children about them, riches, health, and honours, they think they are then more out of God's danger than other men, and are apt to say, *Soul, thou hast goods for many years*: but know, that God, without taking either thy goods away or thy soul away, can, in this life, put thy spirit into such a condition of darkness, as thou wouldst give all the world to have a moment's ease; when all other comforts shall be to thee but as the white of an egg, as Job says. As he hath joys the world gives not, so he hath afflictions the world inflicts not. Therefore fear him more than the loss of all; obey him rather than to keep all; for God can meet with thee in the midst of all: so he met with David, though a king, and then all his wives and kingdom could not comfort him, till God would heal the bones that he had broken.

Thirdly, Take notice there are such troubles, and learn not to censure others when they are in this condition; thou walkest in the light, and seest another in the dungeon; he may be dearer to God than thou. It was Job's friends' fault, who having not had experience of such a condition in themselves, concluded he

was an hypocrite ; if you thus judge then (as Asaph says) You condemn the generation of the just. And herein Satan also is gratified, and the ways of grace scandalized. . If God use his children thus, *Curse God and die*, says Job's wife,—and so the foolish men and women of the world.

Fourthly. *Pass your sojourning here in fear, and serve him with fear*, 1 Peter i. 17 ; *for even our God is a consuming fire*, Hebrews xii. 29. Keep thy heart in awe with the knowledge of such an estate ; this kept Job in awe, and made him so strict a man all his days. Read the thirty-first chapter throughout, and you shall see what a righteous man he was, and then see the reason of all (ver. 23) : Destruction from the Lord was a terror to me ; and to the same purpose also (chap. iv. 16.) he says, that he had always feared that which had now befallen him, whereof the distress of his spirit was the greatest evil, this he feared might befall him when he had most assurance.

Lastly. Be thankful that God spares thee. Perhaps thy body is weak, and he knows thou art but flesh ; and so stirs not up all his wrath : if he should fall on thee as on others, it would destroy thee. But consider that thou hadst a stone in thy heart as well as any other : hath God cured it by gentle draughts, and so dissolved it, and carried it away ; when as he hath cut others, and bound them, and put them to much pain in taking of it out ? Oh ! be thankful. You that are healthful and have strong bodies, are you not thankful when you see others sick, and lie bedrid, roaring of the stone, tooth-ache, gout, whereof you are

free? and ought you not to be much more for the healthfulness of your spirits (cheerfulness being the marrow of them) whereas others are sick (as the expression is, Isaiah xxxiii. 10.) for want of assurance that their sins are forgiven; others roar all day, as on a rack; and are distracted, almost out of their wits; and even themselves are a burthen to themselves. Oh, be thankful that it is not so with you!

THIRD USE.—“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and hath been in darkness,” but now are out of that eclipse, and walk in the light again, you who have been in the dungeon, and have been set free again; who have had the wounds of your spirits healed, your souls raised from the nethermost Hell, when they drew nigh to the grave, and have found a ransom; learn your duty also.

First, to be thankful to God and Jesus Christ, and to love the more; for you know and have tasted what he did for you; you know how bitter a few sips of the cup were, which he drank off and took down,—and therefore must needs love him more. You also have more experience of God’s power and faithfulness, and what a miracle God hath wrought in raising you up again;—He hath shewn you wonders among the dead, as Heman speaks: be thankful. Thus David, in Psalm cxvi. 3, 4, compared with the first verse: *I love the Lord;—and why? The sorrows of death compassed me, the pains of Hell gat hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow; I was brought low, and he helped me.*

Secondly. Learn to pity others in that condition. Who can do it better than you, that have experience of the like? If you hear of any soul in distress, it is expected of you to pray for him more than of another. Christ learnt to pity us the more in all our infirmities, by bearing our infirmities himself: to that end God raised you up, that you might be able to comfort others with the comforts you have received; and might pray for them. Therefore Isa. lvii. 17, when any poor soul is smitten, God, as is there said, is moved to restore him again, for his mourners' sakes as well as his own.

Thirdly. Declare what God had done for you; you have been in Hell: give warning to others from coming there: *We knowing the terror of the Lord, persuade men.* If the rich man had come from Hell, what stories would he have told to have scared all his brethren! Tell you the like:—You have seen the wonders of God in the deeps, now you are ashore; tell men of the rocks and shelves and storms they are like to meet with in such and such courses: of uncleanness, worldliness, &c. David says, when he should have once his bones that were broken healed again, that then he would teach sinners God's ways.

Fourthly. Take heed of what may prove the fuel of such a condition. The Devil may come and cast you into your old fits, if he find the same materials to work upon; such as gross sins, acts of uncleanness, lying, unjust dealing, &c. You know what brought David to his broken bones; and likewise take heed of performing duties formally, coldly, and in hypocrisy,

and of resting in them, which are but as a hollow tooth, as Solomon speaks; that is, broken, better out of the head than in; these may cause the tooth-ache again. Take heed of sinning against light; if the Devil found no such things in you, he would not trouble you: so also, get small straggling doubts answered; let them not lie neglected, they may come in together one day, and make an army; though severally and apart, as they now rise in your consciences scattered, you can despise and neglect them.

FOURTH USE.—*The fourth and main use, to such as fear God and walk in darkness.* Then, who is among you walking in darkness, and yet fears to offend God as much as Hell, and endeavours and desires to obey him in all things, as much as to go to Heaven? Such, when they find God withdrawn, and their hearts left comfortless, their spirits dead and hard, do call God's love and their own estates into question, especially if they were in the sunshine before, but now sit in the valley of the shadow of death: if dandled in God's lap before and kissed, now to be lashed with terrors and his sharpest rods, and on the tenderest place, the conscience; to have their songs in night turned in "writing bitter things against them," how bitter is it to thee! Once they say they could never come to the throne of grace but their hearts were welcomed, their heads stroked, and they went seldom away without a "white stone," an "earnest penny," put into their hands: but now "God is a terror to them;" and when they arise from prayer or

the like duty, their hearts condemn them more than when they began. Once, they never looked to Heaven but they had a smile; now they may cry day and night, and not get a good look from him. Once, say they, they never hoist up sail to any duty, but they had a fair and good wind; God went along with them; but now they have both wind and tide, God and the deadness of their own hearts against them. In a word, God is gone, light is gone: God answers them neither by vision nor by prophets; neither in praying nor in hearing; and therefore hath forsaken them, cast them off; yea, will never be merciful! Oh, woe to us, say they, we are undone!

You err, poor souls, not knowing the Scriptures, and the manner of your God, and of his dealings with his people; to think that his mind is changed when his countenance is, and so to run away from him, as Jacob did from Laban; to think he hath cast you off, when he is but returned to his place, that you may seek him more earnestly! Like children, when their mother is gone aside a little, you fall a-crying, as if you were undone. So it is that you are always in the extremes; if he shines on you, then your mountain shall never be removed; if he hides his face, then he will never be merciful. This, as it is a fond and childish fault, so it is beastly and brutish also thus to judge; I term it so, because ye are led therein by sense; and, like beasts, believe nothing but what you feel and see; and measure God's love by his looks and outward carriage, which when Asaph did in other afflictions, as you in this, he cries out he was ignorant,

and as a beast, Psalm lxxiii. 22. What ! will you trust God no further than you see him ? It will shame you one day, to think what a great deal of trouble your childishness put the Spirit of God unto. As what a trouble is it to a wise man to have a fond and foolish wife ; who, if he be but abroad, and about necessary business, perhaps for her maintenance, yet then she complains he regards her not, but leaves her : if he chides her for any fault, then she says he hates her ; and is so much distempered by it, as a whole day's kindness cannot quiet her again. Thus deal you with God ; and though he hath given you ever so many fair and clear evidences of his love, and these ever so often reiterated and renewed, yet still you are jealous, never quiet, always doubting, questioning all upon the least frown, that either God must undo you, by letting you go on in your sinful dispositions, without ever rebuking of you ; or else lose the acknowledgment of all his love formerly shewn, and have it called in question by your peevish jealous misconstructions, upon every small expression of his anger towards you. Some of you that are less troubled, and thus "wanton against Christ," I would chide out of it.

But you that are more deeply and lastingly distressed, I pity you : I blame you not for being troubled ; for when he *hides his face, the creatures are troubled* ; Psalm civ. 29. God would have you lay it to heart when he is angry, Isaiah lvii. 17. God there took it ill, that when he smote him, he went on stubbornly. If you should not thus lay it to heart, it

were a sign you had no grace ; that you made not him your portion, if you could bear his absence and not mourn. Carnal men, having other comforts, can bear the want and absence of him well enough ; but not you, that have made him your portion, and exceeding great reward. But yet, though you are to lay it to heart, so as to mourn under it, yet not to be discouraged, to call all into question ; for though you change, yet not God, nor his love ; for his love is himself, 1 John iv. 8, 9, 10. We may change in our apprehensions and opinions, and God's outward carriages and dispensations may be changed towards us, but not his rooted love. We are not the same to-day that yesterday we were ; but *Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* To say that he hath cast you off, because he hath hid his face, is a fallacy fetched out of the Devil's topics, and injurious to him : for *in a little wrath have I hid my face for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,* Isa. liv. 8. First, I have but hid my face, not cast thee out of mind ; and though in anger, but a little anger ; and not long neither, but for a moment : and all that while I am not unmindful of thee ; I remember thee, &c. ; and this with kindness, from everlasting to everlasting. When the sun is eclipsed (which eclipse is rather of the earth than of the sun, which shines as it did) foolish people think it will never recover light ; but wise men know it will.

But you will say, If this desertion were but for a moment, it were something ; but mine hath been for many years.

How many years? This life is but a moment ; and God hath eternity of time to shew his love in ; time enough to make amends for a few frowns ;—Everlasting kindnesses. Remember, the text says, *One that fears God may walk in darkness* : not for a step or two, but many wearisome turns in it. Heman was afflicted from his youth : David so long, that he thought God had forgotten mercy, Psalm lxxvii. And doth his promise fail for ever ? Remember what is said in another case, (Luke xviii. 8.) That though *he bears long, yet he comes speedily* ; that is, though long in our eyes, yet speedily in his own ; who hath all time before him, and knows how much time is behind to be spent in embraces with you.

Yea, but you will say, it is not only hiding his face, but I suffer terrors ; he is wroth, he is turned enemy, he fights against me, and therefore I am a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction.

So it was with Job : (chap. xiii. 24.) *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy ?* So Isa. lxiii. 10. Psalm lxxxviii. 16. All these are but the effects of a temporal wrath. There is a wide difference between a child under wrath, and a child of wrath : thou mayest be a child under wrath, when not a child of wrath : God, as he may afflict you in your estates and bodies, so in your spirits, as a Father ; for *He is the Father of Spirits*, Heb. xii. 9.

TEN DIRECTIONS

For those who are more deeply troubled: and Means to be used how to recover Light and Comfort.

FOR their sakes who are thus more deeply troubled, I will prescribe some directions how they are to behave themselves in such a condition, so as to come more comfortably and the more speedily out of it: for it is in these long and great sicknesses of the soul as in those of the body, men are kept the longer in them, and under them, for want of right directions, and prescriptions as we see in long agues and fevers, and the like diseases.

FIRST DIRECTION.—Take heed of rash, desperate, impatient, and unbelieving speeches and wishes: such you will be forced to recal again with sorrow. As David, when he was in fears, uttered a most desperate speech, namely, that Samuel's prophecy concerning him, and message to him from God, that he should be king, would prove false; and he says not only, that *one day he should perish by the hand of Saul*. 1 Sam. xxvii. 1. the ground of which speech was, that he finding himself every day in some danger or other of his life; and so, though God had preserved him again and again, yet he thought that some of those many arrows which were shot against

him so continually, and which still so narrowly missed him, might at one time or other hit and speed him, it were wonder else, but he says further, (Psalm cxvi. 11.) *I said in my haste that all men are liars*; the prophet Samuel and all: that it was but the promise of a vain man; but he soon recalls himself and adds, *I said this in my haste*. So likewise (Psalm xxxi. 22.) *I said this in my haste, I am cut off*; they were rash speeches, (as he confesses) spoken in haste. Even so doth many a poor soul break forth and say, after they have had strong hopes at first conversion that a kingdom is theirs, that heaven is theirs, and that it is reserved for them, and they kept for it also, through the power of God; yet the devil being let loose to persecute them, as Saul did him, and God hiding his face, and the arrows of the Almighty flying thick about their ears the sorrows of hell encompassing them, and well nigh every moment cutting them off,—they (although upheld again and again) yet are apt to say, that one day or other they shall, in all likelihood, be cut off by God's hand, swallowed up of Satan, and everlastingly destroyed: and when they are told of the hopes they had at their first conversion, and the promises that are made to them, they are apt to say that their graces by which they now claim those promises, are all a lie, false and counterfeit, and but in hypocrisy; this they say in their haste too often. So at another time, when David was in doubt about that other promise of an eternal kingdom, made to him, in Psal. lxvii. he says God will never be merciful! What a desperate weak speech was this!—that what a man

sees not at present, he should conclude would never be ; but he acknowledgeth his error in it : It was my infirmity, v. 10, thus to speak. So the church ; *I said, my hope is perished from the Lord ; Lam. iii. 17, 18, 19.* What a desperate speech was this ! But she eats her words again with grief, ver. 21. *This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope.* Job though for a while, at the beginning of the storm he was somewhat calm and quiet in his spirit, and it was his commendation ; and therefore in the 1st. chap. verse 22, it is said, that in all this ; that is, so long and hitherto, he had not charged God foolishly ; but this held but to the first and second chapter ; for when he began to be wet to the skin once, and the drops of God's wrath began to soak into his soul, then he falls a roaring, chap. iii. and curseth the day of his birth ; and chap. vi. 8, 9, wisheth God would cut him off ; and chap. vii. 15, says his soul did choose strangling rather than life. For which speeches God in the end steps out (as it were) from behind the hangings, overhearing him, and taking him up for them (chap. xxxviii. 2.) Who is this, says he, that talks thus ?—How now ?

