



A
SUPPORT FOR
the sinking Heart
in times of distresse.

O R
A SERMON PREACHED
in LONDON, to uphold hope
and allay feare, *January 4th*. Which
was a day of great trouble and deepe
danger in the City.

By SIMEON ASH.

PROV. 25. 11.

A Word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold, in pictures of silver.



LONDON

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the Counter, MDCXLII.

REPORT

of the

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To the Christian Reader.

TH E seasonableness of this Sermon occasioning warme workings in the hearts of many who heard it preached, the Author of it was perswaded to print it: but he judging it unworthy such publike view, returned a denyall unto those desires of his friends. Afterwards understanding that a Coppy taken by short hand from his mouth, would be made common, he rather chose to peruse and correct it, then to expose himselfe and the reader unto greater wrong. Hereupon sundry phrases are filed, and some

A 2 Scriptures

Scriptures layed more open, other additions or amplifications are not very many, but thou now hast the body of the Sermon, both for matter and method, as it was first delivered. When thou meetest with wants and weaknesse, remember that not the confidence of the preacher, but the importunity of some of his heareres, hath made this discourse thus publike. If by meanes hereof, thy soule shall receive any spirituall edification, and grow more able with hope and comfort, to thrust through straights in Heaven way; give God the glory of all his gracious workings upon thy spirit by Jesus Christ.

Martij. 17. 1641.

IT is this day ordered by the Committee of the House of Commons in Parliament concerning Printing, that this Booke, intituled *A support for the sinking heart in times of distresse*, be printed.

JOHN WHITE.



GEN. XXII. XIV.

*In the Mount of the Lord it shall be
seene.*



Interpreters call this Text a Proverbe, the interpretation whereof is to be fetched from the occasion of it.

God by way of tryall did put his servant *Abraham* upon a sad taske, a dead service, commanding him to make a burnt offering of his sonne, his sonne *Isaack*, the sonne of his age, and the sonne of Gods promise. *Vers. 1.*

Take now thy sonne, thy only sonne Isaack whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering. *Vers. 2.*

How heavy this worke was likely to be upon *Abrahams* heart, I leave it to the judgement of any affectionate father, when he hath seriously perused the law of the Lord concerning burnt offerings.

The offering being slaine it was to be cut in peeces, the wood being laid upon the Altar fire was to be put under, the parts, the head, the fat were to be laid in order upon the wood, the inwards and the legs being washt in water, all were to be burnt on the Altar. *Lev. 1. 6, 8, 9.*

When the good old man had chewed this bitter pill for the space of three dayes, towards the end of the third day, he lifting up *his eyes saw the place as farre off* where his *dearest* *Gen. 22. 4.*

dearest sonne must be sacrificed.

Being come to his journeyes end he builds the Altar, binds his sonne, and layes him thereon. What patheticall conference passed betweene them two, the Holy Ghost reveales not. But what it was each affectionate heart will make conjecture. When the father (no doubt with a heavy heart) had taken the knife, and lifted up his hand, and was ready to give the deaths blow to his beloved *Isaack*, now imagin you what were *Abrahams* straights.

Is it not probable he might have such reasonings as these? If I kill not my sonne God will be incensed because he is disobeyed; If I doe, how will the world clamour and censure, being ignorant of my warrant, and therefore apt to judge my act both impious and unnaturall.

Now in the Mount is the Lord seene, divine providence sweetly and gloriously appeareth two wayes.

1. In that *Abrahams* sonne is spared.

Vers. 11, 12. 2. In that a fitting sacrifice is prepared, and both unexpected. *Abraham, Abraham hold thy hand.*

How welcome were these words to the working warme heart of *Abraham*; being ready to let forth the life of his welbeloved sonne? The execution is cheekt, *Isaack* is not killed, and yet the intention of his obedience herein is graciously accepted: yea and as an addition of mercy, he is assured by Christ the Angell of the covenant, that God accounted him one that truly feared his name. *Now I know thou fearest me.*

Heb. 11. 17.

Vers. 12.

This unexpected providence might worke in the good mans heart willingnesse to tender unto the Lord an offering in way of thankfullnesse, that his Majesty might have some homage in the same place where he had shewed so much favour. And though speedy provision of that kind was as farre from *Abrahams* thoughts, as the preservation of his sonne, yet when he lifted up his eyes and looked, *behold behind him a ramme caught in a thicket by the hornes.* And *Abraham* went and tooke the ramme

Vers. 13.

and

and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his sonne,
and Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh.
In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seene.

I will not trouble you in reporting the various readings of these words from the originall. In short, the english of my Text is this, *Mans extremity is Gods opportunity.* Or if you would have my Doctrine in other words, take it thus :

In the Mount, in the midst of straights it hath beene the manner of the Almighty, mercifully to manifest himselfe for his servants comfort. Doct.

There are two things that I shall desire to speake too in the prosecution of this point, purposely pitched upon because of this dayes perplexity.

1. Confirmation, that it may be strongly beleaved.
2. Application, that it may be seasonably improved.

The Confirmation of the Doctrine I will give in.

1. By Scripture.
2. By Reason.

The Scripture prooffe you shall have under two heads.

1. The Promises of God.
2. The experiences of the godly.

I will mention only two pretious Promises, because they are sufficient, being both pregnant and pertinent, speaking both fully and punctually to the point in hand.

The former is in *Psal. 72.12.* where the sweet dispensations of Christs regall authority being typically foretold by King *Solomons* government, we have this recorded. *He shall deliver the needy When he cryeth, the poore also and him that hath no helper.* You may doe well to marke the fittest and fullness of the Promise. *Psal. 72.12.*

1. When Christ finds his people in themselves poore and needy, destitute of abilities to shelter themselves from wrong and violence.
2. When in regard of others it is thus with them, viz. not only that they have weake helps, or few helpers, but when they have no helpers, none at all.

3. When

3. When in this distresse they cry out as persons in an undone condition, then, though not till then will he deliver.

Deut. 32. 36.

The other Promise is registred in *Deut. 32. 36.* For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himselfe for his servants when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none stout, up, or left.

The language is large, and hath much in it, but because the prooffe in it is apparent to every eye, I will leave it.

The experiences of the godly which I shall produce you may please thus to consider :

1. Of single Persons plunged into deepe dangers.

2. Of companies, whether few or many, compassed about with devouring perills on every side.

For single Persons, I will instance in foure Examples.

Dan. 6. 16. 17,
&c.

The first is of *Daniell*, wherein foure circumstances are remarkeable.

1. He was cast to *Lyons*, not only one but many, the number we know not.

2. He was put into the *Lyons den*, and the doore was shut, a stone was brought and layed upon the mouth of the den that he might not get forth from those beasts of prey.

3. The King sealeth it with his owne signet, and with the signet of his Lords, that the purpose might not be charged concerning *Daniell*.

4. In this darke den of deadly danger he continued a whole night, and in this great straight the Lord by his Angell, shut the *Lyons moutes* that they did his servant no hurt at all.

The second Example is that of *David*, 1 Sam. 23. from the 25. to the 28. *Saul pursued after David in the Wildernesse of Maon, and Saul went on this side the Mountaine, and David and his men on that side of the Mountaine, and David made haste to get away for feare of Saul, for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul saying, hast thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the Land,*

where-

Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David.

In this Example these things are considerable.

1. It was no lesse then *Dauids* life that now was endangered. *Verf. 15.*

2. The *Ziphites* who were acquainted with *Dauids* holds, combined themselves also against him. *Verf. 19.*

3. All this strength did not only in a warre-like way take up armes to meete him, for then by flying backe he might have made an escape, but they compassed him round about.

4. His strength was not sufficient safely to breake through these blood-thirsting forces: Now in this straight, an unexpected providence procures his preservation: In this *Mount* was God seene gloriously.

The third Example is that of *Paul*, which you have in the 21. *Acts* 30, 31, 32. *All the City was moved, and the people ranne together, they bound Paul, drew him out of the Temple, and forthwith the doores were shut, and as they went about to kill him, tydings came to the chiefe Captaine of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproare, who immediately tooke souldiers, and Centurions, and ranne downe unto them, and when they saw the chiefe Captaine and the souldiers, they left beating Paul.*

Herein you may note:

1. The generall Insurrection, *All the City.*
2. Their violent Opposition, *They drew him out.*
3. Their bloody Intention, *It was to kill Paul.*
4. Their entrance upon execution, *They were beating him* to beate out his life: Now in this straight commeth tydings, leave him there is something else to doe: Thus was God in the *Mount* seene, and *Pauls* life preserved.

The fourth Example is of *Peter*, *Acts* 12. 4, 6, 7. where-
in note:

1. That *Herod* intending to kill him (having done execution upon *James*, *ver. 3.*) had apprehended him, and imprisoned him.
2. In prison he was committed to the custody of foure quaternions of souldiers, that for every watch both day

and night there might be ~~66~~, and 4. looking to him to prevent escape.

3. The night before he was to be brought forth, he was bound with two chaines, and two souldiers had him betweene them. And now, that night, and in that straight, he was delivered by the Angell of God.

The experiences of Gods people in combined companies, come in the next place to be considered, and for brevities sake I will only suggest three.

The first is of *Shadrack, Meseck* and *Abednego*, wherein their Persons are not so many as the particulars notable in their deliverance, *Dan. 3. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. &c.* Then was *Nebuchadnezzar* full of fury, and the forme of his visage was changed against *Shadrack, Meseck* and *Abednego*, therefore he spake and commanded that they should heate the furnace seven times more then it was wont to be heated, &c.

From these words their extreame perill with which they were besieged, appeares in five circumstances.

1. Their death is determined by the King, who had authority to command both their tortures and executions.

2. The most mighty souldiers were appointed to bind them, and doe execution upon them.

3. The furnace being heated seven times more hot then ordinarily, did burne to death them who undertooke their burning.

4. These 3 men, were cast not only into the mouth, but into the midst of the furnace.

5. They fell down bound in the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Now in this condition, conceive how little hope could be expected of life to be continued, and yet it is affirmed by the Holy Ghost, *that they had no hurt, upon their bodies the fire had no power, nor was the haire of their head singed.*

Uers. 27.

The next is of *Israel* when they came out of *Egypt*, recorded, *Exodus 14*. Wherein these things set forth *Israels* extremity.

1. The forces prepared against them, *The heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and he made ready his Chariot and tooke his people with him, and he tooke six hundred chosen Chariots, and all the Chariots of Egypt, and Captaines over every one of them.* *Vers. 5, 6, 7.*

2. The pursuit made after them, *They pursued after the children of Israel, and the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and Chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen and his army.* *Vers. 8, 9.*

3. The dreadfull apprehensions raised in the hearts of the Israelites, (*viz.*) that no lesse then their death was intended. *Why hast thou taken us away to dye? Had it not bene better for us to serve the Egyptians then that we should dye.* *Vers. 11, 12.*

4. The particulars whereby they were further straightened. 1. *The Egyptians overtooke them encamping by the Sea.* 2. *The Seas if they went forward threatned to devoure them.* In this distresse God discovers himselfe, and delivers them. For observe the words, *Moses said unto the people, feare ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day.* *Vers. 9, 13.*

To day, even just now and not before, helpe comes from Heaven. Herein this farther circumstance hath it's weight, that *Israel* at this instant was provoking God, by murmuring and distrustfull feares.

The last is of *Israel* in the raigne of *Jeroboam* sonne of *Joash*. *The Lord saw the affliction of Israel that it was very bitter, for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel, and the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under Heaven, but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the sonne of Joash.* *2 King 14. 26, 27.*

All these passages propounded from sacred records, may abundantly satisfie us in the truth of the doctrine now under hand: (*viz.*) *That in the Mount of the Lord it shall appear, Mans extremity is Gods opportunity.*

In case you inquire the Reasons of this divine dispensation, I returne answer.

That God thus worketh in reference to }

 Himselfe.
 His people.
 Their enemies

Exod. 14. 4.

1. In reference to himselfe. The prayse and glory of his own blest Name designed in all his works, is the supream end aymed at in this Providence. This God bringeth in as the cause why his hand carryed *Israel* to the very side of the Sea, into the mouth of death before deliverance should appear. *I will be honoured upon Pharaoh and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.*

Dan. 3. 18, 29.

Vpon such occasions the Attributes of the Lord breake forth in glory, His Wisdome is most manifested when it worketh beyond meanes, above meanes, that humane reason cannot find out divine foot-steps. His Power triumphs when all opposition shrinketh before his wondrous workings. The like might be shewed concerning his other excellencies. The event of Gods dealings with *Daniel*, and the three young governours in the times of their straights, discover that this was Gods intent in those providences. For marke how *Nebuchadnezzar* and King *Darius* did trumpet forth the praises of the God of *Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego* and *Daniel*, when they were eye witnesses of those two glorious deliverances which were wrought on by omnipotency. *Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent his Angell, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the Kings word, and yeelded their bodies that they might not serve, nor worship any god, except their owne God. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation and language, which speake any thing amisse against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dung-hill, because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort:*

Dan. 6. 26, 27.

Then King Darius wrote unto all people, nations and languages, that dwell in all the earth. I make a decree, that in every dominion of my Kingdome, men tremble and feare before

fore the God of Daniell, for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his Kingdome that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signes and wonders in Heaven and in earth. Who hath delivered Daniell from the power of the Lyons. By both these instances it is evident, that the Lord doth appeare in the Mount for his owne sake, to get and give him selfe a name in the world.

2. God doth thus work in respect to his own people. And here I will note only foure particulars.

1. Sometimes that he might discover to his servants for their encouragement, both the truth and strength of his owne graces in them. This was the reason why God thus tryed *Abraham*, that he might manifest that holy feare which was planted in his breast. Hereupon God putteth him to it, and carrieth him into the Mount, leadeth him into distresse by degrees, acting him on to build the Altar, to lay the wood in order, to bind his *Isaack*, to lay him upon the Altar, upon the wood, yea to take the knife, and to stretch forth his hand to slay his sonne, before he did appeare for his comfort, in giving order for the lengthening of *Isaacks* life. And now when there seemed to be but one minute of time unto the effusion of *Isaacks* blood, heare the good newes from Heaven, *Abraham I know thou fearest me.*

2. Sometimes to manifest the feebleness of some grace in their hearts for their humbling, *Peter* thought himselfe full enough of courage to come to Christ upon the sinking seas if he might have a call. Well! marke the issue, Christ calleth him, come out *Peter*, but when he saw the windes boysterous, and when his footing failed, he began to sinke, then he was afraid and cryed out, hereupon observe Christs answer, *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt.*

Mat. 14. 28, 29,
30, 31.

3. That he may set the graces of his Spirit in exercise, both for their increase, and for the enfeebling of contrary lusts. We know that habits are strengthened by exercise, and grace is augmented in it's measure, by

being put forth vigorously in it's operations. And by how much any grace gathereth strength, by so much the opposing corruption becommeth feeble in a Christian brest. And that the Lord hath this end in this kind of working, it might be evidenced by manifest instances, but for brevities sake, I will only point at one, in one single experiment.

As holy affiance in God is confirmed, so by such like dispensations creature confidence is abated in holy hearts, *2 Cor. 1. 9, 10.* *But we had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.* Men in straits see the strength of creature helps shrunke up, and withered, whereupon they dare leane to them no longer; but Gods irresistible power, profound wisdom, abundant goodnesse, and other glorious attributes in such difficult cases being clearly discovered, the soule is encouraged confidently to cast it selfe into his armes for future times.

4. That their deliverance might be more sweet to their spirits, and consequently that their joyes might the more readily runne out before his Majesty in holy thankfullnesse. When we expect that now our houses shall be fired, the City sack't, our estates wasted, our wives abused, our children cruelly murdered, our Sabbath and weeke day meetings interrupted, our Parliament dissolved, and our Kingdome desolated. Now to see these clouds to blow over, and our Sunne to breake forth againe, oh how sweet will this glorious change be to our now-dropping hearts! *Dauids* experince speaks to this purpose, *Psal. 34. 1, 2, 3.* A Psalm of *David* when he changed his behaviour before *Abimelech*, who drove him away, and he departed. *I will blesse the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soule shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall heare thereof and be glad, oh magnifie the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Psal. 86. 12, 13.* *I will praise thee O*

Lord

Lord my God with all my heart, and I will glorifie thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soule from the lowest hell. But more fully and fitly may our Kingdome concernments be expressed by: *Psal. 124.* if our God be pleased now to appeare in the Mount for London, for England, in this day of our deep danger, and exceeding, exceeding great feare. And our desired deliverance from present perplexities, may with joy of soule be expressed by the words of that Psalme. *If it had not bene the Lord who was on our side, now may England say, if it had not bene the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us, then the waters had overwhelmed us, the streame had gone over our soule, then the proud waters had gone over our soule. But blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth, &c.*

3. God thus worketh in regard of his peoples enemies, both the Divell and divelish men. 1. In regard of the Divell, that he might stop his black and slanderous mouth, which is upon all occasions wide open in wayes of calumny, casting slanderous accusations upon Gods good servants. When all *Jobs* estate was removed in a day, all his children knockt dead at one blow, God commending *Job* faith thus to Satan, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evill? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered and said, skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life; put forth thy hand now and touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* Hereupon God bringeth *Job* into further straights, for this very purpose to silence Satan. And whereas those malignant spirits continue to be the accusers of the Brethren, and are still apt to provoke his Majesty against them, suggesting, that if his providence put them to pinches, they will then fly out, and manifest their carnall fleshlinesse

Job 2.3.

ver. 4, 5.

Rev. 12.10.

fleshlinesse in the profession and practice of Religion: Hereupon God puts them (as it were) into the stocks, and sets them upon the rack, and causeth them to be besieged with difficulties to prove Satan a notoriour liar.

2. In regard of divellish men. Partly to fill their hearts with the more vexation: Partly to chaine down their violent spirits, that they may not breake forth with further fury against his cause and 'people, and through the power of strong conviction, to work some change in their lives and courses.

1. To fill their hearts with the more vexation. The Lord doth indeed rejoyce in the misery of the wicked. *I Will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your feare cometh:* yea it is a comfort to his highnesse to powre forth fury upon them: *I Will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I Will be comforted.* And the Psalmist seems to give in this, as a reason why God causeth it to be midnight with his servants before light pcep forth, why they are in deep danger before day-light appeare, *Psal. 112. 9, 10. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darknesse, his heart is established, he shall not be afraid: untill he see his desire upon his enemies, his horne shall be exalted with honour, the wicked shall see it and be grieved, he shall gnash with his teeth and melt away.* It cutteth a wicked man to the heart, when he thinketh he shall have the day in the downfall of the righteous, and yet the godly they rise, and get ground, and gather strength. We have a pregnant proof of this in the example of *Haman*; who expecting that *Mordecai* should be hanged, when *Mordecai* was advanced to great honour, then *Haman* mourned and hanged down the head: And thus it will be with the popish and prophane, who this day rejoyce in our dolefull 'straights, when God shall appeare in the Mount for our deliverance.

2. That chaines of restraint might be laid upon their hearts and hands, by Gods strange and amazing providences. When they see that God from Heaven doth give testimonialls of approbation to his poore persecuted servants

Prov. 1. 26.

Ezek. 5. 13.

Esth. 5. 14.

Esth. 6. 10, 11.

ver 12.

servants and service, being plunged over head and eares in the floods of deepest calamity.

This is made good upon *Nebuchadnezzar*. Therefore Dan. 3. 29.
*I make a decree, that every people, nation and language Which
 Speaks any thing amisse against the God of Shadrach, Me-
 schach and Abednego, shall be cut in peeces, and their houses
 shall be made a dung-hill, because there is no other God that can
 deliver after this sort. Then the King promoted Shadrach,
 Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babilon.* Vcr. 30.

In like manner the defeat of *Haman*, and the deli- Eth. 8. 16, 17,
 verance of the poore *Jewes* devoted to destruction, pro-
 duced the same effect upon many of their enemies. And
 truly notwithstanding this dayes feares and straights, we
 will hope to see some such effects upon the hearts and
 lives of some who deride and oppose our desired refor-
 mation. Thus much for Confirmation of the do-
 ctrine. Application followeth. There are foure
 uses to be made which are both naturall and season-
 able.

Hence it followeth, that people have no ground at Use 1.
 all to suspect their own gracious standing in reference Information.
 to God because of their straights. Deep and devouring
 dangers may be ready to swallow up the righteous, God
 may bring an *Abraham* into the Mount, unto great dif-
 ficulties, Gods people may travell through the red sea
 in the way to *Canaan*, seas of trouble, bloody times
 may overtake them who are most deare to God. This
 I rather note because Gods people are apt to dash upon
 this rock, and to doe themselves much wrong by thus
 reasoning. If God did love me, or had been graciously I Pct. 4. 12.
 respective to my humiliations and prayers, I should
 not have seen so black, so dark a day. My selfe and mine,
 our peace and Parliament, our persons and possessions
 had never been in such danger, if the Lord had bin fa-
 vourable to me in seeking better times. Herein *David*
 failed: *Psal. 73. 13, 14. Verily I have cleansed my heart
 in vaine, and washed my hands in innocency, for all the day
 long have I bin plagued, and chastened every morning.*

Now to keep us from adding guilt to our grief, that we may not provoke God to be angry, while our enemies are filled brim full of bloud-thirsting fury. I will briefly suggest foure considerations, to preserve us from this mistake.

1. By this error acted, we deny the perfection of the word of God, because therein there is no such rule to judge by. Yea the Scriptures openly and evidently speake the contrary, *Eccles. 9. 1, 2. No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* And certainly if we shall dare to adde our devises to Gods word, he will be angry. *Adde thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a lyar.*

Prov. 30. 6.

2. Thus people beare faise witnesse against themselves, by passing unjustifiable sentences against their own soules. *Thou shalt not beare false witnesse against thy neighbour.* To detract from our neighbours credit and comfort, is a breach of Gods law. And truly it admits many aggravations, when we deale thus injuriously with our selves.

Exod. 20. 16.

3. We expresse much ingratitude to God, the God of all our mercies, calling his love into question, and overlooking or undervaluing all former favours, because of present pressures and approaching dangers. Let *Israels* miscarriage in this kind be your looking-glasse to shew the soule face of this fault, that you may take heed of this deformity. When *Pharaoh* pursued them, and the roaring seas threatned to devoure them, their deliverance out of *Egypt* (though wrought on by many miraculous providences) was accounted a misery rather then a mercy, for observe their language, *Exod. 14. 11. Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us?*

4. By this mistake we reach a wrong to others, *Psal. 73. 15. If I say I will speake thus, behold I should offend against the generation of thy children.* Our carriage in this particular may cast sad discouragements upon the hearts

of many deare to God, causing them to question their spirituall state, because of outward straights. Hereby also we seeme to suspect their wisdoms who uphold their hopes, and maintaine their comforts, notwithstanding their manifold heavy afflictions.

Censure not others to be rejected or abhorred by the Lord, because you meet with them in the Mount, you see them in straights, in extremities. Beloved, the words of the Psalmist are considerable. *Blessed is he that considereth the poore, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble, the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sicknesse.* As you desire favourable dealing from God in the time of your personall calamity, learne to judge wisely and charitably of them who are in extremity. The Barbarians did censure Paul to be a man under some black note of infamy, fastened upon him by the Lord, because of his suddaine and unexpected danger. *Acts 28.4. And when the Barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer.* Marke their confidence as well as their uncharitablenesse, no doubt he is a murderer: And why no doubt? *because though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth him not to live,* for a venomous viper, a death threatening creature now did hang upon his hand. Beloved when we looke upon men arrested by credit-killing accusations, and pursued with death-threatening charges, and constrained to hide themselves from the bloody hands of violence, let us take heed of adding to their sorrow by our censures. That practice which was well becoming Barbarians, will be very uncomely for us Christians. Two things consider to keep you from this fault, which I will propound without much enlargement.