But good souls, you that are in trouble, oh, take heed of such impatient wishes or speeches as these, or the like, That all which you have had is but in hypocrisy ; and Oh that God would cut me off ! that I were in hell, and knew the worst ! Take heed, I say. When a man is sick and raves, whereas otherwise the physician and those that stand about him, would in pity use him gently, they are forced to hold and bind him ;—an impatient patient makes a phy-

sician more cruel than otherwise he would be ; so would God deal more gently with thee, but for such impatiences ; and know that this is taking God's name in vain in a high degree. You must know that the graces of God written in your hearts are a part of God's name, as whereby his love is manifested to you ; now for you to call the truth of these in question, and say they are counterfeit, is as if you should say that the king's hand and seal, when it comes down to you, that it were counterfeit, and deny it. So if a special friend, or your father, had given you some old precious pieces of gold or jewels, as tokens of their love and remembrances of them, for you to say, in a dis-tempered fit of jealousy, all these are but counters and but alchymy, you should exceedingly wrong and abuse their love. Thus it is if you deny God's handwriting in your own hearts, when he hath written therein by his Spirit, joy, fear, love, zeal, &c. and should say, It is not like his hand. So if you deny the seal of the Spirit, after he hath *sealed you up unto the day of redemption*, and say that all the earnest pennies of heaven are but counters, and alchymy, and nothing worth ; in so doing, you take his name, his love, his mercy, and all in vain ; yea, you lie against the Holy Ghost, as the apostle said in another case. Thus, though God give you full leave to try and examine all his graces in you, and dealings with you, yet not desperately at the first blush and view, upon the least mistake or flaw, to say they are [no graces, and that he will never be merciful, you abuse him when you do so :—take heed of it.

SECOND DIRECTION.—Let the troubled soul make diligent search. Let an inquisition be set up in thy heart. So (Psalm lxxvii. 6.) David, in case of desertion, is said to do: *I communed with my own heart, and made diligent search.*

Now, in this search, make inquiry into two things:—

First. What might be the true cause which provokes God thus to leave thee, and hide himself from thee.

Secondly. What, in thine own heart is the main doubt and objection, reasoning and apprehension, which causeth thee to fear, and thus to call all into question?

These are two distinct things; for although God hath just cause and reason to leave us to this trouble, yet often the thing that troubles and disquiets us is a mere mistake, a misapprehension: even as a father sees good reason often to scare the child; but yet the thing he suffers him to be affrighted with is but a mere bugbear. It is necessary to inquire into both.

First. Examine what might be the true cause that provokes God thus to leave thee. So Lam. iii. 40, *Let us search and try our ways*: it was spoken by the church in desertion, as appears by the former part of the chapter. And to help yourselves in this, go over all the cases which have been propounded. Hast thou not been carnally confident in false signs? or rested too much on true, to the neglect of Christ and God's free grace? Didst thou not before neglect to stir up thy own graces?—go over all those cases men-

tioned : something or other will be found to be the cause. This is necessary ; for, till the cause be known, the heart submits not, neither will it sanctify God's name, nor will the trouble cease, till that which provokes God to lay it on be confessed and forsaken : —and if it be a particular sin that God aims at, then usually, God useth the horror for and the guilt of that very sin to afflict thee with ; and then that sin itself is made the cause of thy trouble in thy own apprehension ; so that then it is easily found out ; thou wilt find thy sin to be the thorn in thy foot, the stone in thy shoe, that did grate, gall, and vex thee. David easily knew, in Psalm li. what it was for which God broke his bones : for his very sin was it ; was the iron mace, the instrumental cause itself, of God's executing it upon him : the horror of that murder God used as the hammer to break him withal, and as the rod to whip him with ; verse 3, My sin, says he, is ever before me ; it was ever in his eye. Indeed, in outward afflictions, it is more difficult to find out the cause why God afflicts a man ; unless sometimes you may, through God's wise-disposing hand, find and read the sin in the punishment,—they so resemble one another, so as a man may say, This cross lay in the womb of such a sin, they are so alike : but in those inward distresses of conscience, that sin which is the true cause, and that moveth God to afflict, God often useth even the guilt of that very sin to terrify thee, to cast a man into the distress, and to keep him in it ; it is both the procatartical cause and executioner also.

But in case thou canst not find out the cause, as

Job, it seems, did not, and Elihu did suppose he might not, therefore gives him this counsel (which do thou also follow, till God shew thee the cause) Job xxxiv. 31, 32, to say unto God (as he adviseth there) That which I see not, teach thou me, and I will not offend any more; and if thou findest it, say also, as verse 31, I have borne chastisement for such a sin; I will never offend any more. Till then, God will not let thee down.

The second thing to be searched into is, What is the chief and main reasoning in thy heart, which makes thee call all into question, whether God be thy God? What is the reason why thou thinkest so? what makes thee conclude so?

For this you must consider, that although God for some sin committed doth hide himself from thee, terrifies, and lasheth thy conscience, yet that which causeth in thee, and worketh in thee this apprehension, that God hath cast thee off, is usually some false reasoning or misapprehension, some mere mistake, some device and sophistry of Satan. When the Corinthian was excommunicated for his sin, Satan had leave to terrify his conscience for it; but Satan went further, he would have swallowed him up of sorrow, by persuading him that such a sin was unpardonable, and that God would never own him again. Now the reasoning Satan used to bring this upon him was a false one; some trick and device, 2 Cor. ii. 7, compared with the 11th verse, whereof, if a man be ignorant, he may go mourning a long while, as a castaway. Therefore, take thy soul aside, and seriously ask it, and examine

it, Why it is thus troubled? What reason, what ground thou hast to think that God is not thy God? and then examine it, whether it be a true ground, yea or no; as the apostle bids us give a reason of our faith, so ask thou of thy soul the reason of its doubting.

Thus David, Psalm xlii. 5, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* and because doubts arise again and again, therefore he asketh the reason again, verse 11, *Who art thou cast down?* David knew, the way to dissolve them was to search into and examine the reason of them; for still, when he had thoroughly examined them, he found them needless and causeless to put him into such desperate fears. The child of God is often cast into prison, into fears and bondage, and after he hath lain long in them, and begins to read over the writ and mittimus, he finds it to be false imprisonment: a mere trick of Satan his gaoler; for as carnal men, when they think their estate good, and that they are in the favour of God, it is some delusion, some false reasoning, that is still the ground of such their opinion; as because they prosper in the world, therefore God loves them; because they perform some duties, have some good motions, which grounds they cannot endure to have examined;—so, contrarily, one that fears God, the ground of his apprehension that he is out of the favour of God, is likewise some false reasoning, which when examined appears to be such; and when it appears, the soul is freed out of his fears and doubts. Heman thought, and said that God had cast him off; and what was the reason persuaded him

to think so ; verse 14, *because God had hidden his face*. It doth not follow Heman : a father may hide his face from his son, and yet not cast him off. So David also reasoneth, Psalm lxxvii. 2, 3, I have sought God, prayed, and used the means, and yet I am troubled, and yet God reveals not himself ; and what doth he conclude from this ?—Will the Lord cast off for ever, verse 7. He thought, if God had loved me, he would presently have heard me ; he thought his soul would not have been worse after praying. This was a false reasoning, for, Psalm lxx. 4, sometimes God shuts out his people's prayers. A father may sometimes seem so angry, that he may throw away his child's petition, and yet resolve to be his father still. It were infinite to reckon up all the false reasonings that souls in distress have sometimes from a place of Scripture misunderstood and misapplied ; some who, being annoyed with blasphemous thoughts against God and Christ, and his Spirit, though they be their greatest affliction, yet have thought they have sinned against the Holy Ghost, upon the misapplying that place, Matt. xii. 31, *That blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven* ;—whereas that place is meant only but of some one kind of blasphemy, which indeed is wilful blaspheming of God and the work of his Spirit, out of revenge, Heb. x. 29 ; so some, because they have sinned after enlightening and tasting, and fallen into some gross sin, think they shall never be renewed, by reason of that place, Heb. vi. 4 ; whereas he speaks of a wilful and revengeful falling away, with such a

revenge as they would, if they could, crucify Christ again, verse 6; for otherwise David had not been renewed; for he sinned presumptuously, and “despised the commandment.” So some, if they hear but of a fearful example, and of God’s severe dealing with others, how he cast them off upon such a sin, as he did Saul, they think and conclude that upon the commission of the like, that God hath cast them off also; but there is no certain ground for such a thought, for secret things belong to God. So because some hear that there is a time, after which God sometimes offers grace no more, but swears against some men, therefore, that their time is also past, which they can have no ground for; for though it be true that God doth so with many that hear the Gospel, yet the word gives us no certain rules to judge he hath done so by any of us. It is good to fear, lest thou shouldst provoke him to it; but thou hast no sign to fear he hath done so with thee; and indeed herein lies the main and first business to be done in raising up a troubled soul, even to find out the ground of their doubting, and to examine the truth of it and confute it. If a man be falsely imprisoned, or cast in a suit at law, what doth he to remedy it? He seeks so find out the error in the writ; so do thou search out the ground of thy trouble, go to some spiritual lawyer skilled in soul-work, keep not the devil’s counsel, he opposeth nothing more than making your doubts known.

THIRD DIRECTION.—THE third direction I give to such is, That they keep and lend one ear as well to

hear and consider what makes for their comfort, as unto what may make against them.

This direction meets with a great infirmity of such as are in distress, who, through Satan's temptations have their hearts so deeply possessed with prejudicial conceits of the misery of their estates, that as the people of God, in *Exod. vi. 9*, through the anguish of their hearts, were so far distempered, that they listened not to the good message which Moses brought them, nor believed that so good news could be true of them, —so are the souls of many that are in distress, so filled with anguish and sense of misery, and so strongly pre-possessed with desperate opinions, and so far put out of hopes, that they reject all that is spoken for their comfort, so as they will not so much as be brought to cast an eye or a thought upon any thing that may be an occasion of comfort to them; like some prisoners at the bar, through extremity of fear, they cannot read that in their hearts and in the word which might save them. Tell them of what God hath wrought for them and in them, as evidences of his love, and as they cannot so often, they will not read them over; or if they do, they read them over but as a man doth a book he means to confute; they pick quarrels, and make objections at every thing that is said; as if they were hired as lawyers to plead against themselves, and to find flaws in their evidences. I have observed some who have set all their wits to work to strengthen all arguments and objections against themselves, and who have been glad if they could object any thing which might puzzle those who have come to comfort

them, if they could hold argument against themselves, as if they were disputing for the victory only; and thus through much poring upon and considering only what might make against them, they have had the bolts of their hearts so far shot into despair, and fixed in desperate sorrow, and the true wards of sound evidences so far wrung and rested by false keys, that when the skilfullest and strongest comforters have come with true keys to shoot back the bolt, they would not turn about, nay could scarce get entrance.

This was David's infirmity, as at the 10th verse of Psalm lxxvii, compared with the second verse, *My soul refuseth to be comforted*; he spilt all the cordials and physic that were brought him; he was not only void of comfort, but refused it. What! bring me promises to comfort me (will such an one say)! you may as well carry them to one in Hell, or give physic to a man past recovery; and so will take down nothing that is given them; so also the church, in the third of Lamentations, verses 17, 18: her heart was deeply possessed with a desperate apprehension; My hope, says she, is perished from the Lord; and what was it that shot her soul into so fixed despair? verse 17, she forgot all good; she forgot, that is, she would not so much as take into consideration and remembrance any thing that had been comfortable to her. All good (so the original) that is, all God's former good and gracious dealings with her; all the good things wrought in her and for her, whence she might have comfort; and instead thereof, what did her thoughts feed and chew upon?—only wormwood and gall, her bitterness

and distress poring only on what might make against her : *I said my hope was perished from the Lord, calling to mind my affliction and my misery, my wormwood and gall.* These she could revolve and roll up and down in her mind though they were bitter, and would entertain thoughts of nothing else ; but when, on the contrary, she began to take into consideration God's gracious and faithful supporting her in that very desertion, *in faithfulness renewing his mercies every morning,* verse 22, 23 ; and that still he maintained in her heart a longing and lingering after him, and a secret cleaving to him, and that God did enable her to choose him as her portion, verse 24 : This, I recall to mind, says she, verse 21 (which speech hath reference to those words beforecited, which follow there) therefore have I hope : she [spits out her wormwood, and eats her own words ; and now that her heart began to listen to what might comfort her, presently she began to have hope. This sullen, peevish, desperate obstinacy is a thing you ought to take heed of ; for hereby you take Satan's part, and that against those you ought to love so dearly, even your own souls ; but as they said let Baal plead for himself,—so let Satan plead his own cause ; do not you. Hereby also you forsake your own mercies, as it is said, Jonah ii. 8, you give up your own right, and are so far befooled as to plead against your own title, your own interest in the best things you can have interest in, God's mercies made yours by an everlasting covenant ; you give up your portion bequeathed you in your father's will, which you ought to maintain, and you trust to lying

vanities, the soothsayings and fortune-tellings (as I may call them) of Satan and of your own hearts! Hereby also ye become judges of evil thoughts; for he is an ill hearer of a cause who will hear but one speak.