1. The sinfullnesse
 2. The dangerousnesse
- } of this censoriousnesse.

The sinfullnesse of it:

1. Being forbidden by Christ, *judge not, that you be not judged;* judge not, that is, not rashly, groundlesly, uncharitably. Mat. 7. 1.

Use 2.
Admonition.

Psal. 41. 1, 3.

2. Arguing want of love, for truth and strength of love maketh faire and canded constructions of all occurrences which concerne them whom we love. *Charity doth not behave it selfe unseemly, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evill, beareth all things, beleeveth all things, hopeth all things.*

1 Cor. 13. 5.
ver. 7.

3. Weakening love, for affection is enfeebled by our looking upon our brethren through the glasse which presents them as unlovely, while we think them persons disregarded by God, our respect to them is diminished.

4. Hindering prayer, the Apostle knew this, and therefore I pray you consider by what an argument he preseth the *Hebrews* to pray for him, *pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly.* If you be well perswaded of the afflicted in regard of their pious frame, you will be the more willing to let out your hearts for them in a way of prayer. But when men thus think, the Heavens frown, and God is angry with such an one, and therefore it is a vain thing to bestow time and breath in prayer for him, this office of Christian love is interrupted. By these particulars you may perceive that this censoriousnesse is very sinfull; sinfull in the roote, and sinfull in the fruits, sinfull in the heart, and sinfull in the life, checking grace, and hindering duty.

Heb. 13. 18.

2. Consider the dangerousnesse of it.

1. God is much incensed, You remember how *Eliphaz* and the other of *Jobs* friends, loaded him with their heavy censures, concluding his hypocrisie from his extremity. Now when God had done with *Job*, having schooled him out of the whirlwind, and had wrought him to his own bent, observe what followeth, *The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, my wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends, for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath.* Therefore my beloved if you would not suffer under Gods frowns, nor smart under the expressions of his displeasure

Job 42. 7.

sure, if you would not have the sparks of Gods wrath to kindle upon you, take heed of censuring any of Gods worthies that have bin instrumentall for good either in Church or commonwealth, because for the present under a black cloud, because exposed unto any disgrace or danger, by reason of some sad providence.

2. Our censoriousnesse may in our suffering times adde much weight to our own heavy pressures. If I censure others, and thereby adde affliction to their bonds, I may expect that God will adde gall to my wormwood, when the bitter cup commeth to my hand, and I must per force take down a displeasing and distastfull draught. *Judge not, that you be not judged, for with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you againe.* These meditations made use of, may, I hope through Gods mercy, prevent our sinning against God, others and our selves, by uncharitable censures cast upon our distressed brethren.

Mat. 7. 1.
ver. 24

It concerneth all of us to prepare for a journey into the Mount, to make ready for tryalls by extremities. Beloved, this day the Heavens are black over our heads, and our feares are not few, for ought we know God will have us into the Mount, my meaning is, it may be the Lord will thrust us into such extremities, as we never yet met with in all our lives.

Use 3.
Exhortation.

There are two things that I will plainly speake to in the enlarging of this use.

1. What may quicken us to prepare for straights.
2. What course must be taken that we may be prepared for such a condition.

To perswade our preparation, consider two motives.

1. That we are all exposed unto perplexities.
2. That we are all subject to manifold miscarriages in such a state.

1. We are all subject to a distressed condition, let him that denieth it bring forth his supersedias, and say here, I have that from Heaven signed and sealed, which doth secure me I shall never come into adversity. Beloved, be-

leave it, whatsoever afflictions have seized upon any of Gods worthies formerly, may overtake you and me before we dye, and we cannot tell how speedily. You have heard what befell *Israell*, and why may not the same betide *England*, you have heard what befell *Abraham*, *David*, *Daniell*, *Paul*, and why may not we looke for the like.

Secondly, Subject we are to many miscarriages when God in his providence bringeth us to extremities: I will only hint this in a word or two.

1. Extremities doe expose us unto unbelieve, A grievous sinne it is to suffer our soules at any time to be taken from an holy adherence, and firme dependance upon our God, and yet thus we are in danger to dishonour his highnesse, and wrong our own soules in times of distresse. *Dauids* example doth evidence this fully. What more fayre promise can any man imbrace, then that which God made to him particularly, that he should be the King of *Israel*, and yet when *David* was in a straight, you heare of his distrust from his own confession, *I was*
 Pl. 16.10,11. *gratly afflicted, I said in my hast all men are liars, Nathan*
 a liar, and all others who told him of succeeding *Saul* in the Kingdome of *Israel*, they were all liars. And why? because he saw not a faire and easie passage to the crown. The like also is recorded concerning him, when wearied out with the bloody pursuit of envious *Saul*. And *David* said in his heart, *I shall perish now one day by the hand of Saul*.
 1 Sam. 27.1.

2. In distresse we are disposed to strange impatiency and discontent of spirit, which distemper doth woefully disguise our hearts, and disgrace our profession. It is a wonderfull thing that ever a heart furnished with grace, should flye out as *Jonah* did. First, he thought he had lost his reputation, because *Ninives* by him threatened was by the Lord spared. Well, he goeth out, and then the Sunne annoyed him in regard of his body, but God provided a shelter, and the man was calme, after ward the gourd being worme-caten and withered, *Jonah* he chafes,
 Jonah 4 4.
 ver. 6.
 ver. 7.

chafes and frets. The Lord checks him by this interrogation, *doest thou well to be angry?* Marke and be warned by his answer, *I doe well to be angry even unto death.* The history of patient *Job* also proves this plentifully.

ver. 8.

ver. 9.

Job 3.

3. I might adde, that we are subject to sinfull feares, which dismay and torment the heart, check duty, weaken joy, and interrupt our sweet communion with God. Take notice of this distemper in Gods own people, for which his majesty chideth them, *And who art thou that fearest a man that shall dye, and the sonne of man that is but as grasse, and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and layed the foundations of the earth, and hast feared continually every day, &c.*

Isa. 51. 12.

ver. 13.

4. Apt we are to use sinfull shifts betaking our selves to unworthy practices to safeguard our selves in times of extremitie. Observe this in *Peters* practice, his Master is apprehended, violently carried away, likely to suffer death as a grievous malefactor. Now he seeth himselfe surrounded with them that oppose Christ, and this distresse drove him upon a dangerous rock, a three-fold denyall of his dearest Master: Let this move you and me, to prepare that we may not in like manner misse it, if God shall be pleased thus to prove us.

Mat. 26. 70.

ver. 72.

ver. 74.

These things I beleeve doe affect your hearts, whereupon in probability you will desire direction. Attend therefore and I will give you some counsell briefly: There are six things which I shall commend to your consideration and practice.

First, You must labour to make sure your propriety in God: When *David* upon service had bin abroad, *Ziſlack* the place where he left his wife and children was burnt, when he commeth home, there was no house to entertaine him, no wife to welcome him, no children to be a comfort unto him, they all were carried captive, hereupon he with the rest, *Wept till they could weepe no longer, &c.* But *David* encouraged himselfe in the Lord his God. Heede here the ground of his support and consolation, not the Lord God, but the Lord his God, deity and

1 Sam. 30. 2.

ver. 3.

ver. 4.

ver. 5.

ver. 6.

and propriety hold up his heavy heart, for the good man enjoying God, might thus refresh his drooping spirit. What though I have not an house to dwell in? thou art my dwelling place, my habitation, a place of sweetest rest and safest refuge. What though I have not a Wife? I have more in God then a yoke-fellow could have afforded. What though I have not a Child? there is more then the comfort of a numerous posterity in the blessed Deity. The souldiers cannot batter down this castle, the pilfering people pillaging, cannot possibly steale away this treasure, the troops of robbers, the desperate Cavilliers cannot deprive of this possession: This might be much enlarged both seasonably and profitably, but I must not insist upon any thing. But this is my request, that you would without delay endeavour to cleare up your interest in the almighty, that your dejected hearts may not abide disconsolate in the dayes of your distresse.

Luk. 14. 18.

Secondly, Acquaint your selves with God, and labour to be familiar with his Majesty by constant and frequent communion through Jesus Christ. Men desire to know the utmost worth of what they have in possession, and what improvement may be made thereof if need should so require. We reade in the Parable, that he *that had bought a piece of ground, must needs goe to see it*, and therefore he must be excused if other things be neglected. If we were thus wise for our soules, we would seek to know, and to improve our God who is our inheritance, yea our all, unto our various advantages in the times of our greatest need. Seriously therefore aske thy selfe this question, What have I in having a God? What have I? I have infinite wisdome to advise me in all difficulties, infinite power to carry me through all straights, abundant goodnesse to supply all my wants, the tenderest bowells to commiserate me in my most dolefull condition, yea I have almsufficiency to fill me brim full, and running over unto satisfaction. I added converse with thy God. He that would have comfort from Physicians

sitians in time of sicknesse, gaineth and maintaineth acquaintance with them in time of health. If you and I shall dare to keep at a distance from God in a way of estrangement from his Majesty in summer dayes, and in sun-shine seasons, when the Heavens are cleere, and the City is peaceable, and the Parliament promising, and our hopes flourishing, we shall want comfort through communion with God, when the sunne setteth, winter approacheth, Parliament breaketh, and misery threatneth on every side. Being in hast I shall here lay heads confusedly on heapes, whereas I should distinctly have discovered three things.

1. How God is revealed in holy writ for our comfort in the worst of times.

2. By what courses Christians should gaine, and maintaine communion with their God.

3. What fruitfull improvements may be made of God by such employments. But I shall leave these things to your private care, having suggested this course by way of friendly counsell to make way for your comfort in the day of distresse.

Thirdly, Walke exactly. Take heed of making breaches upon your consciences, by willing and willfull sinning against the God of your comforts. Beloved, beloved you know that those who have had bruises and broken bones, they will feele aches in hard weather, and certainly if you will in time of prosperity dare to sinne against conscience, it will adde sorrow to your hopes, and gall to your wormwood, when God cometh upon you in a way of bitter calamity. Sinfull sensuall surfets upon sweet morsells, will breed wringing paines, and painfull vomits. The sonnes of *Jacob* were in a great straight when they were taken for spies as the story reports. What did now wring them? The remembrance of sinne, though many yeers since committed, ah our brothers blood, our brothers blood; we would not pity him when he made his moane, and now God will beavenged of us. Alas, alas, we were hard-hearted to-

3. Cor. I. 12.

wards a brother, and therefore no wonder that we meet with harshness amongst strangers. Whereas the maintaining of a cleere conscience, ô what a comfort will it be when all shall be blackness, and blood about us. See it in *Paul* and his companions. When they made no other account but to dye, what saith *Paul*, *This was our rejoicing*, (that was strange, joyce when the next day they might expect to goe to the stake?) well saith *Paul* *our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.* Beloved, beleve it that you cannot lay in a better cordiall, to comfort and to stay your hearts in fearfull; fainting, distressing, dying times, then by exact walking with God before the storme fall. The Apostles experience puts a *probatum est* unto this prescription. For ought we know, the day is at hand wherein we shall heare the warre-Horses neighing, the murthering Cannons roaring, the little Children skreaking, and the fearfull Women skritchng: You know not, beloved, how soon you may see your City flaming, your own houses burning, your goods wasting. It will be a sad sight to behold your Wives barbarously abused, your Husbands bloudily butchered, and your Children cruelly tormented. I beseech you, I beseech you, consider now what will yeeld you comfort then. When *Hezekiah* did daily expect to dye, take notice, unto what he betooke himselfe for solace and support: *Remember now ô Lord I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* In like manner may we raise up our sinking hearts in such heavy times, if we can truly thus speake unto the soule-searching Majesty. Lord while times were peaceable and prosperous, when I was surrounded with comforts on every side, thou knowest I had a heart to walke with thee humbly, to observe thy Sabbath holily, to use thy worships purely, and to aime at the honour of thy name sincerely. This, this will cheare you both living and dying. You know that neither

Isa. 38. 3.

ther the lowd windes, nor the black clouds, nor the great showers, nor the flashings of lightning, nor the hideous claps of thunder, doe so much affright us, as an earthquake. But when some vapours are got into the hollow places, the bowells of the earth, and the foundation of the world shakes, this is terrible, this is terrible indeed, though the Sunne shine, and no cloud appeare in the skie. In like manner it is not so much an outward affliction as guilt within, guilt within which causeth the heart of man to rocke and quake through feare within him. Therefore take heed, stop all the passages into your soules, keep the heart with all diligence, that no knowne guilt be admitted into it, as you desire a stable, firme frame of spirit, prepared for the strongest stormes, the greatest straights wherewith divine providence may possibly prove you.

Fourthly, If you have made wounds and bruises in your consciences, seeke an healing plaister by sound repentance suddainely. A bone broken being well fet (they say) becomes the stronger. *David* had gashed his conscience grievously, both by uncleannesse and murder, in the matter of *Bathsbeba* and *Uriah*. Notwithstanding by means of *Nathans* plaine dealing being wrought to deepe sorrow, the wound was healed, and the same mouth which cured him by a corrasive, gave him this comfort, *God hath forgiven thy sinne, thou shalt not dye*. Now after this, according to the threatning of *Nathan*, God raised up evill against him out of his own house, and he was in a wonderfull straight, *Abolom* was up in armes against him. This distresse occasioned the third Psalm, as the title tells, wherein he expresseth his perplexed condition. *Many are they that rise up against me, many there be that say of my soule there is no helpe for him in God*. Now here is a straight indeed, many imagining, that Heaven could not helpe him: yet if you will by his phrase of speech, judge the frame of his heart, you shall find as much confidence in him now, as ever in all his life: Take notice of it. *But thou o Lord art a shield for*

2 Sam. 12. 13.

ver. 11.

Psal. 3. 1. 2.

ver. 3.

ver. 6. *me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I Will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about. Yea this is added, I laid me down and slept.* Consider in his supposition, 1. The number of enemies, viz. *ten thousand.* 2. The manner of their opposition, *though they should rise up in a warlike manner against me.* 3. Their advantage against him, and his danger to be apprehended by them. It is not though they come to meete me, or though they make after me, for then by flight he might hope for safety, *But though they should beset me round about, &c.* David having made his peace with God, though now in a very great distresse, yea although (remembring God threatning) he might reade his scandalous sinnes, in this heavy affliction, yet his confidence, courage and comfort is very remarkeable. If any of your consciences now wring you upon the remembrance of such a sinne, or such a sinne, (I name none, but leave it between God and your own hearts to consider of it) goe home repent, repent and make your peace with God to day, without any further delay, that you may be fit for a straight if it should come to morrow.

Fiftly, Mind and trade your experiences. God hath done already as much for *England* as is yet to be done, to set all things right and in order againe amongst us. Not many Months since, our dayes were as darke, our feares as great, and our enemies as many as now. Let us therefore remember our selves, the Lord lives, the Almighty is in Heaven, he still is mindfull of his covenant, and changeth not. The holy Scriptures yeeld us plentifull proofe of improving former experiences, to arme against future feares. That of *David* is notable, *Thy servant slew both the Lyon and the Beare, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.* David said moreover, *The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon, and out of the paw of the Beare, he Will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* When my heart is overwhelmed, leade me to the rock that is higher then I, for thou hast bin a shelter for me,

1 Sam. 17. 36.

ver. 37.

Psal. 61. 2, 3.

me, and a strong tower from the enemy. In like manner the Apostle improves his deliverance from Nero, that persecutor. *No man stood by me, but all forsooke me, notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lyon.* Consider the words, *Paul* was not only in the Lyons denne, not only within the reach of the Lyons chaine, nor only under the Lyons paw, but in the Lyons mouth. Now his inferenc is observeable, *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil worke, and will preserve me unto his heavenly Kingdome.* Againe note, *We had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raijeth the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.* Here for your helpe, I will hint one experience still fresh in our mindes, God settled peace between us and *Scotland*, when after great preparations for warre, the armies were set in battell array, the onset given, the skirmish begun, blood drawne, many slaine, the two Kingdomes ready to be broken in pieces, the one against the other. Consider what great things God hath done, and trade your experiences for your future profit.

Sixtly, Cleere up your evidences for Heaven, and keep them so faire, that in the darkeſt day they may be legible, easie to be read without hacking and hesytancy. The usefullnesse hereof in evill times appeares in the Apostles experience, *For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perishe, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction that is but for a moment, worketh for us a farre more exceeding and eternall weight of glory.* Mind the ground, *For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternall in the Heavens.* The heire apparent of Heaven, may hold up head and heart; and in this manner expresse himselfe: come the worst that can come, though my state shall decay, my soule and body part, my selfe and dearest naturall

2 Tim. 4. 16.
ver. 17.

ver. 18.

2 Cor. 1. 9.

ver. 10.

2 Cor 4. 16.

ver. 17.

Chap. 5. ver. 1.

Heb. 10. 34.

friends be plucked asunder, yet *I have in Heaven, a better and more enduring substance*: more and better friends, sweeter and more satisfying communion. If they take away my trash, the true treasure, that is out of their reach. What if they take downe my tottering tabernacle of clay? I shall have a glorified, a beautified body to all eternity, in spight of hell and earth combining against me. What if they drive me out of house, and City, and Kingdome, the best is, they cannot expell me from my God, nor deprive me of a mansion, an abiding place in the City of God, the Kingdome of Heaven.

Use 4.

Comfort.

It is a ground of sweet joy, and strong incouragement unto us, notwithstanding our present state which is darke and dreadfull. Here we may seasonably with comfort call to mind that strange apparition unto *Moses*: *A bush burning with fire, and yet the bush was not consumed*. Beloved, what flames of fury are now kindled in the bosomes of many, threatning to burne downe all our hopes? Yet let us plack up courage, for though our sinnes have made us combustible matter, yet may we hope that our God will not consume us. Let us cheare our selves against the jeares and insolencies of the Malignant party with the words of the Church, *Rejoyce not against me o my enemy, when I fall I shall rise againe, when I sit in darknesse the Lord shall be a light unto me*. Some interpreters conceive, *Abraham* had this deliverance hinted before hand, and therefore first told his servants, *I and the lad will goe yonder and worship, and come againe to you*: and afterward going to the place where *Isaack* was to be sacrificed; when the child said, *father, father here is the wood, but where is the burnt offering*, he answered, *my sonne God will prepare one*, and this held up the good mans heart, encouraging him thus to resolve, *I will goe on, I will see what God will doe, I will put him to it*. We are in straights at this day, I need not tell you, and who knowes but that to day in the Mount God will appear for our comfort. Much I ear-

Exod. 3. 2.

Mich. 7. 8.

Gen. 22. 5.

not speake through want of time to this use, yet dare I not altogether be silent, considering the season. Under two heads I will briefly assist your sinking spirits by way of advice.

1. Learne aright to make way for desired comforts in times of distresse, that you may have this Texts, and this Sermons encouragement at hand, not only now, but hereafter when you may stand in need.

2. Improve the particulars comprised in this title *Jehovah*, held forth for our use in the Text now handling, I may not now speake under these heads, both unto our Nationall and Personall concernments distinctly. For the former, way is made for our refreshing in the worst of times that can possibly overtake us.

1. By studying the qualifications to which favour is promised.

2. By using the means of our good which by the Lord are prescribed.

First, Every one may not challenge propriety in the priviledge of the Text. Every loose-liver may not come out and say, well! in the Mount God will be scene, and therefore I will feare no colours. No, no, for there is a peculiar gracious disposition to be found upon the hearts of them who may expect that God will appeare in the Mount for them, for their consolation.

1. Your soules must be so seasoned with Gods feare, that having his command, you will not draw backe from any service put upon your hands, how hard, how heavy soever. Marke it in *Abraham*, *Abraham* now I know thou fearest me, and how doth his feare discover it selfe, Vpon divine commission he sets upon a service, the doing whereof, was against heart and haire, repugnant to reason, without all president, against the streame of naturall affections, crossing the conceit and opinion of the world. Can you imagine if *Isaack* had bin slaine, and the fact known, what a hubbub would have bin in the Country? how many mouthes would have bin opened, in reporting *Abrahams* strange and unheard of cruelty? *Isaack* is killed,

killed, and his own father, father *Abraham*, that religious man, he himselfe hath killed him, how would this have rung in every corner? Doe but thinke what Mother *Sarah*'s would have said upon her Husbands returne home, Husband where is *Isaack*? and conjecture with what a sad heart he might have made this answer, Wife I have killed him, and I have burnt him before God as a sacrifice. Beloved, neither these things, nor any other which might be cast in as discouragements, did take him off from duty. The feare of God carried him above all discouragements, both from his naturall affections, his wives frownes, and the worlds clamours. And to this man, thus fearing God, God appeares in the Mount: Munde this I pray you, and labour herein to be like this gracious man, thus devoted to Gods feare.

2. You must not dare to adventure upon any known sinne, though it be to safeguard your persons, your estates, your places of favour and honour, your any thing, your all things under the Sunne. A man of this make, is one who may expect to meet with the Almighty in the Mount. The prooffe of this is faire in the experience of *Daniell*. The decree was signed, he must not for thirty dayes pray unto his God, if he did, he must be throwne into the Lyons den, well saith *Daniell*, let the Lyons make a meale upon my body, I am reolved I will not forbear this worship due to my God, I will not thus interrupt my communion with my heavenly Father. The like you have in the three young Governours, the King he would have them fall down and worship the image he had set up. If you will not, you must into the furnace. Marke their answer, *Our God Whom we serve is able to deliver, but if not, be it knowne unto thee, We will not serve thy gods.* And the prooffe of the point reported how God appeared in the dayes of their distresse for their deliverance, unto these experiments I might adde Promises. *If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity, and if thou draw out thy soule to the hungry, and satisfie the afflicted soule.* The meaning

Dan.6.7.

Dan.3.

Isa. 58 9.
ver.10.

ning is, if you will betake your selves to courses of piety and mercy, contrary to your former wayes of wickednesse and violence, then shall your light breake forth in obscurity, and your darknesse be as the noone-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfie thy soule in drougt, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters faile not. If iniquity be in thy hand put it farre away, and let not wickednesse dwell in thy Tabernacle, for then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea thou shalt be stedfast, and thou shalt not feare. ver. 11.

What encouragements should these be to perswade us to reforme our selves, and to endeavour the amendment of one another. Therefore goe home now, and thus say to God, and to your selves seriously and sincerely, I am resolved I will leave my cheating, and cozening, my oathes, lying, my hypocrisie and pride, and all my other known sinnes. Away with these and all other discovered abominations, promise God for future times to betake your selves unto a better course of living, as you desire the sweet and seasonable discoveries of God, in the time of your greatest need. Job 11, 14, 15.

Secondly, The meanes of your good must be used, and they are,

1. Civill.

2. Sacred.

For Civill meanes, You must not say we care not whether we have any more watch in the City, night or day, we will trouble and charge our selves no further in this kind. But you must hold on in being serviceable to divine providence, otherwise you will tempt God. There is a notable example of *Joab* in this case both commendable and imitable. When *Joab* saw the front of the battle was against him, before and behind, he chose all the choice men of *Iraell*, and put them in array against the *Syrians*, and the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of his brother. And he said, if the *Affyrians* be too strong for me, then thou shalt helpe me, but if the children of *Ammon* be too strong for thee then I will come and helpe thee. Now be of good courage, and let us play 2 Sam. 10. 5.

ver 10.
ver. 11.
ver. 12.