FOURTH DIRECTION.—THE Fourth Direction is, To make diligent search into, and to call to remembrance what formerly hath been between God and you; the remembrance of former things doth often uphold, when present sense fails. This David practised in the like case (Psalm lxxvii. 5, 6.) when his soul had refused comfort, as I told you (ver. 2.); yet, in the end, he began not only to be willing to listen to what might make for him, but set himself at work to recal to mind, to “consider the days of old, to make diligent search;” namely, into the records and register of God’s dealing, (ver. 11.) to see if there were ever a record extant which might help him, now the devil pleaded against his title: even as if your houses and lands were called into question, you would search over old writings and deeds; so do you in this. “I considered,” says he, “the songs in the night;” that is, that joyful communion he had enjoyed with God, when God and he sung songs together; and “I communed with mine own heart, and made diligent search;”—I tossed and tumbled over my heart, to see if no grace formerly had been there, and if no grace at present were there: he searched into what might comfort him, as well as into the causes that might provoke God thus to deal with him; for, I take it, both may be meant.

And so Job did when he was thus stricken and forsaken of God: he views over every part of his life; he seeks what dry land he could find to get footing upon in the midst of seas of temptations,—recounts what an holy life he had lived,—with what fear and strictness he had served God (chap. xxix, xxx, and xxxi, throughout); and tells them plainly (chap. xxvii. 5, 6.) That let them plead and argue what they could against him, and go about to prove him an hypocrite, till “I die,” says he, “I will not remove mine integrity from me, nor let go my righteousness.” I will never give up mine interest in God’s mercies, nor the evidences I have to shew for them; and, says he (chap. xix. 27, 28.) “Though my reins be at present consumed, yet the root of the matter is in me;” that is, though God deals thus hardly with me, as you see, yea, though the exercise of grace is much obscured, the sunshine of God’s favour withdrawn, his face hidden from me, and the joyful fruits of righteousness, and comfortable fresh green speeches and leaves you have known to grow upon this now withered stock fallen off, yet there “is the root of the matter still in me :” a root of faith that decays not,—a constant frame of grace that still remains, which hateth sin, loveth God; and you shall all never beat me from it;—and canst thou call nothing to remembrance betwixt God and thee which may argue infallibly of his love? What, nothing! Look again. Did God never speak peace to thy heart, and shed his love abroad in it? Hast thou at no time found in thine heart pure strains of true love and good-will to him?—some pure

drops of godly sorrow for offending him, and found some pure dispositions of self-denial, wherein thou didst simply aim at his glory more than thine own good. Hast thou never an old tried evidence which hath been acknowledged and confirmed again and again in open court? What! not one? And if thou canst now call to mind but one, if in truth, it may support thee; for if one promise doth belong to thee, then all do,—for every one conveys whole Christ, in *whom all the promises are made*, and who is the matter of them; as in the Sacraments, the bread conveys whole Christ, and the wine also whole Christ,—so in the word, every promise conveys whole Christ; and if thou canst say, as the Church of Ephesus (Rev. ii. 6.) This thing I have, that I hate sin; and every sin as God hates it, and because he hates it; as Christ owned them for this one grace, and though they had many sins and many failings; yet, says he, this thou hast. If Christ will acknowledge thee to be his for one ear-mark, or if he sees but one spot of his child upon thee, thou mayest well plead it, even any one to him; yea, though it be but in a lesser degree, if in truth and sincerity; for God brings not a pair of scales to weigh your graces, and if they be too light refuseth them; but he brings a touchstone to try them; and if they be true gold, though ever so little of it, it will pass current with him, though it be but smoke, not flame,—though it be but as a wick in the socket (as it is there in the original) likelier to die and go out than to continue, which we use to throw away,—yet he will not quench it, but accept it; yea, and though

at present thou findest in thy sense no grace stirring in thee, nothing but hardness, deadness, &c. ; yet if thou canst remember (yea, but this once I had) as a woman with child, though, after her first quickening, she doth not always find the child to stir, yet because she did feel it stir, she still conceives hopes, and thinks she is with child,—so think thou of the new creature formed within thee.

These things you are to recal and consider in time of distress,—to remember former graces and spiritual dispositions in you, and God's gracious dealings with you. God remembers them, to have mercy on you; and why should not you remember them to comfort you? Therefore (Heb. vi. 9, 10.) *We hope*, says he, *better things of you; for God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love; namely, to reward you; and, therefore, he calls upon them in like manner, (Heb. x. 31.) to call to remembrance the former days to comfort them,—how they held out when their hearts were tried to the bottom,—when shipwreck was made of their goods, good names, and all for Christ; yet they made not shipwreck of a good conscience. If thou dost thus call to remembrance things of old, and yet canst find no comfort at first from them (as often ye may not, as was David's case, in Psalm lxxvii.; for after his remembrance of his songs in the night, still his soul was left in doubt, and he goes on to say, Will God ever be merciful?) yet have recourse to them again, and then again; for though they comfort not at one time, they may at another: that it may be seen that God comforts by them, and not they*

alone of themselves. Hast thou found a promise (which is a breast of consolation) milkless?—yet again suck, comfort may come in the end. If after thou hast empannelled a jury and grand inquest to search, and their first verdict condemns thee, or they bring it in an *ignoramus*,—yet do as wise judges often do, send them about it again;—they may find it the next time. Jonah looked once, it seems, and found no comfort (Jonah ii. 4.); for he said *I will look again towards thine holy temple*. A man's heart is like those two-faced pictures: if you look one way towards one side of them, you shall see nothing but some horrid shape of a devil, or the like; but go to the other side and look again, and you shall see the picture of an angel, or some beautiful woman; so some have looked over their hearts by signs at one time, and have to their thinking found nothing but hypocrisy, unbelief, hardness, and self-seeking; but not long after, examining their hearts again by the same signs, they have espied the image of God drawn fairly upon the table of their hearts.

FIFTH DIRECTION.—But now, if former signs remembered bring thee no comfort in,—but the waves that come over thy soul prove so deep, that thou canst find no bottom to cast anchor on, the storm and stress so great that no cable will hold, but they snap all asunder, as is often the case of many a poor soul,—

Then take and put in practice this Fifth Direction, renew thy faith and repentance, set thy heart at work to believe and repent afresh, as if thou hadst never

yet begun. Spend not all the time in casting out of anchors, but fall a pumping ; leave off and cease awhile, to reason about the goodness of thy former faith and repentance, and set upon the work of believing and repenting anew. Say, Well, suppose I have not hitherto been in the state of grace ; yet I am not incapable of it for time to come,—I may obtain grace yet. Suppose my faith and repentance hath not been true hitherto, I will therefore now begin to endeavour after such as is true ; and to that end make this use of whatsoever flaws the devil finds in either, to direct thee what to mend and rectify for time to come ; begin to make up the breaches and unsoundness which is discovered, endeavour after a supply of all those wants he objects to be in either,—mend all the holes he picks. Say, Lord, I cast myself upon thy mercies afresh, I desire now to make my heart perfect with thee for time to come, to part with every sin, to submit to every duty, to curse every by-end to Hell, and to set up God and Christ as my mark, pole-star, and aim in all ; and when thou hast done this, let the devil say his worst. This, of all the former Directions, I commend to you as a special means to dissolve and put these temptations about assurance to an end. I set a *probatum est* upon it, take it, practice it,—it is a tried one ; and it is that which at the last the Church in desertion comes to ;—*Come, let us try our ways, and turn to the Lord ;* (Lam. iii. 40.) this is the last way and course she takes. Now, when the water is at the lowest, and the tide of assurance ebbed, mend up your banks as

you use to at low waters ;—now, when nothing but hypocrisy, unbelief, and falseness of heart appear to thee to be in thy heart, do thou groan, sigh, endeavour after the contrary sincerity, and let Satan say his worst ; and this Direction I now, in the next place, prescribe you ; because, in time of temptation about assurance, it is the usual course of some troubled souls to spend all their thoughts upon what formerly they have had, as if they must have comfort only from their former work, or no way ; laying out all their time and cost in new suits and new trials about their former title ; and when they have been cast again and again, yet still to do nothing but read over old evidences again and again, and bring in and study new proofs.

But know that, though this is to be done, and not to be neglected, and is found often comfortable, therefore, in the former Direction I exhorted to it ; yet you are not only to take that course, nor to look back so much to your former faith and repentance as to forget the practice new ; but begin to practice new acts of faith and repentance ;—this is the best way, the shortest cut, and requires as little pains. Thou mayest with as little charge get a new lease renewed, as prove good the old one ; it will require many terms to examine over all thy evidences, again and again, which also perhaps are blotted and blurred ;—thou mayest cut the knot and dissolve the temptations sooner by new faith, than untie it by reasonings and disputings ; and the truth is, in the end thou must come to this, for God's great end in deserting is to

put you upon renewing your faith and repentance, except ye be converted, as Christ says to his apostles, converted as it were anew. He will not deliver thee out of the dungeon till thou enterest into new bonds and bail for thy good behaviour,—therefore begin to do it soon; and whereas thou thinkest that by this thou mayst prejudice thy former title; that is not my meaning, as if thou shouldst utterly give up thy old faith and repentance as counterfeit. *I will keep my integrity*, says Job; only my advice is to forbear and to cease pleading of it for a time, and to begin to renew it rather;—that is it I exhort unto; and then the comfort of thy old repentance will come in. As the apostle says of the law, so I of thy former title; It is not destroyed, but established rather by this; and as Christ says (John vii. 17.) *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine that it is of God*; so as the best way to know the truth is not to spend all the time in disputing about it, but to practise it; which puts an end to controversies in men's hearts;—so say I, to know the truth of, and so come to have the comfort of former grace, is to add to these reasonings about it, the practice of believing and repenting anew. This baffles the devil exceedingly, and gets the advantage of him; for by this the suit is removed, all his old pleas dashed; this puts him upon a new reply, diverts the war, and indeed nonplusseth him;—for what can he say to it? He must now prove thou art incapable of grace, that thou shalt never repent, which all the world and devils in Hell cannot prove; and yet if in this case he tells

thee, as usually he doth, that all will be in vain for time to come, as well as it hath been for time past,—

SIXTH DIRECTION.—Then, sixthly, stand not now disputing it,—but be peremptory and resolute in thy faith, and, turning to God, let the issue be what it will. Faith is never nonplussed. Job vows *he will trust him though he kills him*; (Job xxxi. 15.) so do thou; whether he will damn or save thee, do what he will with thee, leave not to cast thyself upon him for mercy, nor to serve and love him. Go thou on to use the means diligently and constantly; and be so much the more diligent; fear and hate sin still, pray day and night, as Heman did when he thought himself cut off (Psalm lxxxviii. 1.) *I have cried day and night, though I be as one thou rememberest no more*: (ver. 4, 5.) and so at the ninth verse, *I have called daily*; though in verses 10, 11, 12, he thought himself in Hell, and thought it a miracle ever to be raised up again; yet says he, (ver. 13.) *But I have cried to thee*;—that *but* seems to come in as an expression of his resolution hitherto, that though these were his apprehensions of his condition, yet, howsoever, he had, and accordingly would go on to seek the Lord. Suppose thou findest no relish in the ordinances, yet use them,—though thou art desperately sick, yet eat still, take all that is brought thee, some strength comes of it. Say, be I damned or saved, hypocrite or not hypocrite, I resolve to go on: and there is good reason for it; for if thou shouldst leave off to serve the Lord, and resolve never to look

after him more, then thou art sure to be damned ; if there be *an evil heart in thee to depart from the living God*, thou art undone ;—but this other way of seeking him thou mayest in the end prevail :—*Who knows but God may be merciful ?* In Lam. iii. 29, this counsel is given to a soul being yoked and deserted, *to put his mouth in the dust* ; and it waiteth, says he, suffers, and doth any thing, not only if he hath hope, but if there may be hope ;—if there be but such a thought it may prove so, he will make a venture ;—and so do thou. See what Esther did in the like desperate case : thought she, if I hold my tongue (and so Mordecai told her) God will destroy me ; and better it was to make a venture upon the king to speak, and so to carry her life in her hand ; and therefore she says, *if I perish, I perish* ;—and so the lepers. See how they reasoned in a desperate case (2 Kings vii. 3, 4.) “ If we go into the city we are sure to die, for the famine is there ; if we sit still, we die also. Come, let us fall into the hands of the Assyrians ; if they save us alive, so ; if they kill us, we shall however but die :” and there were strong arguments to move them to think they would kill them ; for they were Jews, and of the enemies’ side, and so might be suspected for spies ; if not, they were lepers that might infect the camp, who were fit for no service,—for nothing but to be knocked on the head ; yet, in this desperate case, they took the surer and more probable part, ventured to fall to the Assyrians’ side ; and the success is known to you all. So reason thou : if I give over my believing, humbling myself, praying, attending on the means, I shall cer-

tainly perish ;—there is no help for it. I will therefore rather go on to do all these as sincerely as I can to the utmost, and if God saves me a sinner, a leper, an enemy, so ; if not, I can be but damned.

But let me tell thee, such a resolution can never go to Hell with thee ; yea, if any have a place in Heaven, such a soul shall ; for this puts not the devil only to it (for, in this case, what can the devil himself say to thee ? for if thou wilt venture thy soul, service, and all upon God, let the issue be what it will, in this, resolute yet safe way, if thou wilt in a pure trust refer it unto God with contentedness and submission, what is that to him ?) but it puts God to it also, who cannot find in his heart to damn such an one who shall go on to do thus ; when thou thus freely servest him, choolest him, venturkest and leavest thyself and all the issue of thy ways to him,—thou by this one act in such a case shalt win more upon him and his love than perhaps by all thy obedience in thy life before.—Thy salvation, and the assurance of it (that is God's work) leave it to him, try his faithfulness ; it is self-love makes us too much to be troubled about it. Go thou on to believe, repent, mourn for sin, hate, forsake it, to use the means, this is thy work ; and so doing, thou canst not be damned.

SEVENTH DIRECTION.—*Let him trust in the name of the Lord.* If you ask what ground a soul in this case may have to venture thus upon ?

I answer, His Name ; which will make up a seventh direction.

Being thus resolved to turn to God, and to go on to fear and obey him, thou mayest safely and confidently trust in and stay upon the name of God when thou hast nothing else to rest upon. This you see is the direction which the text gives; and I had thought therefore to have made a distinct point of it; but I will somewhat more largely open and explain it, only as it is a direction and means of support and comfort in this distress, and so take it as it riseth out of the text. Thus, That to one who resolves to fear God and obey him, the name of God is an all-sufficient prop and stay for his faith to rest on when he sees nothing in himself, or in any promise in the word belonging unto him.

The name of God alone is here opposed to all other means and props which faith hath to rest on. It is opposed to all comfortable sense of God's love, to all sight of any grace in a man's self to which any promise is made;—so that when the soul shall look into itself with one eye, and glance over all the word of God with another, and yet shall see not any one grace in the one, nor promise in the other made to any grace within itself which it may rest upon,—yet the soul, then looking upon God, and considering what a God he is, and what he says of himself, of his mercy and kindness, and free grace towards sinful men; even the sole consideration of what merely it knows to be in God as he is revealed in the covenant of grace, may support him. This it is to stay upon his name.

Now, to explain this further to you.—By the Name of God, two things are meant:

First, Those glorious attributes, especially of grace and mercy, whereby God hath expressed himself, and made himself known to us.

Secondly, Jesus Christ, as he is made and set forth to be righteousness to the sons of men.

For the first, in the 24th of Exod. verses 4, 5, 6, 7, the Lord proclaimed his name: *The Lord God, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and will by no means clear the impenitent.*

For the second, I refer to that place, Jer. xxiii. 6, speaking of Christ: *This is the name wherewith he shall be called*, or made known to us,—**THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**; that is, that Jesus Christ, who is God, hath righteousness in him for us; ; which may be made ours.

So that when a poor soul in distress is not able to say: ‘ I see such or such signs, or any evidence in myself, whereby I can say God is my God, or that Christ is mine; yet, because I see free grace enough in God, and righteousness in Christ, which I being a sinful man, and not a devil, may therefore be capable of, and may come to have an interest in them, though I know nothing in myself whereby I can challenge any present interest; and because Grace and Mercy is his name, and our Righteousness his Son’s name,—therefore I do cast myself upon both for pardon and favour, and thereupon my soul leans, stays, and abides, and from these it will not be driven; so that these two apprehensions meeting in the heart in truth, help to

make up this resting upon his name here spoken of; namely, First, That there is such free grace, good-will, and mercy, in God, and that Jesus Christ is appointed and made to be our righteousness;—and secondly, That I am capable of, and may come to have an interest in both these; and that though there be nothing in me which may challenge an interest in them, yet there is nothing that excludes me, whereupon I cast myself upon God for both, and there rest; yea, though I cannot yet say that ever I shall obtain:—and this, where it is truth, and accompanied with that firm resolution of turning to God in all things before-mentioned, is as good faith as any of you have in your hearts.

And so I come to the proof of this: namely, That when the name of God and Christ are thus simply and alone apprehended, they may be sufficient ground for faith to rest upon;—than which, nothing can be more comfortable to a poor distressed believer. Numb. xiv. When God's wrath waxed hot against his people (as sometimes in like manner it doth against a poor soul) that God began to say, How long shall they provoke me? verse 11; and speaks of destroying them, and of making Moses a great nation,—what hath Moses's faith a recourse unto, but to that proclamation of his name you heard of before, and urgeth that, ver. 17, 18: *Let the power of my Lord be great according as thou hast spoken. The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and he desires him to shew his power in pardoning, because as much power is seen in overcoming his wrath*

as in making a world. Let thy power be great:—it was his name you see that was alleged by Moses, and prevailed with God for mercy. So also, for his Son's sake, The Lord our righteousness; Elihu says, Job xxxiii, when a man's soul is in deepest distress, as in verses 19, 20, 21, 22, he describes it; yet, says he, ver. 23, *If there be a messenger to shew a man his uprightness; that is, that righteousness that is laid up for men in the Lord Jesus, then God is gracious to him, and says Deliver him, and he resteth thereupon, his flesh returns to him again; becoming a means to stay and restore him.* I mention these places of the Old Testament rather than of the New; out of which you see God's name and his Son's name are all-sufficient to uphold and support a soul. So the penman of that Psalm whether David or whoever, Psalm cxxx, when he was in depths, as verses 1, 2, plunged over head and ears in sorrow and discomfiture, who hath his faith recourse unto? ver. 4, to God's name; to nothing that was in himself, but simply to what his faith apprehended to be in God. Mercy is with thee; he says no more: in him and with him, it is to be had; and he confirms his faith in that by this argument, because else, *none would fear him; and, if thou wert extreme to mark what were amiss, no man could stand, or would be saved; therefore surely says he, mercy is with thee, and therefore let Israel hope in the Lord, ver. 7;—and why? what! because Israel sees he hath grace in himself? No; but because mercy is with him, and plentiful redemption, ver. 8; which word redemption hath relation to his Son's name.* There is enough in him,

else he will have none ; and Israel is mentioned in his will as capable of it ; and therefore, says he *I will wait and hope in the Lord*, verse 5 ; and though he could not say that God had forgiven him, yet forgiveness was with him ; and there he pitcheth and resteth his soul, as a beggar at a great man's door, when there is none else in the country able or willing to relieve him ; there he lies, though he knows not whether he shall have any thing or no. *In my father's house there is bread enough*, says the prodigal ; there it is to be had, and no where else ; and there is enough, and crumbs will serve me, says the woman of Canaan ; thou art the Mediator thought she, and it is thy business to save, and though I am a dog, yet I am capable of having crumbs. *Woman*, says Christ, *great is thy faith* ; not such faith among all my disciples. These trusted in his name, and nothing in themselves. So Psalm lxii. David says, at the 5th verse, he trusted in God for salvation and mercy, and exhorts throughout the whole : *Trust in God fully, and at all times, and in no creature*, verses 8, 9 ; and what was it he rested upon ? simply two attributes of his, viz. Mercy and Power. God hath spoken once ; that is, irrevocably, as Psalm lxxxix. 35, *Once have I sworn*, &c. and twice I have heard this ; that is, often met with it in the word, and thought of it, says he, that with God is power, (verse 11) so as he is able to save in the greatest distress ; and I have heard that *to him belongeth mercy also* ; verse 12 ; and therefore he may be willing to help ; and because these are in him, though I have nothing in myself, yet these I rest upon,

and these alone. Many such instances more might be brought.

The reasons why the name of God, and what is in God, is prop sufficient for faith to rest upon, are,—

First. Because the name of God, that is, God's attributes and Christ's righteousness, do sufficiently, adequately, and fully answer all wants and doubts; all objections and distresses we can have, or can be in, whatsoever our wants or temptations be, he hath a name to make supply. For example, take that his name in pieces, mentioned *Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6*; consider every letter in his name, and every letter answers to some temptation that may be made by us.

First. Art thou in misery and great distress, he is merciful; the Lord merciful; the Lord therefore able to help thee, and merciful, therefore willing.

Yea, but secondly, Thou wilt say I am unworthy, I have nothing in me to move him to it; well, therefore, he is gracious; now grace is to shew mercy freely. Yea, but I have sinned against him long, for many years: if I had come in when I was young, mercy might have been shewn me. To this he says, I am long-suffering. Yea, but my sins every way abound in number, and it is impossible to reckon them up, and they abound in heinousness; I have committed the same sins again and again; I have been false to him, broke promise with him again and again. His name also answers this objection; he is abundant in goodness; he abounds more in grace than thou in sinning, and thou hast been false again and again to him, and broke all covenants, yet he is abundant in truth, also

better than his word, for he cannot to our capacities express all that mercy that is in him for us. Yea, but I have committed great sins, aggravated with many and great circumstances, against knowledge, wilfully. He forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, sins of all sorts. Yea, but there is mercy thus in him but for a few; and I may be none of the number. Yes, there is mercy for thousands, and he keeps it; treasures of it lie by him, and are kept, if men would come in and take them.

Object what thou canst, his name will answer thee:—needest thou comfort as well as pardon, he is both *Father of mercies and God of all comforts*, that is his name, 2 Cor. i. 3. Needest thou peace of conscience, being filled with terrors? he is the God of peace, 1 Thess. v. 23. Yea, but I have an heart empty to grace and holiness, and full of corruptions. He is the God of all grace to heal thee, as well as of peace to pardon thee. Needest thou wisdom and directions? he is the Father of lights, as the apostle says. Is thy heart inconstant and full of double-mindedness?—he is unchangeable also, as he speaks there, James i. Thus all objections that can be made, may be answered out of his name. Therefore it is all-sufficient for faith to rest upon.

The like may be as fully shewed in his Son's name, in whom God hath made himself strong, to shew mercy and bestow all good things; whose name is adequate to God's name; that is, is of as large extent in worth and merit as God's heart is in his purposes of shewing and bestowing mercies, to purchase all that God

meant to bestow ; whose name hath likewise an all-sufficiency in it to supply all our wants and desires, and satisfy all scruples. For example, that is his name mentioned by the prophet Isaiah (ix. 6.) (which he here directs to) compared with 1 Cor. i. 31 ; for, would we have peace of conscience, and the guilt of sins removed,—he is the Prince of peace, and is made righteousness to us. Are we in depths of distress, terrors within, terrors without, out of which we see no redemption?—he is the *Mighty God, able to save to the uttermost*, being made redemption to us. Want we grace, and his image to be renewed and increased in us?—he is the everlasting Father, a Father to beget his likeness in us, and everlasting, to maintain it ever, when it is once begun, he is made sanctification to us. Want we wisdom to guide us?—he is the Counsellor, and is made wisdom to us. All we want he hath ; even as all he hath we want ;—and further, although we not only want all these, but ever so much of all these, his name is also Wonderful. For such he is, in all these, able to do beyond all our expectations to astonishment.

Or, if the soul desires more distinct and particular satisfaction in point of justification, which consists in the pardon of sins, and acceptance to the favour of God, it being the point which in this state of desolation is questioned, and wherein the soul desires satisfaction,—that other name of his, *the Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6, will answer all objections and doubts that our hearts can make, if we had but skill to spell all the letters in it ; for if that righteousness

of his satisfied God, who, in condemning us, is greater than our hearts, then it may satisfy our hearts much more. The righteousness of his life and death is not only an adequate sufficient ransom (1 Tim. ii. 6.) but there is plenteous redemption in it, Psalm cxxx.;—yea, to superfluity, as the apostle's phrase implies, 1 Tim. i. 14; that is, over-full, more than would serve the turn; and that to pardon his sins, who (ver. 15.) was the chief of sinners. He elsewhere challengeth all the wit and powers of sin, and Hell, and darkness, to appear in this dispute, and undertakes to answer them all out of this one position, which he lays as a bottom truth,—Christ hath died, Rom. viii. 34, which is in effect the same with this, *The Lord our righteousness: who therefore, says he, shall condemn?* What can be alleged either in the heinousness of sin in the general, or in any of thy sins in particular, unto which an answer may not hence be fetched, from the righteousness of his death and life? Is it that sin is an offence against the great God?—Against thee, against thee, as David speaks; and is not this his righteousness, the righteousness of Jehovah? Jehovah our righteousness, who is the mighty God. Is the glory of this great God and all his excellences debased by us in sinning? and will not the emptying of his glory, whose name is the *brightness of his Father's glory*, in performing this righteousness for us, satisfy and make amends? Are our sins the transgression of the holy and righteous law in every part of it? and did not Jehovah who gave and made that law, to make himself our righteousness, *make himself under the law?*

Gal. iv. 4, and to make up a full righteousness, fulfil every part of it? Rom. viii. 3, 4. Is it thy continuance in sin, and the number, and the iteration of them that amazeth thee? All fulness dwells in him who is our righteousness, Col. i. 19, and hath dwelt in him longer than sin in thee; and the righteousness of our Messiah is everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24,—the merit of which, an eternity of sinning could not expend, or make void; and is all this righteousness laid up for himself only, or for any other sort of creatures, so as thou mightest never come to have an interest in it? No, the top of our comfort is, that our righteousness is one letter of his name; and that our names are put into his. For us it is, and ours it is ordained to be; as much ours to save us trusting upon it, as his own to glorify him. Ours, not for himself; he had no need of it, being God blessed for ever. Ours, not the angels; neither the good, for they are justified by their own; nor the bad, they are put out of God's will for ever;—but ours, who are the sons of men, and among them theirs especially, who are broken, lost, whose souls draw near to the grave, and their lives to the destroyers; and that come and pray unto God, and stay themselves upon it; unto them God cannot deny it, for it is theirs; for he will *render to man his righteousness*, Job xxxiii. 22, 26. So as his Son's name also is all-sufficient to answer all objections for faith to rest upon, *so as they that know his name will trust in him*, Psalm ix. 10.

A second reason why his name is sufficient, though you have and see nothing in you, nor any promise

made to any grace in you to rest upon is, because even all those promises made to conditions in us, which we ordinarily look unto, are Yea and Amen only in this his name, and his Son's name; that is, the original of them all,—the root, the seed of them all; his name is the first matter of all those secondary promises, from which they are made, and into which they are resolved; his name gives being to them all; if it were not for the mercy, grace, truth, kindness in him, and the righteousness which is in his Son, all the promises which are made, what were they worth! As the worth of bonds depends upon the sufficiency of the man who makes them, so all these promises upon his name. Therefore, now, when you rely upon his name, having as yet no promise made to any thing in you to rely upon, you then rely upon that which is the foundation of all those promises; you then have recourse to the original, which is more authentic than extract copies; you rely on that which all those other are resolved into, and therefore is sufficient, though all the rest fail you in your apprehension.