E play

play the men and fight for God and our country, and the Lord doe that which seemeth him good. Remember we have by solemne protestation bound our selves before God to doe our utmost in wayes lawfull for the honour of our King; the liberty of the Protestant Religion, for the peace and welfare of the three Kingdomes, and for the priviledges of our Parliament, and keeping within the limits of our callings, to oppose Popery, and popish innovations. Therefore every man according to the lawes of God and of the land, must unweariedly be industrious, night and day, for the Kingdomes good, in the use of meanes, both defensive and offensive, as necessity may require.

2. There are meanes sacred, Teares and Prayers are the Christians best weapons, this munition let us make use of. *Jehoshaphat* surrounded with danger, when *Moab*, *Ammon*, and the children of *Mount Seir* came out against him, what course doth he betake himselfe to? he feared, and set himselfe to seeke the Lord, and proclaimed a fast. And *David* being in danger to loose both his Kingdome and his life, by the insurrection of *Abfolom*, betooke himselfe to prayer, to breake the neck of *Achitophels* crafty counsell, and also to secure himselfe from the hand of violence, now stretched forth against him. Beloved, as Gods command, and the practise of his people, doe guide us unto this imployment, so Gods pretious promises, and our own glorious experiences, touching the prevalency of this ordinance, should perswade our perseverance herein in these times of feare and danger.

2 Chro. 20. 3.
2 Sam. 15. 3 1.
Psal. 3.

Secondly, What is the improvement of the originall word here used, *In the Mount Jehovab shall be seene*. This title hath much in it, a great deale more then I may mention. Thus much I have observed from holy Scripture, that it both,

1. Advanceth God.

2. And advantageth a Christian in times of straights.

Psal. 68. 3.

Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoyce before God, yea let the exceedingly rejoyce. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extoll him that rideth on the Heavens by his Name *Jah*, and rejoyce

ver. 4.

rejoyce before him. Foure things there be hinted in this title *Jehovah*, and they are all usefull for our present purpose.

This title holdeth forth the Lords,

1. Sovereignty.
2. Independancy.
3. Immutability.
4. Fidelity.

1. It suggesteth the Lords unlimited Sovereignty, his absolute and undoubted authority over all things. *Jehovah* he is the *most high*, not only high, or higher then many, or more high then the most, *but the most high over all the earth.* Psal. 83. 18. It is *Jehovah* that ruleth Kings, and ordereth Crowns, joy in him, he can rule both the Kings heart and counsell, he governeth in the Country and in the City, at *Westminster*, and here within the walls: Therefore still rejoyce in him, for he is *Jehovah*, the all-governing Majesty.

2. It noteth his independancy. All creatures for their continuance, have a kind of dependance upon one another. As the grasse and plants upon the earth, the brutes upon the fruits of the earth, and our nutriment is from inferior creatures. But our *Jehovah* dependeth upon none, he is of, and from himselfe, he needeth no servant, no service. *In him we all live, move and have our being,* Acts 17. 28. but his Majesty is beholding to none, either men or Angels, either for being or wel-being. Thus much God intended to teach by his speech to *Moses*, and God said unto *Moses*, *I am that I am.* Exod. 3. 14. We think verily that we shall be utterly undone if the Parliament breake up, or if our King divide himselfe from this his body representative. Beloved, my soule maketh out to God for the prevention of this sad fraction. Yet I beseech you remember this, whatsoever falls out, that whereas all men, and all ordinances, Kings and Parliaments depend on God, yet our God *Jehovah* is an independent Majesty.

3. It intimateth Gods Immutability, All other things change, As a snow ball melteth by our handling it, and the flower withereth by our smelling it, so these sublunary contentments wast and ware away by our using them.

Isa. 26. 4.

But in the Lord *Jehovah* there is everlasting strength, or as the originall language expresseth it, The Lord *Jehovah* is a rock of ages, he abideth the selfe same, strong, unalterable, unmoveable God throughout all generations.

Mind this (my beloved) that though *England Ireland*-like should be wasted, although there should be sad changes in Church and Common-wealth, in City and Country, in Towns and Families: Yet still our *Jehovah* continues in himselfe, and unto his people the self-same All-sufficient, All-satisfying God. Surely we who pitch our hearts and hopes upon this unchangeable foundation, the Lord *Jehovah*, may abide steddy in our spirits and comforts in the midst of the worst alterations that can overtake us.

Exod. 6. 3.

4. It expresseth Gods fidelity. *And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the Name of God Almighty, but by my Name Jehovah was I not known unto them.*

Gen. 15. 13, 16
compared with
Exod. 12. 41.

The true meaning is, that whereas God had manifested abundantly his power by many glorious providences in former times, now he intended to prove himselfe mindfull and carefull of his promises made unto his people. Now let us make improvement hereof for our comfort. Search divine records, consider the various pretious promises annexed by the Almighty unto the covenant of free grace and mercy. Choose out of those Gospell treasures, such pearles as you put the highest prizes upon, Collect those particular promises, which you conceive most pertinent for your condition, and most full for your satisfaction. And from this sweet title *Jehovah*, you may comfortably and confidently inferre this conclusion.

Whatsoever Promise is registred in the book of God, either in the old or new Testament, that this *Jehovah* will set all his attributes on work, for the full and seasonable accomplishment thereof unto his own people by speciall covenant. Therefore having evidenced your propriety in Gospell Promises through Jesus Christ, from this bottom build your comforts, in the darkest and most dolefull times. Is is *Jehovah* the all-governing, the independing, the immutable and faithfull God that will be seen in the Mount for his servants deliverance.

GOOD
COURAGE
DISCOVERED,
AND
ENCOURAGED:

IN
A SERMON preached before the
Commanders of the Military Forces,
of the Renowned Citie of *London*.

In the Parish Church of *Great St. Helens*.
May the 17. 1642.

By SIMON ASH, Preacher in *London*.

DEUT. 20. 2, 3, 4.

*And it shall be, when yee are come nigh unto the Battell
that the Priest shall approach, and speake unto the people.*

*And shall say unto them, Heare O Israel, you approach this
day unto Battell against your Enemies: Let not your hearts faint,
feare not, and doe not tremble, neither be yee terrified because
of them.*

*For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for
you against your enemies, to save you.*

LONDON,

Printed by *John Dawson* for *John Burrough's*, and are to be
sold at his shop at the golden Dragon neare the Inner
Temple-gate in *Fleet-street*. 1642.

DISCOVERED
CONTRACT

1870

...

...

...

...



TO
THE RIGHT
WORSHIPFULL,

the Aldermen, and Commoners,
unto whom the *Militia* of the Citie
of *London* is committed, the Serjeant
Major Generall, the Colonels, the Lieu-
tenant Colonels, Serjeant Majors,
Captaines, and other officers of
the trained Bands of the
said *Citie*.

Right Worshipfull,



Ornelius, Centurion of the Ita-
lian Band is thus commended by
the Holy Ghost, that hee was a
devout man, and one that fea-
red God. And I may report
thus much to your honour and to
move others to make imitation;
that you have begun, and hit herto
carried on your Martiall affairs
religiously. For having put the
City into a posture of defence; before the execution of the Mi-
litia; you joyntly sought God by Prayer for good successe.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

The Lord heard your Prayers, for you went forth, and returned home, without the least touch of danger to your selves, or your Companies. This remarkable Providence called you againe together, to praise the God of saluations, the God of your mercies.

Hereupon you were pleased to appoint me (very unworthy) to assist you in the service of Thankesgiving: A service not unseemly for the Hoast of Heaven.

This Sermon, which upon that occasion I preached, through the Constructions of your Love found such acceptance, that you commanded it to come abroad to doe you further service.

And seeing you gave it good entertainment, as it was first presented, it makes bold to waite upon you without change of habit, expecting your Protection.

Although I somewhat suspect that sundry amplifications in the Sermon which affected the Auditors, may not be so pleasing to the Iudicious Reader, yet your desires to have it printed, as it was preached, makes me to run that adventure.

The Lord of Hosts guide, guard, and encourage you in all your good undertakings for peace and truth, and make you carefull to put Christian references upon all your services, for the honour and safety of our King, the welfare of his Kingdomes, and the continued Prosperity of this famous Citie. This your prudent and pious perseverance in the worke so well begun, will draw forth many prayes to God, many prayers for you, and much rejoycing in the hearts of all them, who sincerely affect you; of which number, I beseech you account him one who is

Your Servant, in, and for Christ,

SIMEON ASH,



GOOD
COURAGE
 DISCOVERED,
 AND
 INCOVRAGED.

PSAL. 31. 24.

Be of good Courage.



Right worshipfull, and worthy Gentlemen, (whose desires, and whose service of thanksgiving, I am now attending.) I hope you are come hither with an intention;

First, to honour God for preservation enjoyed, through his providence, to whom you prayed. My Text lookes back unto such a businesse; *The Lord preserveth the faithfull*; therefore let

B

Verse 23

the

the faithfull upon such experiences in way of prayse, in way of requitall learne to bee of good courage.

Secondly, I beleeve you are come together in expectation for the future, to receive further favours from the God of your present prayses; and my Text looks forward to that, *Bee of good courage, and hee shall strengthen thine heart, and wait I say on the Lord.*

My Text is short, the words in our translation are not many, in the originall, there is but one word, *קִיָּמָה*, The Septuagint renders the Hebrew word, *ἀνδρῆσδε*, Quit your selves like men; *Viriliter agite*, play the men, *Roboramini*, bee yee strong.

The Counsell here given is for all Christians, at all times needfull, but for you, and at this time, most seasonable.

Bee yee courageous. First, The Counsellour was, a Worthy, a Souldier, a Warriour, a Commander, a King: *David*, as the title tels you, Hee cals for courage.

Secondly, The Persons counselled, they are Saints, faithfull ones: O yee Saints love him, his manner is by his speciall providence to preserve you; Therefore bee yee of good courage. The point lies faire, which I conceive pertinent, and now purpose to profecute,

Doctr.

Gods people must bee of good courage.

I shall briefly suggest the Scriptures prooffe, in a threefold gradation, wherein good courage is called for:

First, Saint *Paul* an Apostle with Apostolicall authority, periwades to it; *2 Cor. 16. 13. Quit yee like men.*

Secondly, *Iehosaphat* a King, with regall authority, commands it; *2 Chron. 19. ult. Deale courageously.*

Thirdly, The great God of Heaven and Earth, putting himselfe under a warlike notion, as the Lord Generall of all the forces in the World, the Lord of *Hosbs*. He preemp- torily presseth it; *Haggie. 2. 4. Now bee strong & Zorobabel saith the Lord and bee strong & Ioshua, the Sonne of Iozabek the High Priest, and hee strong the people of the Land saith*

the

the Lord, and worke, for I am with you saith the Lord of Hosts.

Three things there be, that I shall speake to, in the prosecution of this point.

First, The explication of the vertue, the grace called for, wherein I will endeavour to discover what this courage is.

Secondly, The confirmation of this truth by reasons, from which this Doctrine may undeniably bee concluded, and by which you may all bee fully convinced, that there is abundant cause, why all Gods people should bee courageous.

Thirdly, The application of all, by way of use, that my Sermon may be the more serviceable.

Christian courage may thus bee described, It is the undaunted audacity of a sanctified heart in adventuring upon difficulties, and undergoing hardships for a good cause upon the call of God.

A Description of good Courage.

There are six things considerable in the description that I have given, which I will particularly point at, and prove.

First, the *Genus*, the common nature of it : it is an undaunted audacity. This Animosity (as some phrase it,) it is common both unto men, and to some bruits. The Lion, *Prov.* 30. 30. is said, to bee the strongest among beasts; that turneth not away from any.

And there is an elegant description of the warre horse, in regard of boldnesse, *Job* 39. 19. &c. Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou cloathed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a gras-hopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible, hee paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength, hee goeth out to meeete the armed men. Hee mocketh at feare, and is not affrighted, neither turneth hee back from the sword. The Quiver ratteth against him, the glittering speare and the shield, hee swallowes the ground with fiercenesse and rage, neither believeth hee, that it is the sound of the Trumpet.

And this boldnesse that is in bruits, it is spoken of, as a piece of this same courage that God is pleased to give to men; *Ezek. 3. 9.* this is the Lords promise. *As an Adamant, harder then the flint, have I made thy forehead.*

The word *Harder*, is the same in the Hebrew, that is here in my Text, *Fortiorum petra*; The Rock; that is not afraid of any weather, Summer, or Winter, Sunne, and Showres, Heat, and Cold, Frost, and Snow, it blusheth not, shrinketh not, it changeth not it's complexion, it is still the same; Such alike thing is courage, in the common nature of it.

Secondly, Consider the subject, it is the Heart, the Castle where Courage commands, and exerciseth Military Discipline; (shall I so say) its within the bosome, it is the Soule of a valiant Soldier.

Some conceive, our *English* word Courage, to bee derived from *Cordis actio*, the very acting of the heart.

A valiant man is described, *2 Sam. 17. 10.* for to bee a man; whose heart, is as the heart of a Lyon. And sometime, the originall translated, Couragious; as *Amos 2. 16.* may most properly bee rendred, *a Man of heart.*

Beloved, valour doth not consist in a piercing eye, in a terrible looke; in bigge words; but it consists in the mettall, the vigour that is within the bosome. Sometimes, a Coward may dwell at the signe of a roaring voyce, and of a sterne countenance: whereas true fortitude may bee found within his breast; whose outward deportment promiseth little, or nothing in that kind.

Thirdly, Note the qualification of this same subject; I said a sanctified heart: for I am not now speaking of fortitude, as a morall vertue, whereof Heathens, that have not God, are capable; and for which many among them, that are not Christians, have beene worthily commended.

But I am now discoursing of Courage, as a vertue Theological, as a gracious qualification, put upon the people

of God by speciall covenant. And there are three things that doe characterize it, and which doe distinguish it from the morall vertue of fortitude.

The Roote, whence it ariseth;

The Rule, whereby it is directed;

The End, to which it is referred;

The Roote, whence it riseth, is love to God; All the Saints of God that love the Lord, bee of good Courage: The love of Christ constraineth mee to make these bold, and brave adventures, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 14.

The Rule whereby it is directed, is the word of God: what the Lord hath pleased to leave on record for a Christians guidance in holy pages, 1 Chron. 22. 12. 13. *The Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, that thou maist keepe the law: If thou take heed to the statutes, and judgements, which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong and of good courage, dread not, nor be dismay'd.* Bec a man of mettall; but let thy mettall bee according to my mind, according to this rule.

And the End, to which it referres, is God. For every sanctified man, being a selfe-denying, and a God-advancing man; his God is his Center, wherein his actings, his undertakings rest, and his Soule is not, yea it cannot bee satisfied but in God.

The fourth thing considerable in the Description is, the naturall, the formall, the immediate operations, that doe flow from this gracious, audacious frame of heart, they are two:

There is an adventuring upon difficulties;

And there is an undergoing of hardships.

First, There is an adventuring upon hard services, It is said, 1 Sam. 31. 12. *The valiant men rose and went all night, and tooke the body of Saul, and the bodies of his Sonnes from the wale of Bethshan, and came to Gabesh, and burnt them there.* When the Philistins had taken their bodies and were gone away Conquerours, and fastened them there,

as Ensignes of victory, brave blades, well mettalled men, went by night, and fetched them back againe: an hard, and a brave service.

And by reason hereof there is an enduring of hardships: Those Worthies of whom the world was not worthy, who are said to be *men valiant in fight*, Heb. 11. 34. This testimony is given of them, that *They endured torturings, the tryall of mockings, or cruell mockings, of scourgings, of bonds, and imprisonment, of stoning, of being sawne asunder, of being slaine with the sword, of wandring up and downe in sheepe skins, and goats skins, being men destitute, afflicted, and tormented.*

Fifthly, in my description, I cast in the cause, which true courage undertakes to doe, and suffer for, the object it workes upon, the prize it adventures for, it is a good cause, *1 Cor. 16. 13* Matters of faith, *stand ye fast in the faith, quit ye like men.* It is a Gospel peice for which I am to jeopard a joynt, to hazard alimbe, to adventure life, *1 Cor. 6. 13.* or matters of fact: I must be of good courage to my conscience, that I may maintaine an evenesse of spirit in reference to my rule, in relation to my God, *1 Pet. 3. 14.* *If yee suffer for righteousnesse sake happy are yee, be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled.* It is a noble, a Christian resolution in any man, if hee thus determine, rather then I will make a wound upon my conscience, a breach betweene God and my soul; rather then I will violate a sacred vow, and transgresse the command of my God, I will run the greatest hazards in outward regards that can be imagined.

The goodnesse of the cause (Divines say) for which a man suffers, makes the Martyr ; In like manner, it is the warrantablenesse of the worke, wherein the souldier, the man of mettall appears, that gives him the credit, the honour of this title, to be accounted a valiant man.

1 Cor. 1. 9.

Sixtly and lastly, I added that good courage makes the foresaid adventures upon the call of God. *Have not I commanded yee, be strong and of a good courage: If the Lord please*

please to beat up the Drum; If the Lord please to bid them arme, and come abroad, his call is sufficient, Now God calls either by his precept, or by his providence. Either God calls his Champions for to undertake dangers, or hee commands dangers to over-take them; and hereupon being led forth by the Lord of hosts, they expresse their valour: For this they know, that whether it be estate, or peace, or life, or liberty, or Religion, or whatsoever else they hope to defend, they are all tallants that God hath entrusted them with, and that therefore only upon his Commission signed, and sealed by his own hand they may come forth, and must come forth bravely, and shew themselves couragious in reference thereto.

Now for a man in an impetuous, giddy, neady way, to breake himsele unwisely in his reputation, liberty, estate, and himsele knowes no other reason: but because his spirit moves him, and his humours stirre in him, or some passionat inconsiderate persons provoke him, this (my beloved) is not to be couragious. Wee reade in the Gospel, of a man possessed with an evil spirit, that did often cast himself into the water, and into the fire to destroy himself. And truly it nearely concernes many men of daring spirits, to consider seriously what spirit it is that acts in them: These things we must marke, that the true nature of courage may be understood.

Mark 9.22

This description of good courage I judged meet to promise and to explain briefly, that we may understand the duty in the text, the duty, the seasonable duty, which God calls for, and I plead for.

Bee of good Courage.

The second thing I propounded in the prosecution of this point, is the reasons wherefore a Christian should be couragious: And my doctrine is built upon a fourefold ground.

First, Gods people should be of good courage, in reference

reace:

rence unto the condition, unto which God hath called them. God hath appoynted all Christians to be souldiers. A Sacrament is a souldiers oath, when we were baptized we tooke presse money, and vowed to serve under the colours of Christ, and as manfull souldiers to fight against the world, the flesh, and the Devill; and as oft as wee have beene at the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, wee have renewed our solemn, and sacred obligation in that kind, in reference to Christ, who is called *The Captaine of the Lords host*; *Jos. 5. 16.* and *the Captaine of our salvation. Heb. 2. 10.* *Indure hardnesse* (saith the Apostle) *as a good souldier of Christ, 2 Tim. 2. 4.* *Epaphroditus my fellow souldier, Phil. 2. 25.* Beloved, wisdom is not more necessary for a Counsellor, nor eloquence for an Orator, then courage for a souldier. Souldiers we are, wee must therefore, *Be of good courage.*

Jos. 1. 7.

Secondly; the weighty services wherein the Lord of Hosts is pleased to employ us. Men employed in peculiar services are commanded to put on fortitude: As *Ioshua* who was a Commander to guide, and governe the host, the armies of the Israelites in their passage to *Canaan*, *Be thou strong and very couragious, that thou maist observe to doe according to all the Law, which Moses my servant commanded thee, turne not from it, to the right hand or to the left.* And *Ezra*, in regard of his office, is thus spoken unto: *Arise, for the matter belongeth unto thee, bee of good courage, and doe it*; and common Christians, in respect of services required of them, are to be couragious in their places, *Jos. 23. 6.* *Be yee therefore very couragious to keepe, and to doe all that is written in the booke of the law of Moses, that you turne not aside therefrom, to the right hand or to the left.*

Shall I hint some services that are charged upon all our consciences

The worke of mortification, to pick out our eyes, to chop off our hands, to cut off our feet; doe you thinke that a milke sop, a man that is not a man of a stout spirit

will

will doe this. Now to massacre fleshly lusts, is (as it were) for a man to mangle, and dismember his owne body, it is a worke painefull and grievous, as for a man to cut off his owne feet, to chop off his owne hands, and to pick out his owne eyes, as Christ and the Apostle *Paul* doe expresse it.

Besides this, there are in Christians bosomes, strong holds to be battered, fortifications to be demolished: there are high hills and mountaines, that must be levelled with the ground, there are trenches to be made, vallies to be filled. O beloved, I may not mention the hills that lye before us in heaven way, which we must climbe up; and craggy rocks that we must get over: and without courage certainly the service put upon our hands will not be discharged.

There are also the wals of *Irusal:m* to be repaired, and the Temple to be reedified: If *Nehemiah* had not beene a man of a brave spirit, hee would never have gone through steech with that Church worke, those weighty services which hee did undertake. How this is applicable to us for the present time, the time of our begun reformation, I speake not; but rather doe referre it to your considerations; I beseech you to reade *Neh. 4 17, 18.* They which builded on the wall, and they that did beare burthens, with those that laded: Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the Builders every one had a sword girded by his side, and so builded, and he that sounded the Trumpet was by us. While they were at worke they were all ready for warre.

Thirdly, Christians must bee couragious, in reference to the 3. huge Armies, with which they are assaulted.

There are armies }
 Of Devils:
 Of Lusts.
 Of men and women in the world,
 that doe wage warre with every Christian, that in good
 earnest makes out after his God in heaven way,

For the Devils, it is the argument of the Apostle, and from thence I tooke it, *Ephes. 6. 10. Brethren, be strong (saith hee,) for we wrestle not against flesh, and bloud, but against principalities, and powers, against the Rulers of the darknesse of this World, against Spirituall wickednesses in the heights.* Marke for the number they are many, *Our name is legion, for wee are many:* How many thousands, neither you nor I know. There is strength in them, they are Powers, Principalities, and they are Rulers, they have very great authority in the Darknesse of the World; in Midnight men, Darke men, Men who love not Sunne-shine light, but rather delight to lye in holes and caves.

I meane, in regard of the Darknesse of their minds, and their wilfull ignorance of the things of God. And they are in the height; they fight with much advantage (as some observe,) being over our heads. And they are Spirits, they worke invisibly, and they fight against our Soules, they labour to keepe our hearts in thraldome, they seeke to beggar and to undoe us in regard of our grace, and Spirituall joyes.

The Holy Apostle *Peter* sayeth, The Divell your adversary, goeth about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom hee may devour. An Adversary, and a Devill, and a strong one, as a Lyon roaring, and then hee is active, hee walkes about, and hee is full of malice, ready to devour: These things touched upon, doe tell us, that wee, who are alwayes furrounded, besieged by such enemies, have need of courage.

1 Pet. 2. 11. There are armies of lusts, I know not how many. The Apostle saith, *Fleshly lusts that fight against the Soule.* These foes lye within us, and they strike at the head, and the heart, endeavouring to let out the precious life of our immortall soules.