Thirdly. His mere name is support enough for faith, and may be so, because it is for his name's sake, and his Son's name's sake, he doth all he doth; and for nothing in us, but merely for what is in himself; so Isaiah xlvi. 9, 10, *For my name's sake, &c.* So also Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 32: *For my name's sake, and not your sake*; and Isa. xliii. 25: *I am he that blot-teth out thy transgression for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* For it is he blotteth out transgression, and pardoneth; and if it be for his name's

sake he doth all he doth, and fulfilleth all promises made to us, and to what is in us,—then when thou seest nothing in thyself to which any promise is made, nothing which may appear to be any argument or motive that he will pardon thee, then trust thou in that his name; that because he is God, and hath mercy in him, that therefore he will do it; for that thing which is the only or main motive to God himself to do any thing for us, must needs be (when apprehended and believed) the strongest and surest ground for our faith also, to persuade the heart that he will do it. As it is in knowledge, the knowledge of the causes of things causeth the surest knowledge; so in faith, the knowledge of the main motive to God, the cause of all, causeth the greatest certainty of persuasion.

This then may direct poor souls in distress what to venture all upon, upon what ground to hazard souls, labours, endeavours, faith, repentance, obedience and all, upon his name, when they see nothing in themselves to which any promise belongs; as David says, Psalm lxxiii. 26: *My heart may fail, and my flesh may fail, but God will never fail*; so I may say, Your comforts in prayers, in hearing, your joys, your earnest-pennies you have laid up, may be all spent in a dearth, your own graces and all promises made to them; your own hearts may fail, and being creatures they use to fail again and again,—but God's name, and his Son's name rested on, will never fail you; lean on these, not by halves, in distress, but trust perfectly, as the apostle says, on that mercy you hear is in God; upon that

grace revealed ; that is, throw and cast your whole souls, your whole weight upon it. He only *hath perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee* ; have not half thy soul upon that Rock which is higher than thee, but creep up, and get all upon it, and when all fail, renew thy faith on his name ;—there rest, there die. To this purpose may that of Solomon serve, Proverbs xviii. 10 : *His name, says he, is a strong tower, and the righteous fly to it and are safe.* Now what end is there, and use of a tower in the city ? but when all outworks are taken, the walls scaled, all fortifications forsaken, houses left, then a tower holds out last, and is a refuge to fly to ; só also when the devil and God's wrath besiegeth thee round, and encompasseth thy soul, and the comfort of every grace in thee is taken from thee, and thou art driven from, and art forced to forsake all other thy holds and grounds of comfort, then fly to the *name of the Lord, as thy city of refuge*, as in Heb. vi. 18, it is compared ; say, there is mercy in thee, Lord, and that is thy name ; and there is righteousness in thy Son, and that is his name ; and I am directed to trust in thy name in time of need, and here rest and catch hold as on the horns of the altar ; and if thou diest, die there.

EIGHTH DIRECTION.—The eighth direction is, to wait upon God, thus trusting in his name, in the constant use of all ordinances and means of comfort : waiting is indeed but an act of faith further stretched out. As an allegory is but a continued metaphor, so waiting is but a continuing to believe on God, and to

look for help from him, with submission, though he stays long ere he comes. Waiting is an act of faith resting on God; and an act of hope expecting help from him; an act of patience, the mind quietly contenting itself till God doth come; and of submission if he should not come. Therefore, says the church, being in this very case, *It is good (says she) to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of the Lord.* It is good indeed to do so; for God will afflict thee less, ease you the sooner, comfort you the more when he doth come; and in the mean while it makes you to possess your souls, and to be yourselves, and uphold them: and to do otherwise, to be impatient, and to give over looking for the Lord, as Ahaz did, is the greatest folly that can be; for, as Job says (chap. xii. 14.) *If he shut up, there is no opening;* all the world cannot let you out, he keeps the keys of the dungeon, and you must stay his leisure, and he stays but for a fit time to let you out. *He will wait to be gracious to you, for he is a God of judgment,* Isa. xxx. 18; a wise and judicious God, and knows the fittest times and seasons; and that he stays so long, is not out of want of mercy, for he waits, and longs to be gracious; but he doth it out of judgment, and his wisdom sees not a fit time; he is grieved as well as you, that you are not yet fit for mercy, that his mercy would not yet be exalted, if he would shew it, till you further see your misery; and therefore, says he, *Blessed are all they that wait for him.* And as he now waiteth but to be more gracious to thee, so he did heretofore, a long while wait for thee, that thou shouldest begin

to turn to him, and said, When will it once be? Jer. xiii. 27. Thou madest him stay thy leisure in turning from thy sin, why may he not make thee stay his for the pardon of it? and indeed the escaping Hell in the end is so great a mercy, that it is worth the waiting for all thy days, though thou endure an Hell here, and gettest not a good look till the very last gasp and moment of living; therefore, *put thy mouth in the dust, and wait quietly, if there may be hope at last.*

And waiting thus, go on to use all the means of grace more diligently, more constantly, though thou findest a long while no good by them; omit no ordinance God hath appointed for thy comfort and recovery: as in a long sickness you still use means, though many have failed; as the woman who had the bloody issue, spent all upon physicians, in the use of means for her recovery. That trouble of mind doth only hurt you, that drives you from the means: therefore the Devil endeavours nothing more than to keep such souls from the word, from good company, from the sacraments, from prayer, by objecting their unprofitableness unto them, and that all is in vain, and that you only increase your condemnation.

But first, If thou learnest no other lesson in the use of the means, but that thou art of thyself most unprofitable; and that unless God teach thee to profit, no good is done, and so learnest to depend upon God in the ordinance,—this is a great degree of profiting.

And, secondly, As when men are sick and eat and cast up again, you used to say, yet take something

down, for some strength is gotten, something remains in the stomach which keeps life and soul together, so I say here :—Though thou shouldest forget in a manner all thou hearest, seemest to reap no benefit by it : yet hear, for some secret strength is gotten by it. And as for increasing thy condemnation, know, that utterly to neglect and despise the means is greater condemnation ; and that to use the means would lessen thy condemnation. Therefore, read, pray, meditate, hear, confer, receive the sacraments, forbear not these your appointed meals. Indeed, when the body is sick, ye use to forbear your appointed food ; but when the soul is sick there is more need of them than ever. All these are both meat and medicine, food, physic, cordials, and all. Use reading the word—*The Scriptures were written for our consolation*, therefore read them much : attend on preaching, for God creates the fruits of the lips, peace, Isaiah lvii. So receives the sacrament often, those days are sealing days ; go thou and confess thy sins, write over thy pardon, put in all thou knowest by thyself, and bring it to Christ to set his seal to it.

Only take this caution, that thou trust not to the use of the means, but unto God in the means : to think, oh, I shall have comfort by such a man, or at such a time, in such an ordinance ; this often dasheth all. So believe in God as if you use no means, and yet as diligently use the means, even as if your confidence were to be in them.

NINTH DIRECTION.—*To Pray ;—Pleas to be used to*

God in Prayer for recovery out of this Condition. And, ninthly, above all things, Pray, and get others also to pray for thee; for God often restores comfort unto such, at the request of mourners for them, Isaiah lvii. 18. But yet especially be earnest and fervent in pouring forth thy complaint thyself; for though the speaking of friends may somewhat further thy suit, yet, as between two wooers, so it must be wrought out between God and thee alone in private; and his good-will must be obtained by wooing him in secret. This counsel the apostle gives you: *Is any man afflicted? Let him pray,* James v. 13. And because, of all afflictions else, this of darkness in a man's spirit needeth prayer the most, therefore David pens a Psalm on purpose, not for his own private use only, but for the benefit and use of all others in the like distress, as by the title of it doth appear:—*A prayer for the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord,* Psalm cii. And this, says David, is my constant practice when *my soul is overwhelmed, I pour out my prayer unto thee,* Psalm lxi. 3. And it was Christ's also; for, in his agony, he prayed yet more earnestly, Luke xxii. 44.

When at any time, therefore, thy sins and God's wrath meeting in thy conscience, make the deadly sick, as Isaiah speaks, then pour forth thy soul, lay open and confess thy sin; and as it will ease thee, as vomiting useth to do, so also it will move God to pity, and to give the cordials and comforts to restore thee again. Thus David, Psalm xxxviii. 18, being in great distress, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5, *I will declare my iniquity and*

be sorry for my sin : and he makes it an argument to God to pardon him, *when his bones were broken.* Psalm li. *Cleanse me from my sin,* ver. 2, *for I acknowledge my transgressions,* ver. 3 ; and when he had confessed, ver. 4, 5, 6, then he cries, *Make me to hear of joy and gladness,* ver. 8, and *restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,* ver. 12. And what was the chief ingredient, the main and principal motive, which wrought most kindly with him to confess, and mourn, and brought up all ? Against thee, thee only : he puts in twice as much of the consideration thereof as of any other ingredient, to make his heart mourn ; that chiefly, it not only melted, but dissolved him. And in these thy confessions, let the same also mainly work with thee. Against thee, thee have I sinned, thus oft, thus grievously, thus presumptuously ! Against thee, a God so great, and yet withal so good, so kind, so willing to receive and pardon, if my heart (say) were but as willing to turn unto thee ! and when thy case is as Job's was, Job x. 15, 16, 17. That thou art full of confusion, as he speaks there, so full as thou thinkest thy heart could hold no more ; and yet it increaseth, as it is there, and he fills thee fuller yet ; then do thou pour out thy complaints to him, as he pours in confusion into thee ; and when he hunts thee, as Job there complains, like a fierce lion, fall thou down and humble thyself like a poor and silly lamb ; if thou diest, die at his feet, mourning, bleeding out thy soul in tears : and when he hunts thee up and down, and pursues thee with blow after blow, follow thou hard after him wherever he goes, with complaint after complaint : and when yet he leaves

thee not, but again and again returns, as some read it, after some intermission, and shews himself terrible to thee day after day, night after night, yet do thou look in like manner again and again towards his holy temple, as Jonah did; and when he begins to bring in new sins, new indictments against thee, as it is in the 16th verse, *Thou renewest thy witnesses; and when thou thoughtest he had done with thee, he fetcheth new rods forth, and enters into new quarrels and reckonings long since past and forgotten, as it is in the same verse: Changes and war are against me, vicissitudes and armies of disquietments; and when one army is overcome, new appear in the field,—then fall thou down upon thy knees, and say as Job at last doth, I have sinned, I have sinned! what shall I do unto thee? What shall I do unto thee! O thou Preserver and not the destroyer of men! these and these abominations I have done, and I cannot now undo them! and what shall I do to obtain thy favour? Alas! nothing that can satisfy him; only confess thy sin, accept thy punishment. Go and strip thyself therefore, and, with all submission, present thy naked back to him, and though every stroke fetched not blood only, but well nigh thy soul away, yet complain thou not one whit of him; *put thy mouth in the dust*, Lam. iii. 29, 30; be still, not a word; but only such as whereby thou utterest thy complaints, and doth acknowledge thine own deservedness of ten thousand times more; and say as Micah, vii. 9, *I will bear thine indignation patiently, for I have sinned against thee: bear witness still to every stroke, that it is not only just, but also less than**

thou hast deserved; and that it is *his mercy that thou art consumed*, and cut off at every blow: and the heavier he lays on, struggle thou not, he will let thee down the sooner; the higher he lifts up his hand to strike, the lower let thy soul fall down; *humble yourselves under his mighty hand*, and still kiss the rod when he hath done;—and then take up words of pleading for thyself; it is for thy life, desiring him to remember what he hath been ever thinking of even from everlasting, thoughts of peace and mercy to us-ward; and the number of them cannot be told, as David says, Psalm xl. 5, which he hath been ever thinking of, and with the greatest of delights (as one that was in his bosom and was his counsellor, his Son tells us, Prov. viii. 31); and plead thou as David and other saints of God have done: What are now become of all these thy thoughts of mercy? Are they restrained? What! are all now on the sudden forgotten? laid aside, which thou hast been thinking on so long? hast thou forgotten thine old and ancient delights? Ask him if he hath forgotten his own name, to be gracious and abundant in kindness: it is his name? Say, did the very intent of shewing mercy so infinitely beforehand possess thee with delights, and now when thou shouldst come to put it into execution, and hast so fair an opportunity of doing it, to a soul as full of misery, the object of mercy, as ever, hast thou now no heart, no mind to it? And withal, say that thou hast notice given thee of an infinite and all-sufficient righteousness in his Son, laid up in him, and that by his own procurement, whereof his Son never had, nor can have

any need himself, being God blessed for ever, and for whom was it then appointed but for the sons of men, those who are weary, wounded, sick, broken, lost; these his Son hath put into his will, who still lives to be his own executor. And say further also to him, that it is come to thine ears that his Spirit is the Comforter, a God of comforts; and that his Son hath bought them all, his whole shop and all his cordials, and all his skill; and is anointed with this Spirit on purpose to pour him forth into the hearts of those that are wounded, and sick, and broken; and the whole, they have no need of them. If it be said unto thee, Yea, but thou art most unworthy,—answer, But he professeth to love freely. If the greatness of thy sins be objected against thee, plead thou again, that plenteous redemption is with him; and if thou hast not enough to pardon me, say, I am content to go without. If thou art ungodly, say, *That thou believest on him that justifieth the ungodly.* If he puts thee off, as Christ awhile did the woman of Canaan, and says he hath no need of thee; say, that thou hast need of him, and canst no longer live without him; for in his favour is thy life, and that without it thou art undone. If he seems to rebuke thee thus, how dardest thou press thus to him who is the high and lofty One; a sinful man to him, whose name is holy? say, thou hast heard himself say, *Thus saith that high and lofty One, whose name is Holy, that he dwells with him that is of a contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble,* Isaiah lvii. 15;—and be further bold to tell him, that there are but a few in the world that do seek him; and

if he should turn any away that do, he would have fewer; for who would fear him if there were not mercy in him, and plenteous redemption?

If still he doth pursue thee, and his wrath lies heavy on thee, ask him what it is he aims at? Is it to have the victory, and overcome when he judgeth, as Rom. iii. 4; which David also knew when he humbled himself, Psalm li. 4; freely tell him that thou art willing to give it him, to yield to him, to stand out with him in nothing; but art content to submit to his commanding will in all things, and to his condemning will also, if so he pleaseth; and that it shall be just, as David there acknowledgeth, if he doth condemn thee: and justify thou him, whilst he is condemning thee, and say that at the latter day he shall need no other judge against thee than thyself. Only beseech him to consider what honour it will be to him to pursue dry stubble, and to break a poor dried leaf, that crumbleth under his fingers if he doth but touch it! as Job pleads, to *break a reed* that is broken already; say, thou art not a fit match for him; and he hath said *He will not contend for ever*, Isaiah lvii. 19, especially when he sees any to lay down the weapons, as thou art content to do.

Or is it, ask him, that he aims to have glory out of thy eternal condemnation in Hell? tell him it is true, he may; and that this is some comfort to thee, that he may have the glory out of thy death and destruction, who never yet had it out of thy life: but yet desire him to consider this before he thrusts his sword into thee, that he did first sheath it in his Son's bowels;

and that he may shew as much power in overcoming his wrath, as in venting of it ; yea, and have also greater glory thereby ; for plead that thou art never able to satisfy him, though he should throw thee down to Hell : he may cast thee into prison, but thou canst never pay the debt : and what profit therefore will be in thy blood : and therefore, if satisfaction to his justice be his end, he might better accept that which his Son made him, and so he shall be sure to be no loser by thee : and thereby not only receive the glory of his justice, but shew the riches of his grace and mercy also, and so double the revenue of his glory in thee.

Or is it, Lord, that thou aimest to have more obedience from me than heretofore thou hast had ? Plead, that this is the way at present to disable thee for service, for that while thou sufferest his terrors, thou art as one among the dead ; listless not to his business only, but to all things else ; distracted with terrors, as Heman pleads, Psalm lxxxviii. 15, so as the powers and forces of thy soul are scattered and dissolved, and cannot intend and attend upon their duty ; and besides this distraction in thy spirit, plead that it *consumes thy strength also, dries up thy bones and moisture*, as David also often complaineth, and make an argument of it, as Psalm xxxix. 10, 11, 12, 13, *Remove thy stroke away from me, I am consumed by the blow of thy hand : when thou rebukest man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away as a moth : Oh, therefore spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more seen :—*and withal put him in mind, that if he should go on thus to deal with thee, that thou should-

est not be able to do him much service so, nor to do it long; for it will cut short thy days: say, thus David pleadeth, Psalm lxxxix. 46, 47, compared with Ps. xxxix. and Ps. v. 12, *How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself?—for ever? Shall thy wrath burn like fire? remember how short my time is!* As if he should have said, I have but a little time here allotted me in the world, though none of it be shortened; and further tell him, that for that little time thou hast to live, the more joy thou hast, the more service thou shalt be able to do him; and to go about his work more lively and more strongly; for the joy of the Lord is our strength, Neh. viii. 10, and more acceptably also, for thou lovest a cheerful giver; and therefore intreat him to restore thee to the joy of his salvation, so shalt thou be able to do him more service in a week than in a year now, long trouble of mind being as long sicknesses, which make all thy performances weak; and it is for his disadvantage to have his servants lie long sick upon his hands.

And if it be objected against thee, that if thou shouldest be trusted with much assurance, thou wouldest abuse it, and turn it into wantonness, reply, That if he pleaseth, he can prevent it, by preparing thy heart beforehand for these cordials, so as they shall work most kindly on thee; by writing a law of love towards him in thy heart, which when his love shed abroad shall join with works more strongly; and one grain of it hath more force to purge out sin, to constrain, and strengthen to obedience, than a pound of terrors; and say, That though thou hast indeed a stub-

born and self-loving heart, yet he can make his loving-kindness overcome it, for it is stronger than death ! say Thou hast love in thee, which runs out enough to other things, if he would be pleased to win it to himself : suggest how that that soul mentioned Isaiah lvii, had as stout and stubborn an heart as thou, and went on frowardly, notwithstanding all thy terrors : and yet, O Lord, thou tookest another course with him, and didst heal him again, and that by comforts ; I will heal him, says God there, and restore comforts to him, ver. 17, 18, and that so, if he please, he may deal with thee :—and if light and mercy yet come not, but still God seems, as it were, to cast thee off, then call to mind if ever thou hast had any true communion with him, and thereupon begin to challenge him ; so doth the church, Isaiah lxiii. 16, when in thy case : when his mercies were restrained to her, she says Yet, doubtless, thou art my Father. She saw God was angry ; her heart hard (ver. 17.) ; yet she thought she should know him. Doubtless, he is my Father ; and where is thy zeal, the sounding of thy bowels ? so challenge him upon that old acquaintance thou hast had and held with him in former times. Say, *Doubtless, thou art my Father and my Husband*, how strange soever thou carriest thyself now towards me ; for dost thou not remember what hath been between me and thee in prayer, in such a chamber, at such a time ? Hast thou never a piece of broken ring between him and thee, no love-passage, no love-token, that could not pass between him and any whom he had not betrothed himself unto in kindness ?—produce it at

such a time as this ; and if thou shouldst discern no grace in thee thyself yet desire him to look into thy heart ; and be bold to enquire of him, If he can see nothing there which himself wrote, never to be blotted out ? If there be not some spark of love to him and his fear, which himself put there?—and ask him if he knows his own hand ?—and for thy comfort know, that when thou canst not read it (thy graces being much blurred) yet he can read his own hand at any time, and will not deny it.

Thou mayest be yet bolder ; yea, desire him to look into his own heart, and therein to view the idea he had of thee, and those secret ancient thoughts he bore towards thee from all eternity ; and if at first he seems yet silent, then desire him to look upon thee again, and ask him if he doth not know thee?—and if he hath not known and taken thee for his from everlasting, and engraven thee in the palms of his hands and table of his heart, with such deep and lasting letters of loving-kindness as are not as yet, yea, which will not for ever be blotted out ? tell him, Thou darest refer thyself wholly to what past between him and his Son concerning thee, and let his own heart decide it. Appeal to Christ as thy Surety and a witness thereof for thee, who was privy to all his counsel, Whether thou art not one of those he gave unto him with a charge to redeem and save?—and desire him to look into Christ's heart also, if thy name be not written there with his own hand ; and if that Christ did not bear thy name written up in his heart (as the high priest did the names of all the tribes) when he hung upon the cross,

and when he ascended into the Holy of Holies. Thus Habakkuk, putting up a prayer in the name of the Church, hath taught us to plead (Hab. i. 12.) O Lord, *Art not thou from everlasting my God and mine holy One?* It was a bold question, yet God dislikes it not; but approves it, and presently assents to it in a gracious answer to their hearts ere they went any further; for the next words, and those abruptly spoken, by reason of a sudden answer, are an assurance of this: *We shall not die.* God being put thus to it, and his own thoughts being spoken, could not deny it,—he acknowledgeth it was true; and thus whilst thou mayest be speaking blindfold, as it were, casting anchor in the dark, yet speaking his very heart, he perhaps may own thee, and fall upon thy neck and kiss thee.

And if yet, after continual praying thus, thou findest still no comfort, no answer for him, but he seems rather even to shut thy very prayers out, as in Psalm xxii. 2, 3, then expostulate, as David doth in Psalm lxx. 4, *Why shuttest thou out our prayers, and wilt not hear us pray?*—for, alas! thought he, we have nothing else to help us in the time of need but prayer; and if prayer will do no good, I am undone, say.

If, through all these discouragements, thy condition prove worse and worse, so as thou canst not pray, but art struck dumb when thou comest into his presence (as David, in Psalm lxxvii. 4, *I am so troubled, I cannot speak*) then fall a making signs when thou canst not speak; groan, sigh, sob, chatter, as Hezekiah did, bemoan thyself for thy own unworthiness, and desire Christ to speak thy requests for thee, and

God to hear him for thee. *Christ is an Advocate with the Father*, and pleads no bad case, nor was ever cast in any suit he pleaded.

If still, probably, after many years he owns thee not, but it grows darker and darker,—suppose even till thy death approacheth, or to such extremities that he seems to thee to cast thee off for ever, so as thy distress boils up to such thoughts as these, that there is no other remedy, but thou and he must part,—then, in the midst and depths of such sad fears and apprehensions, down upon thy knees once more; and notwithstanding, fall thou a blessing him for all those glorious excellences of holiness, kindness, grace, wisdom, &c. which are in him, the beauty of which first took thy heart and made thee enamoured with him, though thou shouldst be ever like to be the better for them. Bless him for all the mercy he shews to others, by which they have occasion to magnify him, though thou shouldst be found unworthy! bless him, and those who shall for ever live with him, who do stand about him, see his face, and enjoy him for ever! What sins thou thinkest thou shalt be condemned for by him, condemn thyself for first, and still ask forgiveness of them; what service thou hast any way done him, which he had any glory by,—get thy heart to say thou repentest not of it; but art glad of all done for him, and wish it had been better; what mercies thou hast tasted of from him, confess thyself unworthy of; and thank him, though thou shouldst never partake of any more (such dispositions as these, in such extremities, do often appear in the hearts of God's children) and

desire him that he would but preserve good thoughts of him in thee, that thou mayest not blaspheme him ; and when thou art going, sinking into Hell, in thy own apprehensions, see if he calls thee not back again.

Hear what himself saith (Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.) *Ephraim is my son, his dear son, my pleasant son*, as he says there ; and yet he began to speak against him as bitter sharp words as ever he hath done against thee, and took him up severely, and looked sternly on him, as if he had meant never to have had mercy on him ; upon which Ephraim falls a crying, being thus checked, and bemoaning himself, as I have taught thee to do ; and being yoked as thou art, to tame him, he acknowledgeth it was justly done, having *been a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke* ; and Ephraim began to be ashamed, confounded, not able to look up, for sinning against him, and seeks after repentance ; and that from him, without whose help he was not able to turn to him :—*Turn thou me, and I shall be turned* ; and to challenge him and his eternal love, Thou art the Lord my God. Well, says God, though it be long since I spake against him, and I have suffered him long to lie thus plunged in misery, *yet I remember him still*,—his tears, his sighs, will never be out of my mind ; and though he thinks that I have forgotten him, yet I remember him, and my bowels are troubled for him, as much and more than he is for himself ; and I can forbear no longer, *I will surely have mercy on him* ;—and should he have damned him, his bowels would have been troubled for him indeed all his days.

DIRECTION TENTH.—THE tenth and last Direction is, That having done all this, you would not rest in ease, but healing; not in ease of conscience, but healing of conscience. This I ground upon Isaiah lvii. 17, 18. What was the true issue of that his trouble there, whom God contended with? It was healing and guiding: I will guide him, and I will heal him.

You that are troubled in mind, think not your estates to be good, simply because you begin to cease to be troubled; but only then when the issue of your trouble is healing your spirits by some sound ground of comfort, and when guidance in God's ways, and more close walking with God is the issue of it; for God may slacken the cords and take you off the rack, when yet he hath not pardoned you. A traitor, who was cast into the dungeon, and had many irons on him, may be let out of the dungeon, have his irons taken off, have the liberty of the tower, walk abroad again, with his keeper with him, and yet not have his pardon. Nay, usually before execution they use to take the irons off, and let them have more freedom. Thus it is with many. I thank God, says one, I have had much trouble of mind, distress of conscience, such and such sins terrified me, and I could not sleep for them; but now I am well again, and now they do not trouble me; yea, but is this all? Thou hast cause to fear that thy irons are but taken off against execution. It is with men in point of trouble of mind in the guilt of sin, as in the power of it,—in justification as in sanctification. A man who hath had a strong lust stirring in him, if he hath gone a year or two, and find-

eth it not to stir, he therefore thinks he is utterly freed from it, which yet may be but a restraint of it, not killing of it,—a cessation, not mortification; so it is often in this trouble of mind, which ariseth from the guilt of sin, because a man finds not those doubts, fears, and terrors in his heart which he had wont, therefore, presently he thinks all is well; when, as it may be, but merely a truce, not a peace; a laying down of arms only for a while to make greater preparation against the soul afterwards; a reprival and a little enlargement in prison, not a pardon, if this be all the issue of it.