1 King 22. As the Captaines of the King of *Syria*, had a command to fight against, neither small nor great, but the King of *Israel*. And the Apostle saith, that lusts in his bosome were such

such enemies, as still carried him captive, and haled him as a prisoner. (You know the expression, *Roms. 7. 2.*) Beloved, doth not experience oftentimes prove thus much, that pride, passions, unbelieve, hypocrisie, earthly mindedness, creature confidence, sensuality, doe take up armes against our precious Soules. Alas! alas! lusts, deceitfull lusts, many deceitfull lusts, are still, still tyrannizing in our bowels, which of us hath not cause to complaine with the Apostle, when I would doe good, they are at hand present with mee: strong in mee, ever stabbing, and striking, and poysoning, and wounding; if I would but pray, or weepe, or amend. These Rebels raise their strengths, and combine their forces to hinder mee: and no sooner can Sathan hold up finger, and temptation shew it selfe; But they are ready furiously to march out against Christ, his government, graces, glory. Beloved, I appeale to your consciences, whether in regard of this black guard, maintained within us, wee have not need to bee of good courage.

Thirdly, the armies of people: The Apostle *Paul* saith, hee fought with men who were as beasts, *Beasts after the manner of men*, *1 Cor. 15. 32.* *David* tels you they were Dogges, and they were Tygers, and Wolves, and Beares, and Buls, and Lyons, so in the Psalmes hee phraseth them: I promise you, a man that is so beset, thus assaulted, if hee bee not a man of courage what will become of him? There are *Sanballets* and *Tobiah's*, men of malignant, mischievous Spirits, to doe us mischief in Heaven way; had wee not need in that regard to bee couragious? And truly, women if they cannot use weapons, they will cast, and sling stones, shoote their arrowes even bitter words. *David* met with opposition in that kind, from one that was neare, and should have beene better. *Michol* shee jeared him in his righteous, and holy zeale, in reference to God; you know the story, and therefore I report it not. And doubtlesse, had not hee beene a man of an

Heroick Spirit, hee might have beene dasht out of countenance and baffled and cooled in his zeale; because of her reproachfull language.

There are those that are ready to performe ill offices, *Sheba*-like, to blow a Trumpet of sedition, of contention; to cast coales, and kindle strife betweene the head and the members, the King, and his Subjects; to set all on a flame in the Kingdome. In this regard, wee had need to bee steele to the back, that wee bee not disheartned. From all these three particulars, I might apply that passage, *2 Sam. 10. 9. 12.* When *Joab* saw the front of the battaile against him before and behind; hee sayed. *bee of good courage, and let us play the men*: His speeches did sparkle Spirits, he herein proved himselfe a man meete to bee a warlike Commander, for danger and difficulties did adde heart and heate.

My Masters, you see our case, let us play the men for our people, and for the Cities of our God. Beloved, you perceive by that which I have pointed at, that our enemies are more and worse, we are beset before, and behind, above, and below, without and within; not onely our Cities, but our Soules are opposed, endangered. Hell and Earth, Men and Devils, yea and our selves are Adversaries to our selves. Therefore there is good reason, why wee should put on Courage.

Fourthly and lastly, Wee have need of Courage, because of the various afflictions to bee expected. For ought wee know, heavy things may befall us, and must bee borne by head, and shoulders by us, before wee get to our Castle, our place of refuge, our rest in Heaven; how stony, how thorny, how deepe, and how dangerous our wayes may prove, before wee get to our journeyes end, wee cannot tell. It may bee, wee must travaile through blood, through our owne blood; and therefore wee need Courage.

After our Saviour had suggested to his Disciples, *Mat. 10. 21.* *Brother shall deliver brother to death; the Father the Child, and the Child shall raise against the Parents, and*

cause

cause them to be put to death, and you shall be hated of all men for my names sake; Hereupon hee adds, verse 26. *Feare not, 32. Feare not.* Beloved, we know not what may be our portion here on earth, before we come perfectly to enjoy God our portion, and be happy in enjoying of him for ever. Wee may live to see the Citie fired, our citates wasted, our wives abused, our children torne in peices limbe-meale, peice-meale before our eyes: beleve mee without courage, these sights will be hard and heavy to be beheld, such like sights will cause us to fownd away, to sneek into the dust, if wee provide not courage. Thus have I run over my reasons, and now I request you all, seriously to consider, whether in all the fore-mentioned regards, we have not abundant cause to endeavour, to get the grace the text commends, and to doe the duty that in the text God calls for, *Be of good courage.*

I come now to the application of all that hath beene delivered by way of use. The uses of this poynt that I shall speak to, they are but two.

The first Reproofe;
The second Exhortation.

For Reproofe, hence I have occasion for to blame both unworthy cowardlinesse in some, and wicked audaciousnesse in others: both vices contrary to this vertue, both extremes, opposed by this practize of Christian fortitude, which my text perswades.

First I must check an unworthy dastardlinesse, which discovers it selfe three wayes in the bosomes of men.

First, when men by reason of pusillanimity, & lownesse of spirit, dare not appeare in the cause that they are convinced, to be the cause of God. There were some, *Iob. 12. 43.* who, though they beleevd on Christ, yet they durst not professe him for feare of the Pharisees, lest they should be excommunicated. The consciences of many tell them,

that such a way is the way of God, doubtlesse this is hea-
 ven road ; surely these are the courtes to be taken to enjoy
 God , and communion with him , and yet for feare of
 I know not what , scornes, mocks, losse of friends, or
 the like ; they dare not be seene. It may be they will goe
 to Christ with *Nishodemus* in the night, for feare too many
 eyes observe them , and take notice of them in such un-
 wounted paths , exercises which seeme to proclaime
 strictnesse and precisenesse. You see I am in haste, and there-
 fore cannot instance in particulars.

Secondly, others by reason of cowardlinesse soone
 grow discouraged in sad and weighty undertakings, be-
 cause they find the way to heaven craggy, the duties diffi-
 cult, the services something hard ; and because they have
 not expected successe on a suddaine ; here upon their spi-
 rits shrink up ; I have reference in this expression to the
 original word used to this very purpose, in *Num. 21.4. And*
the soul of the people was much discouraged, because of the way.
 Their spirits were shortned (as it is in the Hebrew) they
 run up by reason of distress, and all vigour gave in. As a Cra-
 vant begins to looke pale through feare ; his spirits fly to
 the heart, you shall see no blood in his face : O did he think
 to be mocked, and to be pursevanted? and did he expect to
 be imprisoned? and did he conceive to bee put on such a
 dead taske, and to worke himsef downe in his strength,
 respects amongst men, and other outward comforts, and
 reape nothing but the wind. Much hath beene done, and
 much hath beene endured, many weeks, moneths, yeares,
 are run up, since hee expected a good crop, of increase
 and comfort : but hopes being frustrated, and expectations
 disappoynted ; hee sits downe dejected : Because Reforma-
 tion is driven on heavily, things stick in the birth,
 therefore many are disheartned.

Thirdly, those that under darke clouds and showres of
 sufferings lye grovelling on the ground, through disconsol-
 atenesse : *He that faints in the evill day, his strength is small,*
Prov.

Prov. 24. 10. There is mention of some, *Iof. 2. 11.* when the wind and tyde went against them; when the victory was carried on the other side, it is said, *their hearts melted, there was no more courage in them*: The melting of the wax is the severing of part from part: The confirming of the parts together, is the strength of it, the loosening of the parts weakens it: a mans soule runs out through fainting feares, as water; whereas it should be confirmed, as a peice of steele. Christians should be magnanimous, and Fortitude will fortifie, and corroborate the soule. As the originall word suggests thus much, so the conjunction of strength, and valour in the holy Scriptures doth import it: *Be strong and of good courage.* Thinke of this, and take heed I pray you of dastardly dejectednesse, and disinaying feares, in sad, suffering times, because thereby both soule and body are much feebled, and much prejudiced.

The second thing reprov'd, is wicked audaciousnesse: This branch of the reprehension is needfull, for certainly, there is in some men a kind of fire, that riseth out of hell, or rather some mettall, which is digged out of the bottomlesse pit, which is called Courage, and so accounted in the world. My meaning is, that there is a devillish, wretched resolutenesse in the bosomes of some to hold on in sinne; notwithstanding divine reprehensions, convictions, threatnings, and executions; which is as much opposite to true courage, as the greatest cowardlines in the world. I told you before, that true courage is for good, upon a Command from God. The Apostle checks the *Corinthians*, because they had so much boldness, as that they did dare to doe that which was offensive, *viz.* to goe to law one with another, and that before Infidels, you dare doe it saith he, you have so much boldness, *1 Cor. 6.* & the Apostle *Peter* checks men, *They are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities.* The Psalmist brings in bad men thus resolving, *Our Psal. 12. 4.*
 tongues are our own, and we wil speak, and who is Lord over us.
Some there be, who though the Minister flash the very
 fire

fire of hell in their faces, discovering the danger of their evill courses; yet like unto the warre-horse, they will adventure further, let the consequence prove what it may: yea, although God be on them in wayes of heavy affliction, with one rod after another, and one blow bigger then another, though his providence pinch them in their persons, impoverish them in their estates, crush them in their credit; and it may be they suffer much in their yoak-fellowes, Children and neere allies; yea, though the often recoyling of their consciences, cause earth-quakes in their owne bosomes, yet on they will still to doe wickedly. These are the men of whom the Prophet complaines, *Who make their faces harder then the Rock*, and refuse to returne. Men of this make are common in every place, and their way of living is much to be bewayled: and now I am necessitated to speake unto them, because their sturdinesse in refusing to stoope unto God in reformation, is reputed courage.

Ier. 5. 3.

To crush these wretched conceits, I heartily wish that the Scriptures may be perused; where you shall find, that those who are commended for the most valiant Champions, and the stoutest souldiers in the Campe of Christ, that they were the most timorous in matter of sinne, and most cautious in references to God, that they might not in any kind offend His Majesty. *David*, that durst take a Lyon by the beard, and durst adventure upon a Duell, a single combat with *Goliath*, yet thus hee expresseth himselfe to God, *My flesh trembleth for feare of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgements.* And *Nehemiah*, who had many wayes worthily expressed his magnanimity for God and his cause, yet no man was ever more awed with the feare of God. Hee perswaded himselfe, and others therunto. *Ought not wee to walke in the feare of God?* And againe complayning of the governours, who were his Predecessors, that they were usurious, and very injurious in their places; hee addeth but so, *Did not I (I durst not) because of the feare*

Psal. 119.
120.

Neh. 5. 9. 15.

of the Lord my God. I am confident, that this position is full of truth, you may trust to it, as sound and orthodox: That there is no more Christian courage, then there is Christian feare in our hearts. There is no more true valour in Gods account, in confiting with difficulties, and stout standing under heavy pressures, then there is a cautious, and timorous circumspection, lest sinne of any kind should be committed to the dishonour, and provocation of God. Shall I thinke that a man that will sweare, and roare, and curse, and pox, and plague (I should not have defiled my mouth with these words) shall I thinke that this man of Beliall hath Christian courage? Hee may have morall magnanimity, as an heathen, as a Romane, but he wants the courage of a Saint, that courage which my Text calls for. Beloved, I pray you beleeeve it, (I speake as a Scripture man; and I speake to men that must labour to be men valiant, as becommeth Saints) *hee that rules his owne spirit, doth more then hee that overcomes a Citie.* That man who takes downe his untamed lults; and that man who bridles the unruly member the tongue Hee who conquers the rebellious mutinies in his owne bosome, and who notwithstanding all avocations, is carefull still to keepe close to God, this is the valiant man indeed, God himselfe, by *Solomons* pen, gives such a one his Letters testimoniall to be magnanimous. And for my part I will adventure that which is dearest unto my selfe in this world, in the hands of this man, if in the hand of any, in regard of valour, and holy, hearty, heroick resolution. But I put off from this reproofe, wherein my zeale hath made mee bold, to speake my mind: For I had rather counsell then reprehend: and before I goe forward, I wish that my checks lighting on ungracious hearts may make kindly and deepe impressions on them, for their amendment. And God grant that you that come to prayse God, as becommeth Saints this day, may learne also hereafter to be valiant as it becommeth Saints, according to the directions of sacred Scripture.

Prov. 16. 32.

The last use, is an use of exhortation; (I feare, I have more to say then my time, and your occasions will suffer mee to deliver.) It is onely this, to perswade you all (my beloved,) I say all, without exception, Colonels, Captaines, other Officers, Souldiers, yea all the Servants of the Lord, to yeild to the word of exhortation, and in your places to endeavour Christian courage; This use most usefull my heart desires to enlarge, wherein I faine would,

1. *By Arguments perswade it,*
2. *By Directions helpe you in it.*

I have Arguments of two kinds, God grant they may come with some strength upon your hearts, to move you to endeavour to be truly valorous.

First, From the consideration of the rich commodities, that are the undoubted consequences of Religious fortitude. O the booties, ô the boones, ô the benefits, that Christians may enjoy in the way of Christian valour? I will point at 6. and I shall doe little more then point at them.

First, It will wind, and worke you into the bosome, and favour of God; *Be of good Courage, and hee shall strengthen thy heart.* Put thou thy selfe forth in a way of bold adventure for him, and his providence shall be sweetly exercised for thy good. A worthy Commander, how carefull is hee of a brave blade, a man that will fight at a Cannons mouth. Doth hee heare from him, that a bone is broken? Send for the Bone-fetter: Is hee like to bleed to death? call for the Surgeon, let him post away to prevent that perill; Doth hee grow weaker and weaker? Is there any thing in the Campe, that may restore his Spirits, withhold nothing; nothing is too good, too costly, would hee cate gold, hee should have it.

Thus it is with God, O what letters of commendation doth hee give in manifestation of his owne love to them

in Pergamus, upon this very ground: *Thou, saith the Lord,* Rev. 2. 13. *thou hast held forth my name, and not denyed it even in those dayes, when Antipas my faithfull Martyr was slaine, even where Sathan dwelleth.* Thou didst fight for CHRIST in the Cave, where the Devill commanded, thou didst stand and appeare for him, when other men did lose life, and blood. Here is a man that God will owne, such a one, shall have Gods heart and hand to doe him honour, to yeild him comfort. And therefore I appeale to your consciences, is not this Courage worth the having? worth the seeking?

Secondly, Your Courage will hearten you in the weightiest and difficultest adventures, which the cause and glory of God, the welfare of his Church, the honour of the King, the peace and prosperity of the Kingdome may put you upon. *Hester* was a woman, yet valiant. Must I to the King for my people; *If I perish, I perish.* I will take my life in my hand and adventure: *Nehemiah*, had a hard taske to undertake, truly a dead peace of service to set upon, yet notwithstanding being a courageous man, hee will hazard his All, to obey the command of his God, and to serve the necessities of his brethren. This is recorded for the everlasting credit of some of the Servants of God, the Priests, *2 Chron. 26. 17. 18.* *And Azariah the Priest went in after him, and with him 4. score Priests of the Lord that were valiant men; and they withstood Vzziah the King, and said unto him, it pertaineth not unto thee Vzziah to burne incense to the Lord.*

Men of brave Noble Spirits will speake, whatsoever it cost them, upon a call from God, men of valour will appeare according to Gods command in services sad, and heavy. Wee say, that a weil metled horse, will take forward, and draw at a standing tree, but that I shall speake of in the next.

Thirdly, It will make us unwearied in our workes, though desired, and expected successe bee denied. You see

it some time; (My similitude is a plaine one, but beloved, it fully evidenceth the thing I speake to,) A Carre-horse of good mettall, will plucke, and fall on his knees, and up, and take forty pluckes at a sticking load, whereas a *Jade*, if it come not at the first twitch, goes back, back, and you cannot get him forward. Just thus is it with a Coward, if hee have not victory at the first skirmish, hee will hardly make a second assault; if hee bee knocked downe, once, twice, or thrice, hee gives up all as lost, and is ready to runne away; but a man of a stout Spirit in such a case, will pluckt up heart, fight againe, so long as hee can either stand or stirre. Thus *Moses* hee goes, the first, and second, and third, and tenth time to *Pharoah*, notwithstanding brow-beatings, repulses, threatnings. Thus saith the Lord, let my people goe. That was his message, either it must bee granted, or hee will not cease his importunity. *Israel* hee comes for, and *Israel* hee will have with him, or else, hee will not leave *Egypt*.

My beloved, let us bring this downe to our selves: Many prayers wee have made, and many fasts wee have kept for *Sion*: and before our deliverance bee compleat, wee know not, how many placks wee must yet have, and how many shall wee take to reparaire the walles, and to reedifie th: House of God, in case, God give us this mettall, which I am commending.

Fourthly, Courage will bee a meanes to keepe us from conscience-wasting, and scandalous miscarriages. What had become (thinke you) of *Shadrack Mesbeck*, and *Abdnego*? or what had become of *Daniel*, if they had not bene men of undaunted hearts? The one had given off doing his duty, presenting his indebted homage to his God, hee must not pray for the space of thirty dayes to his God. The other three must bow downe in way of Idolatry to an Idoll. But marke the Sparkling of their Spirits; *Bee it knowne unto thee ô King, wee know God can deliver us, but if hee will not, wee will not fall downe, nor worship that*

Image.

Image which thou hast set up. They were by Courage kept out of the briers, and off the Rock, which might otherwise have torne and broken them wofully. And *Daniel* was preserved from the neglect of his devotion to his God, by the same meanes.

Fiftly, Believe it, that our Courage will daunt our Adversaries, and drive them away; The Captaine of that black guard, (the Devill I meane) will give back, if stoutly withstood: *Resist him, and hee will flee, stand to it, and hee will runne away.* In like manner, will those, who march under his colours against Gods people. It is said expressly 1 *Sam. 4. 5. 7.* when the *Philistines* heard the *Israelites* shout, O say they their God is among them, wo unto us. Without doubt, the very valour of Protestants will bee the daunting of the Papists. Let those who appeare for Reformation, maintaine their ground, and the enemies thereof, will bee discouraged, vanquished.

1am. 4. 7.

Lastly, I might adde, that our Courage will incourage, I know not how many, One bold leader, will hearten hundreds. O saith *Paul*, my bonds, and sufferings are famous, they are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the Brethren by reason of my bonds Wax bold, and speake the word without feare, *Phil. 1. 12. 13. 14.* If you would know what word? It was the word of CHRIST, who was denyed, derided. Now to speake for a Christ when *Paul* is in prison, and in bolts, and fetters for the word of CHRIST, was an act of Manhood. And *Pauls* valour made them thus bold. The Cities Courage will make the Countrey courageous.

This true valour that I speake for, may have influence I know not how farre, through the Kingdome in way of benefit, and advantaze. Therefore looke you to it, *Quit your selves like men, Be of good Courage.*

The second motive, is taken from the consideration of the sad consequences of cowardlinesse.

First, A mans personall discredit, call a Souldier a crav-

vant, and how doe you disgrace him? They would saine, (saith *Nehemiah*,) *Put mee in feare, that they might have had somewhat to reprobash mee; Nehem. 6. 13.* A Captaine, and a Coward, what a shame is it? If you desire to maintaine your honour and reputation, in City and Countrey, hold up your hearts, *Be men of valour.*

Secondly, This is another a sad consequence of cowardlineffe, it may tend to make us unprofitable, and unserviceable in our places; *I was afraid, and hid my talant, for I thought, thou wast a hard master.* You know whose speech it was. When a man hath both oportunities and abilities to doe, God and the King, the Parliament and Kingdome, good service. God hath bestowed a good head-piece, much wisdom, an able body and healthfull, a strong arme, a vast estate, a great command; and yet notwithstanding, when the welfare of Church and Common-wealth, call him to make appearance, hee drawes back, dares not be seene, all his talents are tied in a napkin, there is nothing traded for God, because hee is a Coward, and dares not looke out of dores. There will be a heavy reckoning for that man, *Take him, bind him hand and foote.* Cowardlineffe makes men, though able, yet unprofitable, therefore take heed of it.

Thirdly, The good causes, which men owne and favour, may receive a great deal of dammage, and prejudice by the pusillanimity, the poorenesse of the Spirits of them, that appeare therein. There was a notable piece of policy, in the endcavour of the rayling wretch *Rabshccah*, to affright the Souldiers of *Hezekiah*, *2 Chr. 32. 18.* *This they did, that they might make us afraid and take our City.* Cowardlineffe ties a mans hands behind him, that hee can doe nothing in the World, hee cannot keepe his ranck, and place, hee neither knowes when to charge, or discharge; his hands quake, his eyes cannot see, hee cries where am I? and what must I doe? Thus all is lost, because of cowardlineffe, it is a mighty disadvantage to be a dastard. Certainly,

tainely a man under the power of dismaying, in feares is scarce a man in the use of his intellectualls.

Fourthly, What sad breaches cowardlinesse, may make upon us, both in regard of sinne, and judgements. I know not. The sad example of Saint *Peter* is here considerable, O what a wound did hee receive, by reason of his unworthy fearefulness; It cost him deare before the cut was cured. You know his threefold deniall of his Master, with the black aggravations thereof; O I know him not, I am not any of them, you are mistaken in mee, &c. But before that breach was, made up, it cost him hot water, *Hee wept bitterly.*

Beloved, beloved, consider what I say, many a man doth that under the command of cowardlinesse, which is paine and anguish in his heart to his dying day. God is wonderfully incensed, when men shrinke from him, because of difficulties and dangers, *Feare not least I slay thee.* Bee not dismayed at their faces (saith God to *Jeremiah*,) lest I confound thee before them, *Ier. 1. 17.* When God calls often, and calls loude upon men to take part with him, and yet they shrinke and draw back, believe it, the danger is not little. You know whose speech it is; *If you will deny mee before men, I will deny you before my Father, which is in heaven.* Marke 8. 38.

A valiant Captaine, when the field is fought, and the victory is got, bids, bring in that cravant, that milke-sop, who did runne away: Hisse him, turne him out of doores, as the shame of his Countrey; when Christ shall come and call, and say to some White-livered men, you were ashamed to appeare for the strict observation of the Lords day, and you would not bee seene to favour the Reformation, which by *Englands* Parliament, at such a time was endeavoured, and you would not labour to have the sanctuary swept from all pollutions, and you would bee at no cost, to have Christs-coine, bear his stamp alone, to have his ordinances pure without mixtures, but you would rather

Revel. 2. 8.

ther *Jffachar*-like, lye under burthens, then struggle for deliverance. You were afraid what might bee the issue of your boldnesse in such businesses, if the times should turn, and the tide run another way, and matters change in such and such a manner. And hereupon you sneakingly left me, and my cause and glory in the open fields. Beloved, this will be an heavy hearing to the cowardly Apostate at the last day, when the fearefull, and the unbelieving must be sent into the lake which burneth with fire & brimstone. Therefore I intreat you againe, and againe, to consider well of this matter.

Lastly, how farre cowardlinesse may tend to discourage others: I wish you to consider: I here remember, that when *Israel* of old, was to goe forth unto battaile, God commanded the officers to speake thus unto the people, *What man is there, that is fearefull, and faint hearted, let him goe and returne unto his house, lest his brethrens hearts faint (or melt) as well as his heart.*

Gentlemen, God forbid that you who are come hither to day, to acknowledge your selves bound to God for your estates, lives, and liberties, & to have the word of truth, preached and pressed upon you for your soules good. God forbid (I say) that you who give good examples in many other kinds, should doe any thing which may tend to weaken the spirits, and to dampe the courage of any, who shall enquire, what doe they in *London*?