That you may further conceive the meaning of this, in one that is God's child, and in a wicked man, though both may be and are troubled in mind and conscience, yet there is a main difference, both in the main cause of their trouble, and also in the issue and removal of their trouble. A wicked man's trouble is for the anguish and present smart he feels in sin, in God's wrath lashing his conscience, and out of fear that his sin will not be pardoned, but that he shall endure these tortures for ever in Hell; so it was in Judas, Cain, and many others; but a godly man's trouble (though it hath often all this in it, yet the chiefest of his trouble is a further thing) is not only the smart, the sting of sin, but also the filth, the foulness, the offence of it done to God, that wounds him; for he hath an heart after God's heart, and therefore looks on sin with the same kind of eye that God doth; and as God accounts the offence done to him the greatest evil in sin, so doth a godly heart also. It is not the sting of this serpent

only, but the poison of it that disquiets him ; neither is it only the want of pardon of sin, and the fear of God's everlasting wrath which mainly troubleth him, —but the want of God's favour, the parting with him, whom he sees so excellent and glorious ; the want of seeing his face ; his desire is to live in his sight, and to have God to be his God. Now, such as the wound is, such is the remedy ; therefore, the one being but troubled with the sting, the smart of sin, pull but that sting out, take that load off, and he is well enough, —as jocund, as pleasant as ever : it being present ease that he seeks, and to that end confesseth his sin, and doth any thing for the present to come out of it ; as Pharaoh (Exod. x. 17.) Take away this death only ; or, at the utmost, his aim is but pardon of sin and peace with God, that he may be freed from the fears of undergoing that for ever, the earnest whereof he feels in his conscience now ; and hence therefore the remedies they often have recourse unto are suitable : they are but like rattles to still children with ; they run to merry company, to music, &c. as Cain fell a building cities ; and so they put off the terrors of their consciences. It is ease they seek and no more ; or they run to a formal performance of duties ; even as poor souls under Popery, when they were stung by the friar's sermons, they set them penances and good deeds to be done, which stilleth them awhile ; and for them they thought they should have pardon ; so men run now to holy duties, but with the same opinion that they did then,—as bribes for a pardon. *What shall I give, says he, in Micah, for the sin of my soul?*

Now, the wound of God's child being deeper, not the sting of sin only, but the poison of it,—not the smart, but the offence done to God,—nor the fear of his wrath, but want of his favour,—therefore, accordingly ease from those terrors pacify not him ; no, not simply peace with God will content him, or a pardon. He says not only *Oh, miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this death only !—but who shall deliver me from this body of death ?* If news were brought him that God would pardon him, and not call him to reckoning for any sin, and no more were spoken to his conscience, he would still be troubled, till he had assurance of his good-will also ; if it were said, God will indeed pardon thee, but he will never love thee as he did, he will not look on thee, thou must not come into his sight,—this would grieve the soul more than the other would content it ; and he would be everlastingly troubled. I may allude to that which Absalom said in compliment of his father, when he was banished from him, to express the true desire and greatest trouble of a soul in this case, as you have it in 2 Sam. xiv 32. Absalom was pardoned the fault, but it contented him not ; Let me see his face, or let him kill me ;—so it is with a poor soul : ease, pardon, knocking off his bolts, content him not, till he enjoys communion with God,—till he sees his face in his ordinances :—*This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face ;* (Psalm xxiv. 6.) that is, this is the mark, the genius, the disposition of that generation. This you may see in David, when his conscience was wounded for that great sin ;—what

was it troubled him? Not the want of pardon of sin, for the prophet told him God had pardoned him,—not the mere stings of conscience and ache of his broken bones: *but that against thee, thee have I sinned*, so as ease could not satisfy him; but further, (ver. 10.) *Create in me a clean heart*, which he speaks, because, he having chewed the cud of that unclean act, it had left a soil in his fancy, *and renew a right spirit within me*. Oh, give me grace and truth of heart to thee! and, oh! let me live in thy presence, and see thee, and have acquaintance with thee: (ver. 11.) the want of this it was that troubled him, which, till he had obtained, he could never be at quiet; for he sought not ease or pardon only; but healing of his conscience by the favour of God, and his love shed abroad; so as take heed of resting in ease; as if your hearts be right you will not, you will wait till the *Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings*. Are you now in darkness, full of terrors and God's wrath! You will not rest till that darkness be dispelled by the arising of the light of the Sun of Righteousness on you, and revealing God's face in the face of Jesus Christ, till his righteousness be conveyed to your hearts by some of his wings, by some promise, by some ordinance of his; for the wound being the unrighteousness of sin, nothing but Christ's righteousness will heal it;—the wound being the want of God's favour, and of the evidence of his being your God, the want of his face and good-will, nothing but the revealing and arising of this in your hearts will heal you; for look what the wound is; such is the

plaster; and indeed this only heals; for though, by other means, the sore may be skinned over, and ease gotten,—yet it will break forth again; so Isaiah lvii. 17, 18, *I will heal him*;—and how? By restoring comforts to him. *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation*, says David, *that the bones that thou hast broken may rejoice*;—and how heals he him? *I create the fruit of the lips, Peace*. He doth it by some promise or other. If the want of the sense of communion with God, and absence from him disquiets a man, then the heart rests not till it hath found its *Well-beloved*. Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. If doubts that no grace is in the heart, then the heart rests not till some grace in truth is evidenced, and some such promise made, or some grace brought home. Still look what the trouble is, such also must the plaster be, and then it is healing. Were ye ever in the dungeon? What was it freed thee? Was it Christ's righteousness laid hold on, God's face revealed, thine own grace with promise brought home to thy heart, that came with a commission to deliver thee? Then it is right; otherwise thy bolts may be knocked off, and this but before thy execution.

ISAIAH L. 10.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness and hath no Light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

SOME gleanings there yet remain of this text, which I thought good to bind up into one sheaf, and thresh out at this time.

The second doctrine is,

That though it may befall one that fears God to walk in darkness, yet but to a few he says, *Who is among you?* He singleth such out of a crowd. If simply he hath spoken of those that fear God and obey him without this limitation added, and walk in darkness, he might well have spoken thus sparingly, *Who is among you?* For to the wicked he says, *All you that kindle a fire, &c.*; for there are but few that fear God, in comparison of them. If he had spoken of those that fear God, and have been in darkness for some little while, probably some few days among many, there are yet fewer; for there are that walk in the light of God's countenance to their death, and never knew what terror of conscience means; but when he shall speak of those that *fear God and walk in darkness*, and suffer terrors from their youth, as Heman did, such an one is one of a thousand; of such

an one he says, Who is among you? Few have experience of such a condition. Job had friends, who certainly were godly, for Job was to pray for them; and God said he would hear Job for them; and they, as is likely, knew many godly men besides Job; yet when this condition of darkness befel Job, it was so strange a trial to them, that they thought him therefore an hypocrite, as never having themselves felt or heard of the like in others. When Christ was to go into his agony, he would not have many of his apostles so much as by him, to be witnesses of it, much less to feel the like: he takes but two or three. The reasons are,

First, because, though all God's people are fighting men, and men of valour, yet he hath but a few champions; as David, though he had many soldiers, yet but few worthies; and, therefore, calls but a few out to fight single combats with Satan and his wrath,—though he exerciseth them all in lighter skirmishes, yet not to fight such bloody battles. *Seest thou not my servant Job? there is none like him.* Him God will venture into the field; but others his friends he will not.

Secondly, As he hath few champions able and fit for such an encounter, so he hath variety of other temptations to exercise his withal; he hath poverty and ill report, imprisonment and cruel mockings, loss of goods, crosses in friends, and some have enough to struggle under one of these; and there is no temptation but must befall some, and seldom all befall one: some are so weak, that they would faint, and not be able

to sustain themselves; and God never suffers any to be *tempted above what they are able*, 1 Cor. x. 13. Some men's bodies are weak; and if God should rebuke them long for sin, they would be brought to nothing; and he remembers they are flesh, and stirs not up all his wrath, as David says, *Oh, suffer me to recover strength!* Some men God hath present use for in their callings and employments, which if they were distracted as Heman was, with terrors continually, they were unfit for.

Thirdly, God afflicts in this kind but in case of extremity usually, when he meets with a very froward heart, and stout proud spirit, a knotty piece, Isa. lvii. 17. If lesser crosses would do it, he would not fetch out the great rod. If a rod will thresh out the cummin, he useth not to *turn the wheel over it, nor take a flail to do it*, Isa. xxviii. 27. Now lesser afflictions work with the most of his, through his blessing; mercies work, disgrace works, poverty works, and *he doth not willingly afflict*, Lam. iii. 33, and therefore, not unnecessarily, he puts not men into the dungeon for every fault; and, therefore, there are few long exercised in this way.

Think not, therefore, thou hast not true grace, because thou wert never terrified as some have been. As some have true faith and sound peace, who yet never tasted of joy unspeakable and glorious,—so some have found humiliation, who never knew terrors of conscience. If thou seest sin the greatest misery, Christ the greatest good, thou art humbled.

You see we may often preach such things which do

yet concern but a few in a congregation, and yet we preach them : there are but few walk long in darkness, yet to such Christ doth preach ; yea, and for such doth God give gifts, the tongue of the learned. God often gives a pastor after his own heart for a few, Jer. iii. 15. *Take one or two of a city, and I will give them pastors after my heart :* much more are many sermons often preached but to a few. So even by Christ himself, as he says, Luke iv. 26, *There were many widows, but unto none was Elias sent, but unto her at Sarepta : and many lepers ; but unto none was Elias sent, but unto Naaman.* So says Christ, *I am sent but to a few ;* and therefore, as we must not defraud one poor soul of his portion, because none else partake of it, so the rest are not to think much : but, as in sorrow, stay till their portion come ; and if any one poor soul hath had his state discovered, all the rest are to be thankful.

See some reason why some in distress of mind complain, that none ever were in the like condition ; this they are apt to do. So the church, Lam. i. 12. The reason is, because few are so troubled, and perhaps they never knew any ; but yet some are, and have been in the like ; for, 1 Cor. x. 13, *No temptation befalls, but is common to man.*

That those few in congregations that walk in darkness, and yet fear and obey him, “ God and Christ hath an especial eye unto, and care of :” you see he singles them out, as it were, from all the rest : “ Who is among you ?” Isa. lxvi. 2, “ All these things have my hand made ; but to this man will I look that is

poor and broken, and trembleth at my word :” that is, though all things and persons else in the world be my creatures, and so I have a care of them all, yet he seems to overlook all else,—and “to him will I look,” &c. as if there were none else in the Church.

The first reason is, because it is the office of Christ so to do. “The Spirit is upon him on purpose,” Isa. lxi. 1—3, “to open the prison to them that are bound,” shut up in this dungeon : “to appoint to them that mourn, beauty for ashes ; the oil of joy for mourning ; garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” He is the Physician, and hath undertaken the cure, Matt. ix. 12 ; and whom should the physician have an eye to but the sick ? and the most sick, as those are that cannot find their sins forgiven, Isa. xxxiii. 14. He is the Shepherd, Isa. xl. 11, and will take care of all his sheep ; “knows them by name.” But of whom especially ? The lambs that are weak, young Christians. “He will gather them with his arms, and gently lead the ewes with young,” that are travailing and bringing forth, as those under terrors are : he will not over-drive them ; for God hath given him charge “he should lose none of them.” He is that “good Shepherd,” that will, as he hath promised, Ezekiel xxxiv. 16, “seek out that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which was sick :” —He names all casualties that befall them, because he helps in all miseries ; yea, and ver. 12, after they have been bewildered “in a cloudy and dark day,” verse 12, and walked in darkness long, he will

“ find them out and deliver them,” as his promise there is.

Secondly. If his office did not move him to it, his love would ; for he is a “ merciful and a pitiful High Priest,” Heb. iv. 15, and was “ in all points tempted as we are ;” and especially in agony of spirit ; therein he drank deepest of any, and therefore is fitted to pity us therein most : and the greater any is troubled, the more he is touched. “ In all your afflictions he is afflicted,” Isa. lxiii. 9 ; and Jeremiah xxxi. 20, “ Since I spake against him I remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him.” When a child is sick, the mother is more troubled and careful about it ; and her eye and mind more on it than upon all the house besides.

The use is, to meet with that conceit that befalls all that are in darkness ; they think that, of all men else, God regards not them : Sion said, God hath forgotten me, Isa. xlix. 15. So David : “ God hath forgotten to be merciful.” Because they find their hearts hard to God, they think that his is so to them : because they can find no love in their hearts to God, they think he bears none to them ; but you see Christ especially inquires for such, and overlooks all others else. God hath “ graven thee on the palms of his hands :” every sigh of thine goes to his bowels : “ I dwell with him that is broken, to revive his spirit,” Isa. lix. 15. God is nigh unto him.

Second use is, Are God’s eyes upon us more when we are in trouble of spirit than on any other ? then let our eyes be upon him : “ We cannot tell what to do ;

but our eyes are towards thee." Let our eyes be towards him for help, as of those that looked on the brazen serpent: let our eyes be towards him for service, "as the eyes of handmaidens are on their mistress:" not to look to men, not to credit, but to have our eyes on God in all we do, as if there were none else in the world to approve ourselves unto.

When he speaks of those his children that are in darkness, he chooseth rather to describe them by fear and obedience than by any other grace: observe, That when the children of God are under terrors, the most eminent grace that doth appear in them, is fearfulness to offend God and willingness to obey him:—other graces may be stirred, but these are most eminent, and therefore he mentioneth these for their comfort.

First. For explication. Know that several occasions draw out several graces. When the sunshine of God's favour melts the heart, then love and obedience thence proceeding, are most eminent, and also godly sorrow. So Mary wept much, loved much, "for much was forgiven her:" her heart was full of assurance. On the contrary, when the sense of God's love is withdrawn, and fears and terrors shed abroad in the heart, then "fear and obedience" shew and discover themselves. Therefore, Isa. lxxvi. 2, "He that is poor and contrite, and trembleth at the word," are joined; trembleth at every command and threatening, is fearful to transgress; and so those in that estate do find. The reason is,

Because graces, and affections in which graces are scated, stir more or less in us according as their objects

are, and our apprehensions of them. Now, therefore, when the soul is possessed most with displeasure, for sin and apprehensions of wrath, then it feareth most, and then fear works accordingly, against that which may displease. Hence the apostle: "Seeing our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 29, "let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear;" therefore, when we feel him so, we are to suspect our hearts most, if we be not more fearful of offending him, and obey him.

The first use is of trial, whether thou art a child under wrath? if thou fearest more, and if that fear produceth obedience? As "Christ learned obedience by what he suffered," so wilt also thou, if thou hast his Spirit.

The second use is, to exercise graces still in their seasons:—When thou "art afflicted, pray; when joyful, sing psalms," James v. 13;—when filled with assurance, then "mourn, and be confounded," Ezek. xvi. 63.

ISAIAH L. 11.

Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled; this ye shall have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.

LET us now come to the opposite state of wicked men, who are said here to walk in the light of their own fire, &c.

All the difficulty lies in opening what is meant by their own fire, and what is meant by walking in the light of it, which is opposed here to walking in darkness, and to trusting on the name of the Lord; namely, Christ's righteousness, as I said before. To this purpose you must remember, that his scope is to shew the differing props and stays for justification and comfort which a godly man hath, and a natural man.