Having thus farre perswaded you, to pluck up your hearts, as it becommeth Saints: I now intreat you, to give me leave to counsell you, what course to take, that you may be couragious, and I promise to doe it, as with sincere reference to God, whose servant I am, so with unfained faithfulnessse to you whom I now serve.

What shall wee doe, that wee may bee couragious?

My directions are in number ten, I will not be long in any one of them, because I would not be tedious, I humbly beg your best attention, desiring to speake to your
soules

soules, and I beseech the Lord to speake to my heart, and yours.

The first helpe to Christian courage (which makes way for all the rest) is this: Labour clearly from Scripture grounds to evidence your propriety in God.

When *David* was utterly undone in outward appearance at *Ziklag*, being stript of all outward comforts, and expected that his brains should be beaten out with stones, (*They talked of stoning him*) *David encouraged himselfe* (hee confirmed and strengthened his heart) as the originall expresseth it, *in the Lord his God*: Is there not more in God, My beloved, I pray you put this question upon serious debate in your owne bolomes, my God to hearten mee, then in mine enemies my greatest, my worst enemies to dismay mee? Take the improvement of this point in two particulars.

1 Gods omnipotency

2 Gods Omnipresence.

Is there not more ability in God, then power in all the world, if combined together. *Be strong, and courageous,* ^{2 Chro. 32. 8.} (*saith Hezekiah*) *Be not afraid, nor dismayed, for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude, that is with him; for there be more with us, then with him: with him is an arme of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to helpe us, and to fight our battailes, And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, King of Iudab.* At this time *Senacherib* had raised a very great Army, as holy History reports: And railing *Rabshekah* was confident, that Israels God could not deliver; yet you see, that this thought. The Lord our God to helpe us, did Steele and strengthen their hearts.

The knowledge of Dietie, and Proprietic, will increase magnanimity in a fearefull heart, what are huge armies, strong fortifications, weapons of war, the strength, stoutnesse, skill, or experience of common souldiers, or warlike Commanders against the Lord Almighty? look back to the history last mentioned, where we read, that one angel in one

Esa. 37. 36.

night killed five thousand men in the host of the King of Assyria. By this example, guesse at the ability of your God, having made sure your interest in him; and from thence gather courage.

Iosh 1. 9.

2 As the ability, so the presence of God by the efficacy of his all-ordering providence, may hearten all them, whose God hee is by speciall Covenant; *Have not I commanded thee, be strong, and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whither soever thou goest.* The Lord is with us, by the presence of his speciall favour, in all our good undertakings whethersoever wee goe. The Christian carries his commander, his refuge, his Castle, his God along with him, whether hee keepe in the Citie, or goe forth into the countrey; whether hee serve by land, or by sea, his God is still at hand. Assurance therefore, that the al-sufficient, al-present God is ours, will lay a good foundation for good courage: Those who adventure upon any service without God going along with them, may expect defeats; notwithstanding all meanes of defence: and therefore no marvell, if they tremble: But God taking part with his people, they may confidently from his presence expect deliverance. *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, they had swallowed us up quicke, &c. but blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us, as a prey to their teeth.* God and his people make one side; and because *their helpe standeth in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth;* therefore they have abundant cause to be of good courage.

Psal. 1. 6.

Secondly, make sure, that the cause you appeare in, is the cause of God. If a man marching to looke his enemies in the face, and being about to begin the battaile, should seele the earth to shake under him, and the ground to sink, every foot hee set forward: O how would this daunt him, and how would his heart recoyle, and give in within him? O beloved, I beseech you, be you well confirmed in your owne hearts, that you doe serve for God. It is that
which

which was added to give Courage to them in *Iehosaphat's* time, when they were surrounded, with *Ammon*, and *Moab*, and Mount *Seir*, as if wee should say, with *Denmarke* and *France*, and *Papists* at home. Well, saith the man of God, Harken yee all *Iudah*, and yee Inhabitants of *Ierusalem*, and thou King *Iehosaphat*; Thus saith the Lord unto you: *Bee not afraid nor dismayd, by reason of the great multitude for the battaile is not yours but Gods.* 2 Chron. 20.
15, &c.

Beloved, hee that hath a bad conscience, and a bad cause, ever fights as a Coward, and is ready at every stroke to lay downe his weapons and runne away. A true man will stand to it, come who may come, for his cause is justifiable, and hee may with boldnesse owne it; but thieves, if they heare any noise, any whispering, they cry one to another, let us hast and bee gone, for they know, their adventure's unwarrantable. When a man thus thinkes with himselfe, being beset with dangers and difficulties, what if I should dye in this businesse? could I with confidence owne it, at the Barre of *I E S U S C H R I S T*? The encouragement of his owne conscience, will much embolden him. But if a mans owne heart tell him; that adventuring and dying in a such cause, shall sinck into Hell, because he opposeth the Commands and Government of *I E S U S C H R I S T*; the libertics, the comforts, the prayers of Gods people, how is it possible, that hee should play the man, and bee truly couragious?

Thirdly, Consider seriously, the many weighty consequences of the good cause, which from good grounds, you undertake to maintaine. Sit downe and sadly thinke what will the issue bee, if you desert your Protestation, whereby you bound your selves, to stand for the true Protestant Religion, the honour of our King, the Priviledges of Parliament, the Lawes of the Land, and welfare of the Kingdome. Here it is notable, how the *Philistines* heartened one another, in the day of their deepe danger, *1 Sam. 4. 9. Be strong, quit your selves like men o Philistins, that*

you bee not Servants to the Hebrewes; *Quit your selves like men and fight*; Either pluck up your hearts, and fight now, or bee slaves for ever; that is the argument.

And I pray you, observe how *Ioab* pleads, *When hee saw the battell before and behind.* 2 Sam. 10. 12. *Be of good Courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the Cities of our God.* And that passage, *Nehem.* 4. 14. It is considerable, as either of the former; *Bee not afraid, remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your Brethren, for your Sons, for your Daughters, for your Wives, and for your Houses.*

Marke it, my beloved, and make application, what if the Papists should get the upper hand? What if the Parliament should bee dissolved? What if the malignant party should effect their mischievous desires? Oh how darke and dolefull, how black and bloody, would our times prove, we are all, many wayes cbliged to stand for the government and worship of the Lord Christ: for the safety, and honour of our King, for the welfare of his three Kingdomes, for the Priviledges of our Parliament, and for our rights by Law; All these are to bee prized at an exceeding high rate: our happineffe will bee great in the enjoying of them, and our misery not small, in the want of them. Every man according to his Relations and engagements, should reason the case with himselfe. What adventures should I make, and what hazard should I runne, that my selfe may not bee enslaved, that my Wife may not bee abused, my Children massacred, and (which is above all,) that Christs holy Religion may not bee corrupted, and that Popery may not bee introduced and established in *England*. Thus meditation upon the worth of the things to bee maintained, will bee a speciall meanes to quicken and to augment Courage.

Fourthly, *Keepe Christ your Captaine in your eye.* For true valour, there never was, nor ever shall bee any like unto him. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, a most mighty, with thy*

thy glory and Majesty; and in thy Majesty ride prosperously, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things; *Psalm 45.*

3. 4. How valiant a Champion was the Lord I E S U S !
Hee endured the Crosse, and despised the shame; Hee went on, Heb. 12. 2;
 though dogges did barke, and Lyons did roare, though men reproachfully reviled him, and the Devils endeavoured to devoure him; though the earth (as it were) did shake under his feete, and the Heavens were black and thundring over his head. Although when his professed enemies had conspired his death, *Judas* did betray him, and his other Disciples did forsake him, yea although his God and Father did hide his face from him, when hee answered Divine Justice for our sinnes, yet hee shrunk not, hee drew not back, from the glorious worke undertaken. When outward dangers encompassed him, and the torrowes of Hell tooke hold upon his Soule, though hee was apprehensive, and sensible of all, unto the utmost, and therefore both complained and prayed to his Father, yet was he not discouraged. Hee did not sound, when hee saw his own blood, yea although his body was wet all over with a bloody sweat, but he worthily did wade through the flood of his appointed passions.

Consider him, consider him, (beloved,) that you may not faint in your minds; when a souldier sees his Capitaine content to take up with poore provisions and undaunted, though hee meet with hard services, harsh usages, sore affronts, hee thereupon growes the more resolute. For thus hee reasons within himselfe. My worthy Com-mander, for his diet, takes up with a crust of course bread and a little water, hee hath not beene in bed these many nights, but still, either watcheth, or else, hee lies upon the ground, the cold ground, no wayes, no weather discourages him, Winter, Summer, wet, or dry, scorching heate, the pinching frost, are alike unto him: Ballets, blowes wounds, bruises, broken bones, doe not cause him to sound a retreat, to give back, and shall I shrink? Beloved, if

Christ had shrunk when Heaven frowned, and men deserted, and Devils opposed him, what had become of you, and mee? Is this Christ my Captain? and hath hee Capitaine-like, Champion-like for mee both done and suffered thus worthily, thus incomparably, and shall not I put on Courage, and shew my selfe a man, a valiant man for him? I beseech you, consider this frequently and affectionately.

Fiftly, I commend unto you, mutuall Christian communion, as a speciall meanes of Christian Courage. In the Prophet *Malachy* his times, when wickednesse was grown to a great head, and the power of godlinesse was discountenanced in them, then *those that feared God, spake often one to another.*

Mal. 3. 16. When *Paul* after shiprack, saw the brethren, who came to meeete him, hee tooke Courage. And also, upon a strong dispute with some who opposed Christ, when *Silas and Timotheus* were come, Paul was pressed in Spirit God bee thanked for that unity and love which is amongst you, amongst you, the Aldermen and Commons of this City, unto whom the Militia is committed; God continue it, God knit your hearts together more fast, and firme from day to day: God give you when you meeete to consider seriously what may heat, and hearten your Spirits in the way of Christian valour, according to that which this day I have preached, and according to that, which this day wee all need.

Act. 28. 15.

Act. 18. 5.

Wee read in *Isay 41. 6.* of a Company of Idolaters, animating each other, in promoting Idoll-worship. *They helped every one his Neighbour, and every one sayd to his brother, Bee of good Courage. So the Carpenter encouraged the Gold smith, and hee that smootheth with the hammer, him that smiteth with the anvil, &c.*

Doubtlesse, at this day, those who envy our hopes, and oppose our peace, doe meeete and hearten one another, both by words and actions. God forbid therefore, that wee should

should bee more regardlesse of one another, having a better cause, and more encouragements.

Sixtly, set faith on worke in the promises of the Gospell. The worthies in the primitive times, waxed valiant by meanes of faith; *Hebr. 11. 34.* You may doe well to informe your selves, what the Lord is pleased to speake in the word of truth for your comfort. By the bond of his owne rich unchangeable grace, he is become your debtour to doe more then I can possibly expresse. Three things I thought to have spoken unto, under this direction.

First, The promise of Gods assistance, *Bee of good Courage, and hee will strengthen thine heart.* The sweet Psalmist saw much sweetnesse in this, and therefore doth mention it, once and againe when the Soule saith, I am ready to fall downe, yet taking courage, to march forward, it shall renew strength, it shall receive an addition of new strength, *Esa. 40. 31.* And that speech of Solomon, *Prov. 10. 29.* is very remarkeable. *The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.* They goe on and gather strength in going, *they walke from strength to strength, Psalm. 84. 7.* Truly this is an heartening consideration.

Psalm. 27. 14.

Secondly, The promise of good successe. Beloved, Christians maintaining the cause and minding the glory of God, are as sure of victory as if now they were singing the triumph, and going away as Conquerours. This is most certaine, for truth it selfe hath spoken it; *In the World you shall have affliction; bee of good cheere, or bee bold, I have overcome the World.* The Devill hath his deaths wound, Corruption hath (as it were) the knife at the heart of it, and the power of wicked men is broken, they are but sprunting and striving for life.

Ioh. 16. 33.

By this argument, the Lord heartened his servant *Ioshua;* *Bee strong and of a good Courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance, the land which I sware unto their Fathers to give them; Josh. 1. 6.* As though

though the Lord had thus spoken; although thou mayest fight many battailes, receive many foyles, loose many of thy souldiers, yet bee not dismayed, for certainly as a Conquerour, thou shalt bring the people to *Canaan*.

Thirdly, Then the recompence assured upon all them, who stoutly stand to the cause of God, is more rich and large, then I can relate. *To him that overcommeth, will I grant to sit with mee in my Throne.* And from this assurance, the Apostle *Paul* encourageth the *Corinthians*. Therefore my beloved Brethren, *Bee ye stedfast, and unmoveable alwayes abounding in the worke of the Lord, for as much, as ye know that your labour is not in vaine in the Lord.* God will requite all paines taken, all sorrowes suffered, and you that have lost houses, or land, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for *Christ*, and his cause, besides that inward peace, and tranquillitie and ioy, which an hundred fold exceed all sublunary contents, to bee enjoyed here, you shall inherit hereafter everlasting life. And againe, feare none of those things which thou shalt suffer. *Behold the Devill shall cast some of you into prison, &c. Be thou faithfull unto death, and I will give thee a Crowne of life.* Feed on these promises, for Cordials flow from them to cheere your drooping hearts, and to strengthen courage.

Rev. 3. 21.

1 Cor. 15 58.

Mat. h. 19. 29.

Seventhly enlarge your loue. If those hearts which now doe but drop love, might flow forth streames of love upon Gods cause, our Kings honour, and the Kingdomes welfare how wonderfully would our courage be increased. Both reason and religion, wil give in manifold strong arguments to augment our love to our Prince, our Parliament, our peace, our priviledges, our posterity: and doubtlesse our love and valour, will grow together.

Love will adventure farre: Women are the more feeble, the more fearefull Sexe, and yet love in a tender mother will produce bold adventures to save the babe of her wombe. The timorous mother, who is wont to tremble at the report of a Musket, will almost come to a Canons

ons

nons mouth to save her Child from being broken in peeces: Love doth it.

Have you not in the countrey sometimes seene an Ewe, in defence of her lambe, to turne head upon a mastive dog, and to stampe, although at other times, the barking of a little whelpe, will make a whole flocke of them to runne away. O, love doth it. And the poore Hen, shee will fly at the Kite to save her brood; Love doth it. O that you and I had this Love; Love to Zion, to the Gospel of peace, Love to Christ, and the pure ordinances of grace: Love will make brave and bold adventures.

And as it will adventure farre, so it will endure much, and long. The Apostle saith, Charity beareth all things, endureth all things, *Jacob* though he had tedious dayes, and weary nights, a sore service under a fowre Vncle, a churlish Master, yet he served seven yeares for *Rachell*, and they seemed unto him, but a few dayes, for the love hee had to her. *1 Cor. 13.7.*
 Love is strong as death, many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drowne it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. *Gen. 29.20.*
 What if one should come to a woman, and make this motion, be content that your child be torne in peices, and here is a thousand pounds for you. Her answer would be ready. Not for a thousand worlds: yea, shee would almost spit in his face, who should presse such a proposition, what rend my child in peices? There is nothing can conquer love: so it would be with us, in reference to Gods commandements, the liberty of Gospel ordinances: No promises, no threats, no means, sayre, or fowle would take us off from appearing in the defence of them, if our hearts were more enflamed with love. *Gant. 8. 6.7.*

Eightly, Walke exactly, keepe your consciences cleare.

Notable is that direction of the Lord, *Deut. 10. 16.* *Ye shall keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that you may be strong:* Suppose a man, who hath a wound, or

Pro. 28. 1.

an impostu mated swelling on his body, should goe into the Campe, if any touch him, hee skritcheth. and he cries, come not neare me, you know the reason, and the application is familiar and easie to the point in hand, wounds in our consciences, will make us timorous and cowardly; but *The Righteous is as bold as a Lyon: He that walkes uprightly, walkes boldly:* Take a man who hath no brokennesse, no boyles, no blanes, no bruises, handle him, shake him, crush him, crowde him, thrust him, cast him: notwithstanding he can better beare all this rugged usage, then another can a fillip with the finger. I beseech you mind the application of this, for the Lords sake take heed, make not inroads, and breaches upon your consciences, goe not against your light, for guilt will make you cowardly. *Adam* as soone as hee had sinned he runs and puts his head in a bush, what was the matter? hee heard a whistling wind, and hee runs away: What hast thou sinned, saith God? **I**, that is the matter. For if *Adam* had kept his heart sound, if hee had not sinned, hee would with boldnesse have encountred with any approaches, either of the creatures, or his Creator.

Ninthly, Improve your experiences. It would bee of singular use to us, to bestow many houres, both together, and asunder, in recounting the many great things which the Lord hath done for us, both in former times, & of later; we have nationall deliverances Citie deliverances, Family mercies & personal mercies to improve providence: Give me leave to call to mind two most seasonable now to be remembered, considering the end of our assembling at this time: I am credibly informed, that your selvs who are here to honour God for your health continued, peace maintained, lives lengthened, had that day when you were abroad, two notable experiences of Gods providence for your preservation; 1. There were muskets broken in the field, and yet neither the Muskettiers, nor any neare them received the least harme, although the throng of people was very great.

Migh

Might not some mens eyes, limbs, or lives have been lost, by such accidents; if the all-ordering hand of the Almighty had not prevented such like dangers. The other passage of divine providence is more remarkable.

2 Gods hand turned aside graciously, and strangely, a kindled match which was cast towards a basket full of Gunpowder, which stood in the field for that dayes service. From what malicious heart, and by what mischievous hand this match was cast, the Lord hee knoweth, whom we this day magnifie, as the God of our salvations.

Beloved, the remembrance of such like providences, should incourage our adventures for the Lord, whose hand hath diverted many unseen, & unexpected dangers. But I had almost forgot to give in my proof, that the improvement of experiences, increaseth courage. I pray you observe it in *Ios. 10. 25.* *And Joshua said unto them feare not, nor bee dismayed, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall the Lord doe to all your enemies, against whom yee fight.*

Our God hath many times disappointed the designs of our enemies: many of them who hated us, and endeavoured our undoing, and desolation, have beene discovered and brought to shame, the Lord hath trampled upon them gloriously. These meditations enlarged by particular pregnant instances, I commend unto you, as meanes to increase your courage.

Lastly, when ever you have occasion to shew your courage, goe out selfe denyingly in the strength of your God, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, Ephes 6. 10.* *Through God we shall doe valiantly, Psal. 60. 12.* *David*

was a man, as in other kinds, so in this imitable; when hee came against *Goliath* (who threatned to pluck him in peeces, as a Faulkoner doth a bird) his words are very observable.

Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of host, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom thou hast despised. Let these be the breathing of your noses. Some trust in Chariots, and some in horses, but wee will remember the name of,

the Lord our God. They are brought downe and fallen, but we are risen an' stand upright. Save Lord, let the King heare us when we call.

Thus be carefull to make addition of prayer, unto all the other meanes of Christian courage. Pray heartily, self-denyingly, and believingly. Advance God, and plead his promise; and expect assistance according to his promise. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all yee that hope in the Lord.*

FINIS.

It is ordered by the Committee, of the House of Commons in Parliament concerning printing, that this Booke intituled, *Good Courage discovered, and incouraged*, be printed.

John White.

26. May, 1642.

THE
BEST REFUGE
FOR THE
MOST OPPRESSED,

IN

A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of COMMONS at their solemn FAST, March 30. 1642.

By *Simeon Ash* Minister in London.

Published by Order of that House.

ESA. 26.1.

In that day shall this Song be sung in the Land of Judah, We have a strong City, Salvation Will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarkes.

LONDON,
Printed for *Edward Brewster* and *John Burroughs*,
and are to be sold at the Bible on Fleet-
Bridge and the golden Dragon neare the
Inner-Temple-Gate, 1642.

THE
BEST MIDGE
FOR THE
MOST OF US

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TO THE
HONOURABLE HOUSE
of COMMONS now assembled
in PARLIAMENT.



He severall Creatures, according to their severall instincts, seeke the preservation of themselves. Nature hath taught those which are void of reason, to make use of such shelters as common provi-

dence hath provided. The Conies (saith Solomon) are but a feeble folke, yet make they their houses in the rock. And the Psalmist telleth us, that the high hills are a refuge for the wild Goats,

Pro. 30.
26.

Pf. 104.
18.

Men in like manner acted by different principles betake themselves to different waies of defence. The rich mans wealth is his strong City, and as an high Tower in his conceit. Some shroud themselves under the authority of great ones, as Birds build in the branches, and Beasts seek shadow under the boughs of high and spreading Trees.

Pro. 18.
11.

Dan. 4.
10, 11.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Judg. 9.
50, 51. *When Abimelech encamping against Thebez had taken it, all the men and women fled into the strong Tower that was within the City.*

Pro. 18.
10. *But the regenerate being raised by the spirit of grace above the world, they are carried beyond all things, on this side God, for the securing of their comforts and safeguarding of their persons. The name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe. Vnto this refuge (which is above all others, and better then all others) my Text and my Sermon directeth Gods oppressed people. This Text was judged seasonable when I preached upon it, for then the times began to be lowring: the improvement of this Doctrine, is now become more necessary, because our dangers are increased, and some suspect that England is threated with a showre of bloud.*

Nah. 3.
12. *The words of the Prophet Nahum to Nineveh are notable. All thy strong holds shall bee like Fig-trees, with the first ripe Figs if they be shaken they shall even fall. And therefore our souls should say, some trust in Chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man. When God had delivered David from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, he still resolves to have steady referen-*

Pf. 60.
11.

Pf. 18. tit

'The Epistle Dedicatory.'

ces unto his Majesty for future defence. The Lord v.2,3.
is my Rock and my Fortresse and my Deliverer,
my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my
Buckler and the horne of my Salvation, and my
high Tower, I will call upon the Lord. *How
much more doth it now concerne us (being surroun-
ded with dangers) to make hast to Heaven for deli-
verance. For our helpe is in the name of the
Lord who made Heaven and Earth,*

*By speedy Repentance we run to God, and if we re-
turn unto the Almighty, he will be our Defence.* Job 22.
23,25.

*By a firme fiduciall adherence unto the word of pro-
mise we make our abode with his highnesse. He that
dwelleth in the secret place of the most High,* Ps. 91. 1,
2,4.
*I will say of the Lord he is my Refuge and my
Fortresse, my God in him will I trust, hee shall
cover thee with his feathers, and under his wing
shalt thou trust, his truth shall be thy Shield and
Buckler. The Magazine and Militia of the world
is in this Castle with the Lord of Hosts, and it is ex-
ercised by the prayers of his people. Prayers draw
forth the Armies of the living God. I can pray to my
Father (saith Christ) and he shall presently give
me more then twelve legions of Angels. 1. The* Mat. 26.
53.
Hosts sent from Heaven upon prayer are Angels,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

which excell in strength. For one of them in one night killed a hundred fowrescore and five thousand valiant men. 2. No lesse then twelve legions are set on worke by meanes of prayer : A legion is judged to be six thousand Foot and seven hundred Horse, according to which computation this Army of Angels raised by prayer is exceeding great. 3. This great Army is by prayer dispatch'd from Heaven in an instant, and he shall presently give me, &c.

Luther called his groanes and prayers Guns and instruments of Warre. Christians in the Army of Marcus Aurelius by prayer prevailed with God both to give rains to refresh the Army and to cast downe haile with thunderbolts upon the enemy, whereupon they were honoured with that title, Legio Fulminatrix. David seemeth to suggest some such consequences of his prayers in times of danger : In my distresse I called on the Lord, &c. then the Earth shooke and trembled, the Foundations also of the Hills moved and were shaken : There went up a smoake out of his nostrils and fire out of his mouth devoured. The Lord also thundred in the Heavens and the highest gave his voyce, haile-stones and coales of fire, yea he sent out his arrows and scattered them, and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them. Preces & lachry-

Pf. 18. 6,
7, 8.

13.
14.

The Epistle Dedicatory,

lachrymæ sunt arma Ecclesiæ, and with such weapons (most Noble Senators) I am perswaded you be as well guarded, as ever any Assembly in the world. The hearts of many thousands doe daily put you into the armes of omnipotency, and into the bosome of the Lord of Hosts. This one thought (which is much inferiour unto many other encouragements) might be sufficient to beare up your spirits above all difficulties, which can encounter you in attending upon the wellfare of this Church and Commonwealth. Your selves have tasted the first fruits of Fasting and Prayer in many-fold experiences: Be confident there is a full Harvest behind, which will abundantly recompence all your great labours and adventures for God and his people.

Many of my Reverend Brethren, have presented you with their rich gifts, with which they served you at your monthly Fasts: And now I humbly tender my two Mites. Your acceptance is my satisfaction, and if this my poore labour of much love and duty, shall contribute any whit unto the publicke good (at which I levelled in it) it will be no small addition to my joyes:

The Lord direct your Counsels by his wisdom, protect your Persons by his power, and prof-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

prosper all your worthy endeavours by his blessing, according to the riches of his glorious grace in **IESVS CHRIST**, in whom I
am

Your Servant in all faithfulnesse,
but in much weaknesse

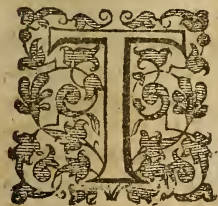
SIMEON ASH.



A
 SERMON PREACHED
 At the late Fast before the *Commons*
 House of PARLIAMENT.

PSAL. 9. 9.

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.



His *Psalm* is almost altogether Eucharisticall, for it containing twenty verses, onely three of them are spent in prayer, v. 13, 19, 20. the other 17. are bestowed in thanksgiving.

And certainly there is much Christianity, much Christian policy in weaving and working praises and prayers into each other. For as God is highly honoured by prayer, *Psal.* 116. 13, 14. *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me (saith David) his answer followes, I will call upon the Name of the Lord.*

Ps. 50. 15.

So Prayer proves the more prevalent, being accompanied with prayſes; becauſe when glory is returned unto God for favours formerly afforded, his Majeſties great deſigne is ſerved and his expectation ſatisfied. *I will deliver and thou ſhalt glorifie me*, whereupon the thankfull Petitioner may moſt hopefully expect theſpeeding of his great petitions at the throne of grace.

Let us learne this pious policy, this religious Rhetorick in our addreſſes unto God, (*viz.*) to preface, to put on our ſuites of greateſt concernment with thankſgivings to the Lord, for the great things already done amongſt us, by his apparant and remarkable providences.

The Occaſion of the praifes in this *Pſalme* preſented (as it is generally conceived) was ſome glorious generall deliverance from ſome very deepe and deſperate danger. And ſome Interpreters conjecture, that the killing of *Goliath* and the overthrow of the *Philiftines*, as a conſequence of that victory, occaſioned this part of holy Scripture.

One ground of this conjecture, is, from theſe words in the title ſet before the *Pſalme*, *Victori ſuper Muth-Labben*, or *ſuper morte Labben*, To the chiefe Muſitian upon *Muth-Labben*. For *Muth* in Hebrew ſignifies death, and *Labben* they take to be the name of that Champion, that Giant, that Monster of men, who deſied the hoaſt of the living God.

From hence note by the way two things,

1. That the enemies of Gods *Iſrael* are put to flight by the downfall of their Champions. An Antichriſtian party may better be plucked downe, if the heads of that faction be removed.

2. That

2. That the death and downfall of *Israels* enemies draweth forth praises from the righteous.

In this *Psalme*, *David* that sweet Singer of *Israel*, praiseth God, both in regard of the beautiful, usefull excellencies, which he espied in him, and also in respect of the renowned Acts which had beene wrought by him.

It may be some heere present, because of this which I have spoken, begin to question my discretion in the choyce of this Text this day. For how unreasonable (may it be objected) is a subject of Thanksgiving, for the service of heart humbling. Give me leave therefore (Right Honourable) before I proceed to prevent this prejudice.

Whereas the three chiefe services of this day are,

1. Heart humbling.
2. Humble hopefull praying.
3. Conscientious Covenant renewing. All these are much promoted by such a subject.

For the first, what meditations more melting to thaw downe the icy, the frozen spirits then Gods mercies, what considerations can more kindly, more thoroughly breake the sinners heart then the excellencies and kindneses of that God who hath beene by sinne dishonoured.

For the 2^d. what arguments will more forcibly draw forth the soul in holy suites before the Lord, then his abilities to bestead us in all concernments, and our experiences of his readinesse to lay forth himselfe for our comfort in former times.

For the 3^d. How shall a Christian be sooner conquered, to give up selfe unto the most High by solemn Covenant, then by the apprehension of the full satisf-

factions to bee enjoyed, in enjoying his Majesty.

My Text contains one intire Proposition. *The Lord will be a Refuge for the oppressed in times of trouble.*

Wherein 1. The Subject. 2. The Predicate are considerable.

The Subject hath in it much sowrenesse, for it suggesteth unto us, Gods owne people in a sad, in a suffering condition, *Oppressed and in trouble.*

The Predicate comprizeth more sweetnesse, for it propoundeth Almighty God as the happiest harbour for his poore people to put into in stormy weather, or rather (that I may hold to the Metaphor in my Text) it directeth the oppressed soule unto the safest refuge to run into in daies of ruinating dangers. *The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of Trouble.*

My Text holdeth forth two Truths, open and apparant unto every eye.

1. *That trouble and oppression may be the condition of Gods owne peculiar people.*

2. *That the Lord will be a refuge unto his oppressed people in times of trouble.*

My purpose is to prosecute both these points at this time, being both profitable and seasonable, I shall say the lesse of the former, because onely implied; but I will be larger in the latter, because openly expressed and chiefly intended. The first truth which craves
Doct. 1. your attention is this, *That oppression and trouble may be in this world the portion of Gods children.*

In the handling hereof, I shall, 1. Interpret the words. 2. Confirm the Doctrine. 3. Endeavour to put all into practise by application.

There

There are 2. wordsto be opened.

First, *Oppressed*. The originall word here used פָּרַד
I finde translated in holy writ. 1. Broken down. *Thou hast* Pl. 44. 19.
fore broken (or broken us downe) in the place of Dra-
gons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

2. Sore broken. *I am feeble and sore broken, I have* Pl. 38. 8.
roared by reason of the disquietnesse of my heart.

And the fulnesse of its signification, may be fetched
from the root, whence it is derived, which is variously
rendred in sacred Scripture.

1. To crush.

His children are farre from safety, and they are crush- Job 5. 4.
ed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.

2. To crush under feet.

To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the Earth. Lam. 3. 34.

3. To smite downe unto the ground.

The enemy hath persecuted my soule, he hath smitten Pl. 143. 3.
my life downe to the ground.

4. To breake into peeces.

They breake in peeces thy people o Lord. Pl. 94. 5.

All these are applyable, to expresse the sad condi-
tion of Gods servants in regard of oppression; they
may bee crushed by intollerable loades laid upon
them, they may be throwne into the dust by the hand
of violence, they may be sore broken, broken into
peeces in regard of all their outward comforts, by the
prevailing power of cruell enemies.

The 2^d. word to be interpreted is *Trouble* פָּרַד, which
I finde translated,

1. Affliction.

In all their affliction, he was afflicted. Isa. 63. 9.

2. Adversity.

As the Lord liveth who hath redeemed my soule from all 2 Sam. 4. 9.
adversity.

3. Tribulation.

Iu. 10. 14. *Goe and cry unto the gods whom you have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.*

4. Distresse.

Pf. 18. 6. *In my distresse I called upon the Lord.*

5. Anguish.

Gen. 42. 21. *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soule, &c.*

6. The pangsof a woman in travell.

Esa. 21. 3. *There are my loynes filled with paine, pangsof a woman that trauelleth.*

And it is derived of a root which signifieth to besiege, and is so rendred in holy writ.

Ier. 32. 2. *The King of Babylons Army besieged Ierusalem.*

All these words, tell us, what fore troubles may overtake and take hold on the people of God. Many and heavy may be the the afflictions of the godly. They may be pursued, overtaken, trampled upon, grievously pained, filled with inward anguish, and besieged on every side with tribulation and distresse.

Confirmation.

The prooffe of the point followes, 1. By Scripture,

2. By Reason.

By Scripture.

Firft more generally. Take notice of the complaint of Gods Church. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face and forgettest our affliction and our oppression. For our soule is bowed downe to the dust, our belly cleaveth unto the earth.* And the Psalmist reporteth thus much.

Pf. 107. 39 *They are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow.*

Secondly and more particularly. The servants of God may be troubled and oppressed.

1. In their credit by false and injurious accusations, Davids adversaries charged him with murtherous and traitorous designs, *Because of the voyce of the enemy,* Pf. 55. 3.
because of the oppression of the wicked for they cast iniquity upon me. False witnesses (or witnesses of wrong) did rise up, they layed to my charge, things that I knew not. Pf. 35. 11.

2. In their outward estates and persons, as by heavy impositions and sore exactions, so by the oppressing sword, and bloody warre.

The Prophet *Amos* cryed out in his times, of them Am 4. 1.
who oppresse the poore, and crush the needy. Who sold the righteous for silver, and the poore for a payre of shooes. Who layed themselves downe upon cloathes layed to pledge. Cha. 2. 6, 8
 And the Prophet *Jeremiah* often speakes of the oppressing Sword reaching Gods *Israel*. *Arise and* Ier. 46. 16.
let us goe againe to our owne people, and to the Land of our Nativity from the oppressing Sword: For feare of Ier. 50. 16.
the oppressing Sword they shall turne every one to his People.

3. In their soules by violent persecutions, driving them from the house; and worship of God. *David* he sigheth forth this sad complaint when by the malice of blood-thirsting *Saul*, he was driven into the wildernesse when faine hee would have convers'd with God in his holy place. *Why goe I mourning* Pf. 42. 9.
 (saith he) *because of the oppression of the enemy.* 2. 4.

The fore-going verses tell us that at this time *David* was banished from the publick Ordinances of God formerly enjoyed. And in the following Psalme he maketh the like complaint upon the selfe same ground.

Why goe I mourning because of the oppression of the Pf. 43. 2, 3.
enemy,

enemy. *ô send out thy light and thy truth, let them bring mee unto thy holy Hill, and to thy Tabernacles.*

Our owne times have given in too many instances of grievous oppressions of all these kindes, which have pinched the people of God, and therefore I shall not need by way of prooffe to say any more.

The Grounds whence it is that the condition of Gods dearest servants may be thus calamitous are two.

Reas. 1.

Pl. 106. 40

41.

42.

From God sharply correcting them for their evils. *Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his People, And he gave them into the hand of the Heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.*

Esa. 42. 21.

ver. 24.

39.

That passage in the Prophecy of *Esaiab*, I may not passe over in silence, because it is so pregnant to the point in hand. *This is a People robbed and spoyled, they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses, they are for a prey, and none delivereth, for a spoyle and none saith Restore. Who gave Jacob for a spoyle, and Israel to the Robbers, did not the Lord against whom we have sinned? for they would not walke in his wayes, neither were they obedient to his Law: Therefore he poured upon him the fury of his anger and the strength of battie, and it hath set him on fire round about.*

Reas. 2.

Pl. 44. 22.

2. From malevolent mischievous men maligning them for their goodnesse. *For thy sake are we killed all the day long, and we are accounted as sheepe for the slaughter. Why must Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego be cast into the fiery fornace? because they would not idolatrously bow to the Image that was set*

set up. Why must *Daniel* be throwne into the Lyons Den; because hee would not draw backe from doing homage and devotion in wayes of holy prayer unto his God.

The Application of the Point followeth, and it may sundry wayes be seasonably serviceable to our soules.

Hence we may guesse at the hainousnesse of sinne, *use 1.* for which we come to be humbled this day at the foot of the Lord.

Should we see a wise, patient and a loving father cast his child to the ground, bruise his flesh and break his bones by blowes, we would be confident the offence was foule; such a Father is God unto his People, and yet thus he sometimes deales with them, as the Scriptures already cited doe evidently and abundantly witness. Herein consider the carriage of divine Providence towards *Iob*, though he was the *Phœnix* of the world for Piety, none like him upon Earth, a man perfect and upright, who feared God and eschewed evill; yet was he oppressed in his estate, broken in his Posterity, blemish'd in his credit, bruis'd in his body, and wounded in his spirit. And yet marke in this his deplorable condition what was spoken for his humbling. *Know this that God exacteth of thee lesse then thine iniquity deserveth.*

Iob 11. 6.

This meditation may be of singular and seasonable use to helpe forward penitentiall heart-ake for our sins this day. Had we spoken, or done somewhat inconsiderately for which the high Court of Parliament might justly by imprisonment confine our Persons, by fines ruinate our fortunes, by setting us upon the Pillory expose us to reproach and derision, or by painfull

racking, torment our bodies, how would blushing cover our faces and our knee bones knocke one against another: Now my Beloved our finnes, personall sins, Family finnes, City finnes, Country finnes, Kingdome finnes, Pride, Passion, Prodigality, Hypocrisy, Oaths, Blasphemy, polluting Gods Ordinances, Sacriligious lavishing out holy time, doe expose us to much more misery then I can mention, unto more heavy oppressions then my language can reach unto: and shall we not be deeply humbled before divine Majesty from whom such sad things have many thousand waies, and more then many thousand times beene deserved.

Use 2.

2. This Doctrine somewhat discovereth the exceeding, exceeding sad condition of the wicked, for doubtlesse their case is much more uncomfortable then the worst estate that Gods owne People can possibly be cast into: Holy Scripture doth hold forth this inference, *Behold the righteous shall be recompenced in the Earth, how much more the wicked and the Sinner?*

PROV. II.
31.

1 Pet. 4. 17

The Apostle Peter speaking of the fiery tryall, which the faithfull in those times were put upon, he argueth in this manner. *The time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them who obey not the Gospell of God.* And is there not abundant reason to make good this conclusion.

Pl. 11. 6.

1. If God a friend, a Father afflict thus severely, what will he doe, when as an enemy he commeth armed with fury. *Vpon the wicked he shall raine snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible (or burning) tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.*

2. If the Lord having his justice satisfied doth deale thus

thus roughly with his owne People endeavouring their good, what will he doe (thinke you) when as an angry Judge he commeth in extreme rigour, to take vengeance, and to make men miserable. *If I whet my glittering Sword, and my hand take hold on judgement, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate mee, I will make mine arrowes drunke with blood, and my Sword shall devoure flesh, and that with the blood of the flaine and of the Captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.* You whose consciences tell you, you have sleighted Gods government, obscured his excellencies, dishonoured his name, I beseech you be perswaded from this which hath beene spoken to repent, and to amend this day. Remember that *God is angry with the wicked every day, if he turne not he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow and made it ready, he hath prepared for him instruments of death, he ordaineth his Arrowes against the Persecutours.*

Deut. 32.
ver. 41, 42.

Pf. 7. 11,
12, 13.

I conclude this Use with the Caveat given by the Psalmist, *Now consider this, yee that forget GOD, lest I teare you in peeces, and there bee none to deliver.*

Pf. 50. 22.

This meditation may be of speciall use to stanch murmuring, and to strengthen Patience under our present Pressures. The authour of the Epistle to the Hebrewes maketh this improvement of this Doctrine. *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of Witnesses, let us runne with patience unto the race that is set before us.* The witnesses to whom hee hath reference were with their sore sufferings pointed at in the preceding Chapter.

Use 3.

Heb. 12. 1.

And the argument will come home with strength upon

upon our hearts, if we take notice of a double diffimilitude or difference between our selves, and those sufferers in the Primitive times.

1. Our Pressures are lighter.

2. Their Graces were higher.

First, Their grievances were heavier then any that we through Gods long-sufferance as yet lye under :

Heb. 11.
ver. 36, 37 *For they had tryall of cruell mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment, they were stoned, they were sawne asunder, slaine with the sword, they wandred about in Sheeps-skins, Goate-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.*

Secondly, Their worth was greater, then our modesty will suffer us to say we have yet attained : Of whom (saith the Apostle) *the world was not worthy.* Those who were beyond the worlds worth, yet were thus inhumanely, thus barbarously dealt with. Let this be thought upon withall seriousness; for though Christian Patience be alwayes needfull and commendable, yet most beautifull and seasonable when humiliation is professed and expressed before the Lord, as we doe this day. *The humbled hearts will accept the punishment of their iniquity.*

Lev. 26. 41

Use 4.

The thought of the many distressing troubles which Gods people are exposed unto in this world, may serve to abate in our hearts the immoderate desire of long life on Earth.

Mistake me not, for I know that long life is a desirable Blessing.

Yet should we all labour to sit loose, both in regard of the meanes of bodily livelihood, and life it selfe.

And doubtlesse our God endeavours to weane us from

from the world, by applying wormewood (as it were) to the full Breasts of our sweetest sublunary contentments.

The Apostle *Paul*, by his prison and bonds was brought to this bent, to be willing, at a little warning, to come away from all enjoyments under the Sunne.

I desire to be dissolved.

Here I thinke it needfull to give in a double Caution, that we may escape a double Rocke, upon which many dash and bruise themselves in desiring death.

Phil. 1. 23.

1. Doe not desire to dye in passion and discontent.

Herein the Prophet *Jonah* missed it very much, when he conjectured that his credit might be somewhat eclipsed, and himselfe reputed a false Prophet, because *Nineveh* was not destroyed. And when the heat of the Sunne annoyed his Body, *He wished in himselfe to die,* Ion 4. 8. *and said, it is better for me to die then to live.*

2. Be not weary of life, through discouragement of spirit, because of difficulties and dangers encountering you in doing duty.

In this kind *Elijah* was too blame.

When *Iezebell* resolved to take away his life, he 1 Kin. 19. 2, 4. *sate downe under a Juniper tree, and requested for himselfe (or for his life) that hee might die, &c.*

(Right honourable) The Lord I believe hath given you more masculine, more Heroick spirits, then to offend in these kinds: Therefore instead of enlarging the Cautions, I will give in two Directions, to guide your practice of the use under hand, in both which, you have the blessed Apostle *Paul* for a glorious patterne.

1. Let nothing so much as love to Jesus Christ carry your hearts out of the world.

Phil. i. 23.

I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is farre better.

And there is good reason for it, in reference to the Point now profecuting, because perfect liberty from the worst oppressours, and heaviest oppressions is onely to be enjoyed in the bosome of our blessed Saviour.

2. When your longings after rest with Christ are boyled up, are rayed to the greatest height, even then in love to Christ, be content for a time to be without him in Heaven, that you may still be serviceable to him in his cause, and the comforts of his people here on Earth.

Phil. i. 24,
25, 26.

Neverthelesse to abide in the flesh is more needfull for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of Faith. That your rejoycing may be more abundant in Iesus Christ for me, by my comming to you againe.

Now here (Right Honourable) give me leave to speake one word to you, and beare with it, though you account it a digression. If the good Apostle could contentedly keepe from Heaven for a time, yea from Christ the Heaven of Heaven, that he might doe his servants some more service in the world. Then be you willing to be with-held from many accommodations in your owne countries, yea in a sort to be estranged from Wives, Children, Neighbours, delightfull enjoyments, that you may serve both Church and Common-wealth in *England*, that you may honour Iesus Christ in the happy worke of Re-
forma-

formation now in your hands, and in the hearts of all Gods people through the Kingdome.

It admonisheth us all to take up our thoughts sometimes with tart troubles and heavy oppressions. Use 5.

Abundant cause we have thus to doe, and we shall confesse thus much, if we consider,

1. How Heaven (the God of Heaven I meane) is incensed against us, by our continued and multiplied abominations; we still heare profane, bloody Oaths, Curses, Blasphemies ringing in our eares; wee still see brutish drunkenness reeling and spewing in our streets; The Lords-day is commonly profaned before our eyes; yea though this City be famous for Religion, yet the streets are filled with vain walkings and the fields with profane sportings, even during the time of publick worship, *And shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord?* Ier. 9. 9.

2. How hell and earth are combined against us, because we endeavour Reformation. The Devill roares, because his Kingdom is battered. Papists and Atheists rage, because Popery and profaneness is opposed.

And certainly if that Prince of the ayre, who also worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience can worke any mischiefs, raise any stormes, cause any confusions, we shall now be sure to be oppressed with them. Rev. 12. 12
Lu. 9. 42.

3. How Ireland is oppressed and wasted, because it professeth the Protestant Religion. Religion, Religion is the root of the quarrell, of the warres raised there. And doubtlesse the Papists, those Lyons, those Beasts of prey are of the same spirit, as greedy after Protestant blood in England, as in Ireland. They are birds of a feather, though they roost in divers nests. But

But you will aske me, what is your meaning: wherefore would you have us mind tribulation & oppression.

I answer, This I humbly request for a double reason. 1. That such a condition may be prevented. 2. that we may be prepared for what in that kinde must be endured.

First, That we may be moved to seeke the prevention of such troubles and oppressions as are ready (for ought we know) to presse, to rush in upon us suddenly.

1. By an humble submission unto the good pleasure of our God, in an open ingenious acknowledgement of our provocations.

Malefactors who refuse stubbornely to take a faire legall tryall, according to the Lawes of our Kingdome, must be pressed to death. This course God held with *David*, he did set him, as it were, upon the racke, where he roared till he resolved to confesse. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* The Lord make us wise for our owne ease and comfort in this regard. Let us particularly without partiality acknowledge our offences against our God, and submit our selves. And the children of *Israel* said unto the Lord, *We have sinned, doe thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee.*

PL 32.3i

Iudg. 10.

45.

2. By a speedy Reformation. Acknowledgement without amendment will be no prevention of wrath, but rather a further provocation. Whereas repentance may make way for our escape, when judgement is at the doore: *And they put away the strange gods from among them, and Gods soule was grieved for the misery of Israel. They turned from their evill way, and God repented of the evill that he had said he would doe.* Whereas if this be not done, the Lord will lay

Iu. 10. 16.

Ion. 3. 10.

lay on more weight, he will punish seven times more, and seven times more, and seven times more, and seven times more. The passages in *Leviticus* speake fully Gods purpose in this particular against the impenitent.

Levit. 26.
18, 21, 24,
28.

I beseech you, I beseech you (Right Honourable and Beloved) let not this my counsell be disregarded on this great day of our Humiliation before the Lord.

Secondly, That we may make provision, for the better bearing of the heaviest loades which man can or God will cast upon us.

We daily see in this City that Porters prepare themselves instruments, that they may carry their loades more easily, yea Carriers provide for their horse-backs Saddles and such like things, that those Creatures may beare their burdens without bruising, and shall we be carelesse?

But how shall this be done ?

1. By endeavouring to make and maintain all sound and whole within.

The sincere heart will well stand under great pressures because sound. Being pressed above measure, the Apostles did joyfully beare the load by meanes of sincerity. Whereas if a bone be broken, or if the flesh be torne, yea if the skin be rub'd up, and the place abide raw, the laying on of the lightest load will cause paine and shrinking.