The stay and comfort of a godly man's soul lies in the *light of God's countenance*; which, when he wanteth, he is in darkness, though he hath ever so many outward comforts. The stay, comfort, and prop of his faith for justification in that estate, when he sees no righteousness in himself, is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our righteousness.

Oppositely, therefore, by the fire, and the light of

their fire, which wicked men are said to walk in, two things must be meant.

First, Their own natural righteousness which they have by nature, and in the state of nature, and the sparks and acts thereof; this they trust to, and neglect the name of the Lord, and the righteousness of justification, and of the new creature.

Secondly, The light of outward comforts from the creatures, which in this world they enjoy, and the sparkling pleasures thereof which they walk in and content themselves with, neglecting communion with God, being estranged from the life of God, and living without him in the world; so as the opposition strongly carries it, that both these should be meant by their fire here, and all interpreters give the first interpretation of it; and I have added this second to make the sense complete.

1st, How that by fire of their own kindling, their own righteousness without Christ, such as the Pharisees had, and Paul had before conversion, should be meant; we must consider that he, speaking here to the Jews, alludeth to the types of the old law, which they were acquainted with; wherein,

First, Fire, you know, was it they offered their sacrifices with, typifying out, as Mark ix. 50, our inward habitual grace and righteousness, whereby we offer up ourselves and our service as a living sacrifice to God, Rom. xii. 1.

Secondly, When they offered incense or sacrifice acceptable to God, they were not to offer it with common fire, which is ordinary in the world in their chim-

nies and kitchens, which was kindled by themselves by sparks out of stones, or from things here below, but it was to be fire from Heaven, and taken from the altar ; so Lev. ix. 24, which was kept continually burning, and therefore, when a new altar was made, *fire came from Heaven*, 2 Kings vii. 3 ; and the high-priest was to take fire off the altar whenever he offered incense, Lev. xvi. 12 ; and therefore, when Nadab and Abihu offered common fire of their own kindling, Lev. x. 1, they were consumed for thinking to please God with it. Now all these things fell out in types to them ; for answerably by fire of their own kindling, is meant the common righteousness of civility and natural devotion, which was by nature in some of the heathen. (Rom. ii. 14.) found even in their chimnies, which also the Jews performed, both by the common help of nature, custom, and education, by the strength of natural principles, of conscience enlightened by the law, and self-love improved ; all which, thus coming but from nature not renewed by grace, is said to be of their own kindling ; whereby yet they thought to please God, and rested in it, as a sacrifice well pleasing to him, as Nadab and Abihu did ;—whereas the righteousness they should have offered up to God, should have been that from Heaven, the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith, and a new work of grace, as fire from off that altar, Christ changing their hearts, and making them new creatures, renewing them into the same image of holiness which was in him ; which as it adds to what is in nature, and grows not there, so differs as much from that goodness of nature you

bring into the world, or which hath been wrought in you by education, as the fire and light of the Sun in Heaven doth from common fire, or the light of a glow-worm from that of the sun.

Now, because the Jews rested in such an outward conformity to the law, of their own working, therefore they are said, Rom. x. 3, *to establish their own righteousness*, being ignorant of both these righteousnesses, Christ's righteousness, which is the fire from Heaven, and the righteousness of regeneration, to change their natures, which is the fire "off the altar."—Nicodemus was ignorant of both, and so had "lain down in sorrow," as his forefathers did, if Christ had not changed him, and begotten him again.

To this end you may further consider, that in men's hearts there are (to use the language of the metaphor here) though they be stony unto God, yet some sparks of fire which may be struck out of them by the word, by education, by enlightening of the conscience, and by working upon self-love in men; and the sparks of this fire are those outward acts of righteousness which arise and spring from self-love and natural conscience, which die as sparks and "remain not;" which the true righteousness of regeneration is said to do, 2 Cor. ix, and 1 John ii. 16; and the "light of this fire," which carnal men, not born again, content themselves with, is that excusing which natural conscience, upon the performing any outward act of just dealing, hath in such men's hearts, mentioned Rom. ii. 15.

And the walking in the light of this fire, is resting therein all their days, not endeavouring to have their

hearts changed, and to get a new principle of grace, and of love to God fetched from Christ, as the spring of all.

THE first Use is, Seeing so many offer up but common fire to God, it is good you examine whether that righteousness you think to please God with, be any more than fire of your own kindling.

First, That righteousness which is kindled in thy heart, and blazing in thy life, whence was it first enkindled? examine the original of it.—Was it kindled in thee by fire from Heaven? that is, by the Holy Ghost coming down in God's ordinances on thee as fire, burning up thy lusts, melting thy heart, dissolving the works of the devil, enkindling sparks of true love to God, zeal for his glory, which are above the reach of man's natural ability,—or is it no more than that whereas every man hath some sparks of ingenuity and honesty towards others, and of sobriety, and of devotion to a Deity, raked up in the ashes of corrupt nature (for even the heathen had *the law written in their hearts*, Rom. ii. 14.) which sparks, thou living in the church, where civility and religion is professed, civil education, natural wisdom, and the accusings of natural conscience enlightened, have blown up to some blaze, to some just dealing, common care of serving God? yet know, that if there be no other principle, nor no more, it is by fire of your own kindling, and you will lie down in sorrow.

Secondly, Examine what duties are especially the fuel of that fire in thee; in what duties is that right-

eousness thou thinkest thou pleasest God with, chiefly spent and exercised?—are they principally the duties of the second table, of just dealing with men, and sobriety, and it may be thou bringest withal a stick or two of the first table to this fire; that is, some duties thereof, such as for thy credit thou must not omit, as coming to God's ordinances of public worship. This fuel, if there be no more, argues it is but common fire; for look into the chimnies of the heathen, thou shalt find the most of all this practised; and in that thou dost put the chiefest of thy religion in them, it is argued to be but a fire kindled of those sparks which are raked up in nature; for those common sparks which are in all men's hearts, are especially those of the second table; but now if it were a fire from Heaven, then though those would not be left undone, yet the chiefest heat of thy heart would be the duties of Heaven, of the worship of God, public and private; when men practise but so much righteousness as is necessary for them to do, if they will live in the world in any comfort or credit, as to the just and sober is necessary, as also to frequent God's ordinances, for the state we live in enjoins them; but when men's zeal and fervour contends also, and lives upon such duties which the world regards not, as mourning for sin, taking pains with the heart in private, between God and a man's own soul, and feeds upon heavenly things and thoughts, and is such fire as the world quencheth, it is a sign it is more than common fire.

Thirdly, In these duties, common fire warms but the outward man, as that fire doth which you feel daily;

it heats you not without,—so common righteousness contents itself with bodily exercise, a formal performance of duties public and private ; but fire from Heaven heats first within, heats the heart within, as at the hearing the word, *Did not our hearts burn within us ?* say they ; so it heats the heart in prayer, makes a man *fervent in spirit serving the Lord.*

4thly. Examine what bellows cherish and keep alive that fire of righteousness that is in thee, and make it flame ; that is, what motives set thee to work to do what thou dost ; if worldly ends make thee abstain from sin, and to be just in thy dealings, as credit with the world, and fear of disgrace, or the accusings of conscience only, or fear of Hell, or hope of Heaven,—this is but common fire ; but if love to God, the consideration of his mercies, his eternal love, and the love of Christ, zeal for his glory ; if these be the bellows, the fire is heavenly ; but if when thou art to be moved with such as these, they stir not thy heart, it is but common fire.

The second use is, to take heed of walking in the light of such fire ; that is, resting in it for salvation, and contenting yourselves with it, as most in the world do, and as the Jews here did ; for you will lie down in sorrow if you do.

But you will say, We do not trust in this our own righteousness, for we profess Christ, and believe in him ; which, added to this is enough.

I answer,—That though you profess Christ, yet unless you have had a light that hath discovered to you that all the righteousness you have by nature, and im-

proved in nature, is a false righteousness, you do then as yet rest in your own righteousness, and rely not wholly on Christ. So, Phil. iii., Paul first saw all to be dross and dung, *counted it loss, that he might win Christ*; it implies, he could not have him else. Men, though they seem to take Christ's title, as many will procure the King's title for a living to make all sure, yet they keep, and stick to, and plead their own; but you must give up that first, and rely wholly on Christ, or he will not save you.

He that doth not daily, above all things, directly, and immediately aim at and seek out for Christ's righteousness; and maketh it not the chiefest of his thoughts, prayers, and business, and is restless without it, rests in his own; for so when he had given up his title in his own, he mainly endeavoured after this, *to be found in Christ*, Phil. iii.

Thirdly. You will seek from Christ a new righteousness of sanctification also; for you will see that the common righteousness of nature and education will not please him; and Christ must be made sanctification to you, 1 Cor. i. 30, as well as righteousness. Thus Nicodemus, although a civil man before, yet when he came to Christ, his old civility would not serve, without being born again, and becoming a new creature; so that you must not think to make a supply or addition unto Christ with fire of your own kindling, you must have all off the altar; your moral virtues must be turned into graces, by having a new end put into them, carrying your hearts in them unto God.

The other interpretation which I add, is, That the

fire of outward comforts is also meant ; which, whilst men enjoy, they go on merrily, neglecting God and Christ, and communion with him ; but the soul of a believer wanting this communion with God, is in darkness, and till he enjoys God again, can take comfort in nothing. Thus Eccles. vii. 6 : The laughter of the wicked is compared to the crackling of thorns.

Fire is a comfortable creature, having both heat and light in it, which serve and help against both cold and darkness, which are two of the greatest evils to the senses.

Heat is comfortable. Therefore, Isaiah xliv. 16, he warmeth himself, saith the prophet, and cries Aha.

Light also is comfortable ; for saith Solomon, It is a pleasant thing to behold the Sun. Hence, therefore, fire here is put for outward comforts.

But yet, what fire are they but kitchen fire ? *ignis focalis*, as the philosopher calls it ; for, it is fire of their own kindling, says the text ; not that purest element of fire above. God is said to be light and fire, whom the saints enjoy, and are refreshed with his light, and in it see light.

And the resemblance this way also will strongly hold ;

For a kindled fire hath two things common, which go to the making of it ; both which together, are called fire.

First. Fuel ; as wood, or coals, &c.

Secondly. That element that preys upon these.

Answerably unto those carnal pleasures and delights

which wicked men enjoy and rest in, two things are also concurrent.

First. The object, which is as the fuel. Things earthly, and of this world:

Secondly. Their fiery hot and burning lusts, which prey upon, and live upon this fuel ; both which make this fire here spoken of ; in both which, this resemblance will hold in many regards.

First. Because the fuel of these fires of their lusts and comforts are base ; things only here below. What is the fuel of your kitchen fires ? things digged out of the earth ; dung, wood, coal ; so things on earth are fuel to their desires. — Their lusts are therefore called members upon earth, Col. iii. 5 ; for all their comforts consist in, and their desires are after earthly things ; as their fair wives, children, houses, meat, drink ; *their god is their belly, and they mind earthly things*, Phil. iii. 19.

Secondly. Because when this fuel is taken away, the fire goes out ; so do men's hearts die when outward things are taken from them. When Nabal thought David might yet come, and take his goods, his heart died within him ; for men live in the creatures ; and out of them they die.

Thirdly. As fire is a consuming thing, Heb. xii. 29, it leaves nothing but ashes ; so are men's lusts, James iv. 4. They ask to *consume all upon their lusts*. All the pleasures they have, nothing comes of them ; nothing of the strength they get by them ; they do all for themselves ; and with themselves all dies.

Fourthly. Fire is a devouring thing ; a whole world

would not satisfy it, if it were let alone to burn on ; and one day, this whole world you see shall be burnt up by fire, as a witch for enticing men. Even such are men's desires after pleasures, unsatisfied they are ; and the more fuel is laid on, the more ye may lay on ; they enlarge their desire as the fire of Hell. Hab. ii. 5.

Fifthly. The pleasures which arise from the meeting and conjunction of this fuel, and their lusts, are but as sparks. Job calls sparks the sons of fire, being engendered by it upon fuel ; as pleasures are the sons of your lusts, when the object and they lie and couple together ; and they are not long-lived, they are but as sparks, they die as soon as begotten, Col. ii. 22, *perish in the using* ; and are but as the cracklings of thorns ; they soon go out.

Sixthly. Smoke accompanies such fires, the fuel being muddy things ; so doth much sorrow their comforts, Prov. xiv. 13 ; and they go out, and end in smoke, as in the text, lie down in sorrow.

So that put these together, both that strange fire of their own righteousness, which is from, and in nature, unchanged ; and the kitchen-fire of outward comforts ; —these are the two main hindrances that keep all wicked men from Christ, and justification through him.

Whereas the covenant of grace hath these two main promises in it :—

Ist. That God himself (who is the God of comfort) will be an abundant reward, Gen. xvii. 1, 2, and so by faith we take him to be, and are divorced from all comforts else in comparison of him ; and,

Secondly. That Jesus Christ his Son is made the Lord our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6, and therefore ere we take him to be so to us, we must be emptied of all our own righteousness by nature, that so God and Christ might be all in all to us; and, therefore, as the first and main work of grace consists both in emptying the heart, and bringing it to nothing in its own righteousness,—so also in regard of all outward comforts, that so no flesh might rejoice in his sight. Answerably unto these two, there are found two main impediments in men by nature.

First. Because in nature they find some sparks of civil goodness, they rest in them, and take them for grace, and neglect Christ;—and,

Secondly. Finding also in this world themselves to be warmed with many outward comforts, being encompassed about with sparks, they content themselves with these. Thus, so long as that young man had righteousness of his own, and possessions of his own, he cared not for Christ, nor communion with him, nor righteousness from him.—Well, but says Christ here, Flatter yourselves with your own righteousness, and cheer yourselves with your own sparks, and walk on; but know you will lie down in sorrow, when the godly shall rest in their beds, Isa. lvii. 2.—You will lie bed-ridden in Hell; or, as a woman in travail, never to rise again.

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