2Cor. 1.9,
12.

In like manner will it be with our soules. As *Iob* while he maintained his gracious frame of heart, he was calme, though impoverished by the hand of oppression, though made childlesse by an heavy accident: but when by fretting he had galled his heart, how

doth he lye downe, desire to dye and fly out shamefully under the load.

2. By seeking interest in God through Christ. *Come unto me* (saith our Saviour) *all ye that are heavy laden.*

Mat. II. 28

Whatsoever our loades are, whether inward, outward, heavier, or lighter, we must make to Christ for ability to beare them, for he adds and abates weight at pleasure : Hee also augments and with-drawes

Iob. 15. 5.

strength according to his pleasure. *Without me* (saith Christ) *you can doe nothing*, neither without him can we endure any thing. And he onely can support the sinking soule under the most smarting troubles and heavy oppressions. Under his wing we shall be sure either of preservation or supportation. I will conclude

Pf. 62. 8. 1

this Use and this first Doctrine, with the counsell of the *Psalmist*. *Trust in him at all times, ye people, and poure out your hearts before him, God is a Refuge for us.* Selah.

Now this lets in the second part of the Text to be profecuted, which I called the Predicate in the Proposition, wherein God is by a Metaphor both made knowne and made over to his owne people, as their defence and deliverer.

Doct.

The Lord will be a refuge in times of trouble.

In the handling whereof. 1. The words used are to be interpreted. 2. The Truthes infolded in them are to be considered.

The Hebrew word here rendered Lord is *Iehovah*, a glorious title of our God, the only true God, used in holy Writ. 1. Both to advance his Name. 2. And also to support and solace his people.

Pf. 68. 4.

Extoll him that rideth upon the Heavens by his Name Jah, and rejoyce before him.

The Originall word translated, *Refuge*, is derived מִשְׁכַּח of a root, which (as it is rendered in our translations) doth signifie.

1. To set on high. כִּבֵּד
I will set him on high, because he hath knowne my name. Pf. 91.14.

2. To exalt.
Behold God exalteth by his power. Iob 36.22

3. To exalt to safety.
To set up on high those that be low, that those which mourne may be exalted to safety. Iob 5.11.

4. To defend.
The name of the God of Iacob defend thee. Pf. 20.11.

And I finde the word in the Text divers wayestranslated in the old Testament.

1. A strong Tower.
The name of the Lord is a strong Tower. Psa. 18.10

2. A strong refuge.
Thou art my strong refuge. Pf. 71.7.

3. An high wall.
The rich mans wealth is his strong City, and is an high wall in his owne conceit. Pro. 18.11

4. An high Tower.
The Lord is my rocke, &c. my buckler, the horne of my Salvation, and my high Tower. Pf. 18.2.

5. High Fortresse.
And the Fortresse of the high Fort of thy walls shall he bring downe, &c. Esa. 25.12.

6. Defence.
The Lord is my Defence, &c. Pf. 94.22.

Times. The word signifies the tempestivity, the season of time. The Septuagint renders it right, ἑν ἑυκαι- γίαις. In good seasons. And thus we sometimes finde it expressed in sacred records.

Esa. 50. 4. The Lord God *hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speake a word in season, to him that is weary.*

This Explication of the words being premised, this Predication, this part of the Proposition in the Text, holdeth forth 3. usefull trutthes.

1. That the true God is *Iehovah*.

2. That God *Iehovah* is an incomparable Refuge to his oppressed people.

3. That the Lord *Iehovah* will be an incomparable Refuge to his oppressed people in the fittest seasons.

The limits of time set for the bounding of my Discourse will not allow me to speake unto these observations severally, and therefore I will only fasten upon the 2^d. being the principall: in the prosecution whereof I shall take in some things considerable in the two other, as the Lord shall direct.

Doct. That God *Iehovah* is an incomparable Refuge to his oppressed People.

There are 2. Branches in the Doctrine.

1. That God is a Refuge.

2. That he is a Refuge incomparable.

In the handling hereof, 1. I will prove both the branches distinctly, 2. I will apply them joyntly.

Refugium
καταφυγιον The Lord will be a Refuge. The Greeke, the Latine and the English word, all hold forth the same thing. A place to fly backe unto.

The Metaphor seemes to be taken from the Camp, from warre, where it is the manner of Souldiers being beaten backe by an over-powring enemy, to retire unto some place of security and defence.

Now such a thing is God *Iehovah* unto his poore people,

people, overpowred and oppressed by the strength and violence of their enemies. He is a Castle, a Fortresse unto whom they may, unto whom they must retire, repaire for defence and safety.

For the generall proof of this first Branch, you may please to observe,

1. That God himselfe promiseth to be the refuge of his oppressed people.

For the oppression of the poore, for the sighing of the needy; now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him, that puffeth at him (or would ensnare him.) Pl. 12. 5.

2. That his oppressed servants claime and challenge thus much from his Majesty.

O Lord my strength and my fortresse, and my refuge in the day of affliction. Ier. 16. 19.

Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compasse me about with Songs of Deliverance. Selah. Pl. 32. 7.

More particularly, it may be of good use for us to consider that the holy Scriptures doe give more full witness unto this truth, discovering unto us. That God is a refuge unto his Servants in regard of all kinds of annoyances which molest, all dangers which threaten them.

1. When clamours and out-cries are made after them. When they are wondred at, as Owles by the chirpings and chidings of other birds.

I am a wonder unto many, but thou art my strong Refuge. Pl. 71. 7.

2. When infectious killing diseases are scattered round about them. *I will say of the Lord, he is my Refuge and my Fortresse, he shall deliver thee from the noysome pestilence. &c.* Pl. 91. 2, 3

3. When bloody persecutors are stirred up against them.

Pf. 142. tit
& v. 43. 5. u

When *David* by the violent pursuit of *Saul* was compelled to take Covert in a Cave, (hee saith) *I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soule, I cryed to thee o Lord, I said, thou art my refuge.*

Persecutions are sometimes compared to the scorching heat of the Sunne (*Matth. 13. 6.*) and in that case God is a Refuge to shadow them.

And sometimes Persecutions are compared unto tempests or stormes (*Matth. 7. 25, 27.*) in that case the Lord is a refuge to shelter them.

Esa. 25. 4

Thou hast beene a strength to the poore, a strength to the needy in his distresse, a refuge from the storme, a shadow from the heate, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storme against the wall.

The 2^d. Branch of the Doctrine remains to be illustrated, *That God is a Refuge incomparable.* We may well call this Refuge, *Non-such.* For certainly there is not any other like unto it. He is a refuge and a refuge. A refuge κατ' ἐξοκην for excellency, as the fullness of the Originall word (explained) doth intimate.

And this may appeare in 7. particulars; three whereof are hinted in the word *Iehovah.*

Pf. 83. 18.

1. He is the highest, the All-commanding refuge. *Iehovah is most high over all the Earth.* In laying open the Originall word here rendred *Refuge*, you heard that it signifies, *An high wall, an high Tower, an high Fortresse.*

All high Towres are over-topped, and all Castles are commanded by this Refuge: The greatest Mountaines

taines are as Valleys, as Mole-hills under the Lord Iehovah. No long Ladders can scale this high wall. No Arrowes of the strongest Archer; no Cannons of the mightiest Warriour can reach this high Towre. *Under the shadow of thy wings* (saith David) *will I make my refuge, untill these calamities be over-past.* And he addeth, *I will cry unto God most high. Be thou exalted ô God above the Heavens.* Pl. 57. 1, 2
5.

And the Prophet in his description of the Lord, hath these expressions. *The Inhabitants of the Earth are as Grasshoppers. He bringeth the Princes to nothing, he maketh the Iudges of the Earth as vanity. He shall also blow upon them and they shall wither, and the whirlewinde shall take them away as stubble.* Esa. 40. 23,
23, 24.

2. He is an independent Refuge. The glorious title *Iah*, tels us, that our God is the God of beings, having his being of and from himselfe. What would you thinke (Beloved) of a Castle which could not be prejudiced, though all soyle should be digged up under it, though no waters should be suffered to flow unto it, though the passages for all provisions should be block'd up from it, though no Sun, no showers, no influences of Heaven should fall upon it.

Now such a refuge is our God *Iehovah*, for he can neither be damnified nor advantaged by any creature, any course, any combination whatsoever. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou beest righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand.* Iob 35. 6,
7.

3. He is a never-falling, a never-failing refuge. *In the Lord Iehovah is everlasting strength,* or as the Originall imports, *In the Lord Iehovah is the rocke of ages.* Esa. 26. 4.

ages. No batteries can beat downe or weaken this Fortresse. The longest tract of time cannot demolish or ruinate this place of defence. Here the words of *Moses* the man of God are considerable. *Lord thou hast bene our dwelling place in all generations* (or as the Hebrew expresseth it) *in generation and generation*. What our God hath bene at any time to his distressed, endangered people, that he is and will be without alteration: For he is a strong, stable, ever-standing, unmoveable, immutable refuge to secure and safeguard them, who are his by peculiar Covenant.

Pl. 90.1.

4. He is the most capacious refuge. Gods immensity is roomy enough to receive all commers.

Job 11.7.

Canst thou by searching finde out God, Canst thou finde out the Almighty unto perfection, It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou doe, deeper then Hell what canst thou know. The measure thereof is longer then the Earth, and broader then the Sea. Whereas Castles on Earth may be so crowded with companies, that the last commers are compelled to lye out of doores, as Bees hang out of the Hives mouth on heapes, through want of roome within. Although many millions more then ever will make unto the Almighty, should creepe into his bosome, yet no one could have occasion to complaine of being straightned in him. The Earth is not so vast to entertaine more Inhabitants, as our God, who is infinite and beyond all dimensions, to give shelter unto all those who flocke unto him in dayes of danger. *Doe not I fill Heaven and Earth,*

Ier. 23. 24.

saith the Lord.

5. The passage to this Refuge is most safe and passable. Although our sins had blocked up our way

to God, and had made such a separation betwixt his Majesty and our poore soules, that our approaches to him might have beene perilous to all eternity : Yet now we have boldnesse (or liberty) to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Iesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vaile, that is to say, his flesh. In whom we have boldnes and ac-
*Heb. 10.
19, 20.
Eph. 3. 12.*

The Lord our Saviour hath cast up such a caus-way (as it were) to Heaven, that we may well travell thither from all Coasts and corners of the Earth : we may safely saile through Christs blood into the bosome of the Father. There are no boggs, no sands to sinke us, no Armies to cut us off in our approaches unto God for safety in stormy, troublesome times.

6. God is a refuge, ever and every where at hand. *Pf. 46. 1.*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present helpe in trouble. Which is not only to be understood concerning the presence of his Essence, but of his speciall providence for their protection.

My Texttels us that *he is a refuge for the oppressed in the seasons of trouble* : God is not onely once, but alwaies seasonably present with his oppressed people, for markethe words, *In the times*, not at one time onely, or only many times, but *in the times*, in all times, all seasons of need. This consideration the Church of God took comfort in. *O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, or in the season of distresse.* *Ier. 14. 8.*

Whithersoever God by his Providence carrieth his people, there he vwill undoubtedly be a refuge to them, both for protection and provision. *Thus saith the Lord, although I have cast them farre off among the Heathen, and although I have scattered them among the* *Ezck. 12. 16.*

Countries, yet will I be to them a little Sanctuary in the Countries where they shall come.

And the Apostle Paul reporting Gods dispensations towards old *Israel*, speaketh in this manner. *They dranke of that spirituall rocke that followed them (or went with hem) and that Rocke was Christ.*

Some glossing upon these words, say, that the waters which flowed from the Rocke did in a streame follow the *Israelites* in their journey for their refreshing. But this I take to be the true meaning of the Scripture. That in all their removals, according to their various necessities, the Lord was still at hand for their supply and safety.

Gen. 17. 1. 7. He is the best furnished refuge. The Lord is *El-shad-lai*, God *All-sufficient*, perfectly able to satisfie all soules with all contentments to all eternity.

That which fully answereth unto all accommodations and comforts whatsoever, is to be found in God our Refuge. Here the Promise to the upright man, recorded by the Evangelicall Prophet is very considerable. *He shall dwell on high (or in the heights) his place of Defence shall be the Munitions of Rockes, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* Are not the words both fit and full to expresse and prove the particular under hand.

In this harbour the heart hath the goodliest prospects, the fullest provisions, the safest protections. Here the soule feedeth upon the sweetest Cordials, taketh the quietest, most refreshing rest, ô the Bowers, the Walkes, the Gardens, the beds of Spices, the All-delights, which the spirit enjoyes in the bosome of the Almighty.

Ps. 73. 15. Will you heare *Dauids* judgement, *Whom have I in Heaven*

Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth, that I desire beside thee, God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

In the best situated Castles in the world, there is some defect in something needfull or desireable : either the ayre, or the water, or the soyle, or the neighbourhood doth annoy ; either food, or fewell, or friends, or somewhat else is scarce or wanting. But in God there is no darknesse, no discomfort, no disease, no death, no defect at all.

By these 7. particulars (which I have briefly pointed at, and which your owne meditations may profitably enlarge) I hope you be well satisfied and settled in the truth under hand, *That Ichovah is an incomparable Refuge unto his oppressed People.*

The Application of this Doctrin, now calls for your attention. In the making whereof I shall faithfully endeavour to be serviceable unto your soules by a four-

fold Use, of $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Admonition.} \\ \text{Reprehension.} \\ \text{Consolation.} \\ \text{Exhortation.} \end{array} \right.$

I. *Admonition.* It warneth all men to take heed of oppressing. Wise King *Salomon* suggesteth the naturallnesse of this inference. *Rob not the poore because he is poore, neither oppresse the afflicted in the gate. For the Lord will pleade their cause, and spoyle the soule of those that spoyled them.*

Use 1st X
Pro. 22. 28
23.

And the reasonableness of this Caveat will be confessed, if the duty of this day, and the quality of my Auditours be considered.

We are assembled to keepe a religious Fast. And, *Is not this the Fast that I have chosen* (saith the Lord)

Esa. 58. 6.

to loose the bands of wickednesse, to undoe the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed goe free, and that yee breake every yoake.

The personsto whom I am preaching are men of high place, great power and much authority in the severall parts of this Kingdome, whose temptation it is to be oppressours.

In the enlarging of my dehortation from oppression, I humbly crave leave to give in, 1. Some aggravations of the sinne. 2. Some diffwasions from it. I shall briefly aggravate the sin of oppression under 5. heads.

Iob 24.13

First, from the persons oppressing. 1. *When they are those who herein offend against the light.* Although they know divine prohibitions and menaces against this evill, yet they act it. You remember the words of the Apostle here applyable. *Knowing the judgement of God (that they who doe such things are worthy of death) yet doe them. Therefore art thou inexcusable o man whosoever thou art.*

Rom. 1.
32. & 2.1.

2. When such oppresse their inferiours, who doe much complaine of oppression from others. There are Country Gentlemen, who cry out of heavy oppressions in Westminster-hall, and yet they themselves doe grinde the faces of their Tenants by racking rents and fines at home. Unto these I will only report the judgement of the Apostle Paul, *Therefore art not thou inexcusable o man, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy selfe, for thou that judgest, doest the same things.*

Rom. 2.1.

3. When men designed to doe Iustice by vertue of their callings, yet deale injuriously. The Psalmist aggravates the injustice of Iudges by this circumstance.

Ps 82.2,5. *How long will ye (ye who sit to judge others) judge*

unjustly. They know not neither will they understand, they walke in darknesse, all the foundations of the earth are out of course. And that passage of the Prophet *Isaiab*, is remarkable, *The Lord looked for Indgement, but behold oppression, for Righteousnesse, but behold a cry.* The Hebrew word translated oppression, signifies a Scabb or a wound, and *Piscator* gives this note upon the place, *Judices instar Scabiei molesti sunt oppressis.* When the oppressed people petitioned the Judges for reliefe, they caused their condition to become more painefull and grievous.

Esa. 7.7.

משפט

Secondly, from the persons oppressed. 1. If poore, the Item of *Salomon* is observable, *Enter not into the fields of the fatherlesse, for their Redeemer is strong, he will plead their cause with thee.* In *Nathans* Parable that oppression is judged very grievous, when he who had an herd and a flocke of his owne, yet tooke from the poore man his one, only, single Ew-lambe. It is an heavy oppression, when poore men are necessitated to sell their working tooles and to pawne their beds and wearing apparrell.

Pr. 23 10,

11.

2 Sam. 12.

3.4.

2. If godly. *They eat up my people* (saith the Lord) *as men eat up bread.* Unto the palates of some, no morsels are so sweet as the bloud of the Saints. And God will give them bloud to drinke for they are worthy.

Ps. 14.4.

3. If the wrong reach many, *They oppresse a man and his house, even a man and his heritage,* saith the Prophet. Our Patentees, Monopolists & other men of that make, may justly be cast under this loading aggravation.

Mic. 2.2.

Thirdly, From the quality of the things where people are oppressed. The Apostle saith expressly, *That no man should oppresse or goe beyond any other in any*

1 Thes. 4.

6.

thing. Yet are there aggravations to greaten the sin of oppression, from the worth of the matters wherein the wrong is offered. 1. It is a cursed course to crush people in their outward estates. *Cursed is he that removeth his neighbours Land marke, and all the people shall say, Amen.* 2. But to overthrow mens civil liberties, and to bring them into slavery is a farre greater injury. *Men with great summes of money (or long service) obtaine freedome.* 3. How heavy then is that oppression which extendeth to the blood and lives of men. Their sinne is hainous, who *hunt for the precious life of a man Skin for skin and all that a man hath will he give for his life.* 4. The worst oppression of all other, is that which pincheth upon the immortall soule. That accusation charged upon *Babylon*, for *making merchandise of the soules of men* is most intolerable. And how farre this fault is chargeable upon such who poyson or starve soules by imposing Popish Innovations, polluting Gods Ordinances, inhibiting Sermons, &c. I referre it to your judgement.

Fourthly, from the ends aimed at in oppression. *Men doe noe despise a theefe (saith Salomon) if he steale to satisfie his soule.* But if a man shall oppresse others, to latisfie his owne lusts, this circumstance maketh an addition of very much guilt. 1. When through covetousnesse, a thirst after money, *a man doth oppresse to increase riches.* 2. When through brutish Sensuality, to please the palate, and to fill the guts, *they oppresse the poore saying, bring and let us drinke.* 3. When men transported by the Spirit of revenge, oppresse others, purposely to ease their stomackes, and to poure forth their gall upon them. As it was with *Haman*, it seeking

seeking to crush not only *Mordecai*, but all the Nation of the Jewes. Thus men make *provision for the flesh, to satisfie it in the lusts thereof*, which is a practise shamefull and abominable. Ro. 13. 14.

Fifthly, from the manner of manning this sinne of oppression. if men oppress only in secret, as being ashamed to owne their injurioufnesse (*as the thiefe who steales in the night*) the fault is lesse hainous, then when *they are corrupt and speake wickedly concerning oppression, speake loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens*, undertaking to satisfie and maintaine actes of unrighteousnesse. When Lawyers at the Barr plead for oppression, Judges on the Bench justifie it, Ministers in the Pulpits preach for it, and Doctors in the Universities dispute and determine to defend it. Iob 24. 14
Pl. 73. 8, 9.

And here I humbly referre it to your wisdomes to consider, whether our Prelates have not been (of late especially) the grand oppressors of the Kingdome, according to most, if not all, the aforementioned aggravations. Have not they been great oppressors both in Church and Common-wealth? What County, what City, what Towne, what Village, yea what Family, (I had almost said) what person in the Kingdome, hath not in one kinde or other, in some degree or other, at one time or other, beene oppressed by them? They and their officers, by citations, censures, exactions have been Catholicke oppressors. How many wealthy men have been crushed by their cruelty? How many poore Families have been ruined by their Tyranny? And I beseech you to consider, whether the most pious, both among Preachers and people, have not met with the hardest measures from their heavy hands. Alas, alas! How many faithfull Ministers have they silenced?

silenced ! How many gracious Christians have they excommunicated ! How many Congregations have they starved or dissolved in this Kingdome ! For the prooffe of all this, and of more then all this, I appeale unto the many Petitions presented to this honourable Parliament. And these are no small aggravations of these and other like their oppressions, that they call themselves the Fathers of the Church, and are accounted more knowing men then their brethren.

I have done with the aggravations of oppression. The dissuasions from oppression follow, some of which I shall briefly suggest under 2. Heads:

1. *A Commodo.*

2. *Ab Incommodo.*

First, the eschewing of oppression will be comfortable. 1. It may be some evidence of a regenerate estate.

רַבִּי

Gods people are called *His mercifull Ones* (For so the Hebrew word usually rendred Saints, in the booke of Psalmes doth properly signifie) because the tender mercies of the Almighty shed forth abundantly upon them, doe leave a compassionate frame upon their hearts. The Apostles Argument is pregnant to my purpose. *As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercies.*

Col. 3.12.

And the example of the Gaoler expresseth thus much. How did the coming in of conquering grace change the man, from churlish and cruell, to kinde and compassionate. 2. It will administer boldnesse unto us, both before God and men. The Prophet *Samuel* is a good president to prove it. *Behold here I am, witnessse against me before the Lord, whom have I defrauded, whom have I oppressed, &c. And they said, thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us.* 3. It may hopefully interest us in the speciall

1 Sam. 12.

3.4.

providence

providence of God for our protection and provision in the times of our need. For observe how divine promise speaks, *He that despiseth the gaine of oppressions, he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* Esa. 33. 15
16.

Secondly, the fruits of oppression are many and bitter unto them who practise it, I will point at some of them. 1. It fastens a blacke marke of gracelesnesse upon them who use it. That passage of the Prophet is considerable. *He is Canaan* (so I render it from the Originall with the approbation of good Interpreters) *The ballances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress.* Hos. 12. 7.

You know by what expression Ezekiel suggesteth the condition of men unregenerate, *Thy birth and thy nativity is of the Land of Canaan*: And such (saith *Hosea*) is the estate of men, of Merchants practitioners in oppression. 2. It exposeth unto the many and heavy judgements of Almighty God. *This* (saith *Iob*) *is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.* Eze. 16. 3.
Iob 27. 13

In these words, first oppressors are branded for wicked ones, as was before touched. But passing that, let us enquire what this their portion is, which they must inherit from the punishing hand of God? I will in few words propound it, from the following verses: *God will cast upon him, and not spare, he would faine flee* (or in fleeing he would flee) *out of his hand.* Ver. 22.

In his estate. *Though he heape up silver as the dust, and prepare rayment as the clay. He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.* Ver. 16, 17.

In his posterity. *If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword, and his offspring shall not be satisfied*

ver. 14, 18 *tisfied with bread He buildeth his house as a Moth, and as
 a Booth, that the Keeper maketh. In his person, both in-
 ver. 20, 21. ward terrors, and outward ruine. Terrors take hold on
 him, as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.
 The East-winde carrieth him away and he departeth, and
 as a storme hurleth him out of his place. In his credit
 ver. 23. amongst men. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall
 bise him out of his place. 3. These offenders cannot
 be concealed: For as their sinne ringeth in Gods eares,
 and calleth for vengeance. Behold (saith the Apostle
 Iam. 5 4. James) the hire of the Labourers, &c. cryeth, and the cryes
 are entred into the eares of the Lord of Sabbath. So the
 Lord himselfe undertaketh to give in evidence against
 Mal. 3. 5. them. I will come neare to you in iudgement, and I will
 be a swift witness against those that oppresse. And will it
 not be sad, when the Judge shall be a witness against
 the prisoner at the Barr. 4. At the last day, the
 sentence against the oppressors will be unspeakably
 heavy. You may guesse at it, by an Argument, a mi-
 nori ad majus, if you reason from the lesse to the grea-
 ter, from those words of our Saviour, Mat. 25. Then
 Mat. 25. shall he say to them on his left hand, Depart from me ye cur-
 41---46. sed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devill and his
 Angels, for I was hungred, and ye gave me no meat, &c.
 And these shall goe away into everlasting punishment.
 Marke my Argument (my Beloved) from this place.
 If not succouring, not supplying, not solacing, not
 supporting Gods impoverished, imprisoned, oppressed
 people will procure punishment perpetuall and unsup-
 portable, what will the condition bee of them who
 have been their cruell oppressors? The Apostle James
 Iam. 2. 13. saith, They shall have iudgement without mercy who shew
 no mercy. The Lord set these considerations home
 upon*

upon your hearts to affright from oppression.

For reprehension of 4. sorts of offenders against the *Use 2.*
truth in hand.

If God promise to be the refuge of the oppressed,
then those deserve blame, who imagine that seeking
to the Lord in times of trouble is labour in vaine.
Job bringeth in the wicked thus breathing their Athe-
sticall conceits. *What is the Almighty that we should serve* Job 21.15.
him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?
And doubtlesse many among us are of this opinion, as
their neglect and sleighting of holy prayer doth unde-
niably discover.

But (my Beloved) our present employment doth
prove that we are better principled, and our grounds
are solid and satisfying (*viz.*) 1. Gods promise. 2. Our
owne experiences. For the Lord *hath not said to the* Esa 45.19
seed of Jacob, seeke ye me in vaine. And we have
reaped such fruit of our prayers that we may say with
the Prophet *David. We sought the Lord and he heard us,*
and delivered us from all our feares. Ps 134.4

2. Much more are they worthy sharp rebuke,
whose profanenesse is so great, that they deride those
who under pressures and in dayes of dangers, give
themselves to prayer. The *Psalmist* mentions this,
as the practice of Atheists. *You have shamed the Coun-
cell of the poore, because the Lord is his Refuge.* Ps. 14.6. x
In like manner, in these times, how many doe scoffe at the
people of God, for their frequency and unwearied-
nesse in Prayer and Fasting, expecting deliverance by
such endeavours. Thus rayling *Rabshekeh* reproach-
ed *Hezekiah* and *Israel*, but the Lord accounted
his language blasphemous, as holy Story doth wit-
nesse. Esa. 37.

Let not us be discouraged in improving God our Refuge by uncessant suites, because of mens scornes and derision : but rather imitate the *Psalmist*, who upon the report of the jeares of the wicked in this kinde, *Pl. 14. 7.* in the next verse breatheth forth prayer. *O that the Salvation of Israel were come out of Sion, when the Lord bringeth backe the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoyce and Israel shall be glad.* With the change of some few words, the same suit may be seasonable for us. O that the deliverance of *England* and *Ireland* were come out of *Syon*, when the full *Salvation* of *Ireland*, and the perfect *Reformation* of *England* shall come from Heaven, then *Ireland* shall rejoyce and *England* shall be glad.

3. My Doctrine checketh them, who in wayes of Creature-confidence betake themselves unto other Refuges, and not unto the Lord *Iehovah*. Mistake me not herein I pray you, for I disswade not the use of meanes to prevent and remove trouble : but my meaning is, that God must be blessed for meanes, eyed in meanes, and at him the soule must looke above and beyond meanes, when most promising.

There are two Rocks upon which men are in danger to dash in dayes of trouble, either to tempt God by disusing meanes, or to provoke his Majesty by idolizing them : and this second sin I now reprove, as crosse-whetting upon my Text, and dangerous unto them who doe commit it. *Ier. 17. 5.* *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arme, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.*

Esa. 31. 1. *Woe unto them that goc downe to Ægypt for helpe, and stay on Horses and trust in Chariots, because they are many, and in Horse-men because they are very strong.*

We looke upon you our Parliament worthies, as the Horse-men and Chariots of *England*, we blisse you, and we blisse God for you, but we may not, we dare not depend upon you, lest at once we incense the Almighty both against you and our selves.

4. The sharpest rebuke belongs unto them, who goe downe into hell for help in dangerous times, who rather make the Divell then God their Refuge: Such I meane who betake themselves unto sinfull shifts for the procuring of their safety, when they see a storme comming. Such who will take courses contradicting their consciences, their Covenants, their engagements both to God and man, to secure their comforts, to save their own heads. How farre are these men from beleiving the truth of my Text, which tels us, that, *the Lord will be a Refuge for the oppressed, a Refuge in times of trouble.* I shall wish such persons seriously to consider the word of the Lord. *Because ye have said we have made a Covenant with death and with Hell are we at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall passe through, it shall not come unto us, for we have made lyes our Refuge, and under falshood have we hid our selves. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Iudgement will I lay to the line, and righteousnesse to the plummet, and the baile shall sweepe away the refuge of Lyes, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.*

Esa. 28. 15
17.

For *Consolation*, unto all them, unto whom God undertakes to be an helpe and shelter. *Happy is he that hath the God of Iacob for his helpe, whose hope is in the Lord his God.*

U/ſe 3.
Pl. 146. 5.

In the amplification of this Use, there are two things usefull to be enquired.

1. Who may hopefully expect helpe from Heaven.

2. What considerations concerning God their Refuge may make unto their comfort? For brevity sake I will not passe the bounds of the 145. *Psalme* in returning answer unto these two demands.

First, God will be their helpe, who enjoy him as their God. This is manifest from the 9.th. and 10.^h. verses, *Whose hope is in the Lord his God. The Lord shall raaigne for ever, even thy God.* Now to make the Lord our God, it is required that with highest estimations, most vigorous affections and utmost endeavours, we bestow our selves upon him. That in the Scripture phrase, men are said to make that their god, upon which the heart flowes forth with the highest tide or the fullest affections. Hence it is that *covetousness* is called *Idolatry*, and the *Epicures* are said to *make their bellies their gods.* Reflect therefore upon your selves most seriously and aske your hearts in the presence of the soule-searching Majesty, what you place the highest in your bosomes, for what you are resolved to make the greatest adventures: And if upon examination you finde that the Lord *Iehovah* hath the throne, the command in your breasts and lives, then doe not question your interest in his Highnesse, as your helpe and refuge.

Secondly, This *Psalme* holdeth forth foure truths concerning God, which may administer matter of much sweet support and joy unto them, whose helpe and hope he is.

ver. 6. 1. His Omnipotency expressed in the worke of Creation, *which made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that therein is.* There is much marrow in this one consideration to refresh a disconsolate spirit in these drooping times: I shall helpe you to it in five Correlaries

relatives or consequences, which naturally flow from this truth, (vid.) *That God in whom our helpe lyes made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, &c.*

1. Therefore God can easily succour and safeguard his people: As by the word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the breath of his mouth. By his word he can command deliverances for Jacob. *And by spreading forth his hands, as he that swimmeth, he bringeth downe the pride of Moab, And the fortresse of the high forts shall he bring downe, lay low and bring to the ground.* Now the motion in swimming is easie, not strong; for strong violent stroakes in the water would rather sinke then support. And therefore by this expression the Holy Ghost would manifest with what facility he can subdue the stoutest adversaries of his Church.

Ps 33 6.
Ps 44 4.
Esa. 25. 11
12.

2. Therefore the Lord can without prepared matter raise up his owne designs. As he made the world without any pre-existent principles, first he made the Chaos out of nothing: and then out of a confused heap, he framed the curious structure of the world, wherein all creatures in an admirable harmony seive each other.

This particular brought home to our concernements may be profitable. Although we looke upon our selves, as an unpolished people, to doe any great matter either in Church or Common-wealth. Although the Philosopher say, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, and we complaine of self-nothingnesse, yet faith tels the soule, that *God made the things which are now seene out of things which doe not appeare.*

Heb. 11. 3.

3. Therefore the Lord can accomplish whatsoever he undertakes without assistants, for he had neither tools

Isa. 63. 5. tooles nor co-workers, when he reared the glorious
 Fabrick of Heaven and Earth. *When there is no hel-
 per, none to uphold, then the arme of the Lord brings
 Salvation.* What though there be few, very few who
 favour the worke of Reformation, in comparision of
 the Malignant Party, who oppose our hopes and wel-
 fare, yet may we pluck up our hearts with comfort
 from this consideration, *That our helpe standeth in the
 name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.*

Pf. 124. 8.

4. Therefore God can effect his designes, notwith-
 standing the vastest distance betwixt the termes from
 which, and unto which he workes ; for in the Crea-
 tion he wrought from nothing to all things, from *the
 Earth which was without forme and void*, unto the
 perfecting of the world, in which worke nothing is
 defective, nothing redundant. We looke at a settled
 peace with perfect Reformation, as a great, great way
 off, espying millions of impediments, difficulties and
 oppositions in the way on this side it : yet this medita-
 tion may encourage.

Gen. 1. 31.
 & 2. 1.

5 Therefore the Lord can dispatch his mighty Acts
 speedily, *For in six dayes he created the Heaven and the
 Earth, with all the host of them.*

2. His Fidelity, *who keepeth truth for ever*, ver. 6.
 Our God in whom our helpe is, is a Covenant keep-
 ing God. Had the words runne thus, who dealeth
 with people according to their deserts for ever,
 then our hearts might have fainted in us, and our
 hopes have perished for ever. But seeing his Ma-
 jesty hath bound himselfe to keepe truth, the
 truth of the Promises of his free grace, this consi-
 deration may hold up heart and hope together. When

Mic. 7. 20.

Satan and our owne consciences cast in sad discouragements

ments, yet we may animate our selves by the words of the Church unto her God. *Thou wilt performe the truth unto Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworne unto our Fathers from the dayes of old.*

3. The variety of Offices which the Lord undertakes in the behalfe of his people, according to their severall necessities. The particulars specified in the Psalmes I shall only name, without interpretation or enlargement. *He executeth judgement for the oppressed, giveth food to the hungry, the Lord looseth the prisoners. The Lord openeth the eyes of the blinde, the Lord raiseth them that are bowed downe; the Lord loveth the righteous, the Lord preserveth the stranger, he relieveth the fatherlesse and widow, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.* The summe of all these expressions amounts to thus much. That the providences of the Almighty are alwayes sweetly and seasonably exercised for his people, and against their wicked oppressours.

4. The perpetuity of his government. *The Lord shall reigne for ever, even thy God ô Syon unto all generations,* ver. 10. Beloved we know that things went very ill with *Israel*, when there arose up a new King over *Egypt* which knew not Ioseph. And certainly, if the busineses of the world, should be transacted by any other supreme authority, then of our God the Lord Almighty, then might our condition be deplorable and miserable. But this is no small comfort unto us, that the God of *Israel* is the God of *England*, that his Kingdome still doth and ever shall rule over all Kings, Commanders, creatures and concernements whatsoever. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, Thy God ô Syon reigneth unto all generations, praise yee the Lord.*

v. 7, 8, 9.

Exo. 1. 5.

Pl. 97. 1.

Use 4.

The last Use, the Use of Exhortation followes, which is to be divided into various branches. In the prosecution whereof I shall presse 5. duties which belong unto all without exception, and afterwards shall make bold to direct one exhortation by way of humble Petition unto the worthy members of the high and Honourable Court of Parliament.

Exhortation 1. To returne praise unto the Lord our Refuge, for that defence and those deliverances which hitherto we have had in him. Nationall and personall experiences should be perused, and for all the God of our salvation should be honoured. If we of this Kingdome cast backe our thoughts unto late providences, wee shall see cause to breake forth in the words of the Psalmist. *The Lord remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

His Majesty commandeth and expecteth glory. *I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorifie me.* Yea he doth abundantly deserve it, for all that patience, wisdom, goodnesse, power and truth expressed upon us in our continued peace and safety. Therefore I pray you, *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* And how well may it become us every one in particular to resolve with *David. I will sing of thy power, yea I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning, for thou hast bin my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee o my strength will I sing, for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*

This debt I believe will readily be acknowledged, but the question will be, how must it be payed? Praises are due debt, but how must they be tendered?

1. My answer is at hand, and it shall be but short.
 1. Gods speciall providence must be observed and proclaimed. *It shall come to passe in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow and from thy feares, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve. That thou shouldst take up this Proverb, &c. How hath the oppressour ceased, the Lord hath broken the staffe of the wicked.* Noble Senatours, we honour you as our instrumentall Saviours in a great degree, and God forbid, but we should study to requite your labours and adventures for the Kingdomes welfare. Yet we must looke beyond you, and you beyond your selves in admiring the most high God, in what hath beene already wrought unto our admiration.

Ia. 14.3,4

2. Our religious voves must be performed. What our voves were in the dayes of our feare and deepe danger our consciences will report, I onely presse the payment of this debt. *Offer to God thanksgiving and pay thy voves unto the most High. Praise waiteth for thee in Syon, and unto thee shall the Vow bee performed.*

Ps. 50. 14.

Ps. 65. 2.

3. Our obedience in all the branches of it should be bettered. Practicall praises are the most acceptable. Our lives must witness the gratitude of our hearts: In this case I cannot propound a better paterne for your imitation then *David*, who upon enquiry, what thank-offering should be tendered, breakes forth into this Resolution. *I will walke before the Lord in the Land of the living.* Wherein three things are observable and imitable.

Ps. 116. 6.

1. His purpose to make a progresse, *I will walke.*

2. The sincerity of his course, *Before the Lord (q. d.)*

I will take every step, undertake every duty, as under Gods pure and piercing eye. All acts of holiness and righteousness shall be discharged as before him.

3. The constancy of this care, *In the land of the living. (q. d.)* so long as I live. Such a present of praise (Beloved) would please the Lord better than an Oxe or Bullock (as the Psalmist hath it) *that hath both horns and hooves.*

4. Gods publick worship should zealously be promoted. This was the first thing determined in Moses his Song, upon the unexpected continuance of Israels safety. *The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation, he is my rocke and I will prepare him an habitation.* It concerns us all upon the recording of our personall and National Deliverances, from oppressions either felt or feared, to lay forth our utmost strengths of authority, opportunity, interests and ability, both to purge and settle the holy worship of God, that his Majesty may enjoy a fixed habitation with content and glory amongst us.

Exhortation 2. To make sure our title unto God, as our peculiar refuge and protection, that we may not be reputed intruders, when we shall have occasion to throng into him for shelter in tempestuous weather. *Davids* suit may be seasonable for us all to joyne in. *Pl. 71. 3.* *Be thou my strong habitation, whercunto I may continually resort.*

To quicken your care in this kind, many things might be mentioned. 1. Our dangers are great, whether we consider our owne deservings from God, or the designs and indeavours of *Syons* enemies against our peace and welfare.

2. The insufficiency of all Creature succours and shelters,

shelters, how faire and how promising soever. *There is no King saved by the multitude of an host, a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vaine thing for safety, neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*

Pf. 33. 16,
17.

3. The Al sufficiency that there is in the Lord in every kinde to bestead every endangered soule, which enjoyeth him, as was fully discovered in the illustration of this Point now in prosecution.

More Arguments I shall not need to use to move your looking after the Lord, that he may be your Refuge when ruine is ready to rush in upon you. But to guide your course that you may possesse God, as your place of Defence, I will commend unto you 3. short Directions.

1. Labour by the knowledge and contemplation of Gods glorious, incomparable beauties, to let forth floods of the strongest love upon him. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him, I will set him on high, because he hath knowne my name.*

Pf. 91. 14.

2. Endeavour from activity of pure love to his Majesty, more to awe your hearts, with the feare of his frowne, then of any, then of all combined oppositions which doe or can surround you. *Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people saith a confederacy, neither feare ye their feare, nor be afraid. Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himselfe, and let him be your feare, and let him be your dread: And he shall be for a Sanctuary.*

Ef. 8. 12,
13, 14.

3. Seeke to be enriched with that righteousnesse which is truly Evangelicall. For Salomon assures us, *that the name of the Lord is a strong Tower, and that*

Pro 18. 10

the righteous runneth into it and is safe (or set aloft.)
 Now if you aske me, who are righteous according to the Gospels construction ?

Luk. 1. 6.

I returne answer, from the description given of *Zachary and Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandements and Ordinances of the Lord blamelesse.* From which testimoniall three notes of Gospell-righteousnesse may be suggested.

1. The rule regulating their course, is that which *God hath commanded and ordained.*

2. The latitude of their obedience, which in their ayme and endeavours is as large, as Law divine. They mind *Commandements and Ordinances, yea all Commandements and Ordinances.*

3. The continuation of this course. They did not only now and then take a turne in the way of obedience, but they were persons *walking*, such who held on in obedientiall references unto God.

In these things, I beseech you, bestow your best houres and abilities, even as you doe desire, that the *Lord Iehovah may be your Refuge in the times of trouble, in the seasons of distresse.*

Exhortation 3. To improve our propriety in God (having made him our Refuge) for safety in stormy and perillous times. I should not need to perswade this practice, if self-love was rightly ordered in us, seeing our selves, both greatly need the Almighty, and might reape abundant fruit by making improvement of him. The unreasonable creatures, by a naturall instinct, betake themselves unto places of defence, when dangers doe threaten them.

Pl. 104. 18

The high hills are a refuge for the wilde Goates, and the Rockes for the Conyes. We

We know by observation, that the little Bees will hast to their Hives, and the Pigeons will flock to their holes, when the storme is rising. I will forbear to enlarge this Exhortation, either by Gods Precepts and Promises, or by the practises and experiences of his people, taking this course in all ages.

This unto me is a commanding Argument, that we shall in a great degree take Gods name and excellencies in vaine, if we labour not to live upon them by a fruitfull improvement, and so consequently, we shall at once, both displease and dishonour God, and damnisie and endanger our selves.

If you demand, how you should make your use of God, as your incomparable Refuge? I shall direct you unto *David* for an Answer, 1. *Trust in him at all times,* Ps. 62. 8.
ye people, 2. *Poure out your heart before him, God is a Refuge for us.* Selah.

First, by true trust in God, we betake our selves unto him as a Castle of Defence. The words immediately following my Text declare thus much. *And* Ps. 9. 10.
they that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou Lord hast not forsaken them who seeke thee. Such who apprehend sure safety to be had in God, they will seeke him, by placing their affiance in him. The practice of *David* makes this more apparant: for he by way of appropriation, speaking thus of God, *My Fortresse, my high Tower and my Deliverer, my Shield* Ps. 144. 2.
(he addeth) and in whom I trust. As by diffidence the soule keepes at a distance from God, so by confidence we draw nigh unto him.

Now to encourage your fiduciall approaches unto God, I will only mention 3. things, which your selves must enlarge and apply unto your own hearts seriously.

1. Consider the irrefutable and immutable strength of the Lord. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*

Esa 26. 4.

Heb. 6. 17
18.Pl. 56. 10,
11.

2. Acquaint your selves with precious Promises, whereby his Majesty desires to draw the disconsolate soule unto him. *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heyres of Promise the immutability of his Counsell, confirmed it by oath, that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us. In the Lord (saith David) I will praise his word, in the Lord I will praise his word, in the Lord I have put my trust.*

2 Sam. 22.
1, 2.

3. Review and husband your experiences of Gods protecting providence in times past. *In the day when God had delivered David from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, thus he speaks, The Lord is my Rocke and my Fortresse, and my Deliverer. The God of my Rocke, in him I will trust, &c.*

Pl. 142. 5,
6.

Secondly, by holy Prayer we hast unto God for helpe in times of trouble *I cryed unto the Lord (saith David) I said thou art my Refuge, Attend unto my cry, Deliver me from my Persecutors.* Here for the guidance of your prayers, you may take notice of these briefe Directions.

Esa. 37. 5.

1. Your cries must be cordiall, and not only vocall. *Poure out your hearts before him. And lift up a Prayer (saith Hezekiah) It will not be sufficient to say a Prayer (as the world is wont to expresse it) or to word it before the Lord, but we should rather heart it before God in holy prayer, that we may receive help from him in times of need.*

2. Your hearts must behave themselves humbly before

fore the throne of grace, when you petition deliverance from the devouring oppressours. *Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine care to beare. To judge the fatherlesse and the oppressed, that the man of the Earth may no more oppresse.* Pl. 10. 17, 18.

3. The soule should have sincere references, to the glory of God, in seeking selfe-safety. Thus *David* desiring deliverance from many mighty Persecutors, he adds. *Bring my soule out of prison, that I may praise thy Name.* Pl. 142. 6, 7.

4. Plead the wickednesse of them who doe oppresse and would devoure, *They gather themselves together against the soule of the righteous, and condemne the innocent bloud, but the Lord is my Defence and my God is the Rocke of my Refuge, and he shall bring upon them their owne iniquity, and shall cut them off in their owne wickednesse, yea the Lord our God shall cut them off.* Pl. 94. 21, 22, 23.

5. Wait upon God unweariedly and resolve to continue praying, whatsoever delayes, checks, or oppositions may encounter you. *In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, untill these calamities be overpast.* Pl. 57. 1.

Because of his strength I will wait upon thee, for God is my Defence. And certainly if we rightly consider Pl. 59. 9.

1. Our distance from God in worth and degree. 2. Our dependance upon him, together with our undone condition if he desert us, we shall tarry the Lords leisure, attending upon his Majesty, for the answer of our supplications, when besieged with dangers on every side.

Exhortation 4. To cast off all cowardly feares of

our oppressours, how potent, politick and prevailing
 soever they be. The people of God have frequently
 gathered courage from this consideration. Truly my
 soule waiteth upon God, from him commeth my saluati-
 on, He only is my Rooke and my Salvation, he is my
 defence I shall not be greatly moved. How long will yee
 imagine mischief against a man, ye shall be staine all of
 you, as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering
 fence.

God is our Refuge and strength, a very present helpe
 in trouble. Therefore will not we feare though the Earth
 be removed, and though the Mountaines be carried in-
 to the midst of the Sea, though the waters thereof roare
 and be troubled, though the Mountaines shake with the
 swelling therof, &c. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the
 God of Jacob is our Refuge. Selah.

Through want of time, I dare not adventure upon
 the amplification of this Use. Therefore I crave leave
 for your helpe and heartening against the feare of Op-
 pressours, to improve onely one Scripture, which I
 conceive very pertinent and profitable. I, even I am
 he that comforteth you, who art thou that thou shouldest
 be affraid of a man that shall dye, and of the son of man
 which shall be made as grasse, and forgettest the Lord
 thy maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and
 laid the foundations of the Earth, and hast feared conti-
 nually every day because of the fury of the Oppressour,
 as if he were ready to destroy, and where is the fury of the
 Oppressour, &c.

In these words, the Lord by his Prophet checking
 and chiding his timorous people, doth counsell them
 to seeke the conquest of their dismaying feares, by
 comparing himselfe their God, with their furious op-
 pressours.

1. Though they be our oppressours, yet his Majesty is our comforter. And is not the God of all consolations more able to cheare us, then all men are to dishearten us:

2. They in their best strength are but dying men and withering grasse ; but he is the Almighty, the all-making God, whose omnipotency and independency is sufficiently discovered by stretching forth the Heavens, and by laying firm the foundations of the Earth. And our necessities cannot possibly put him upon a more difficult service for our Deliverance.

3. Although they seeme ready to destroy, as an Army at hand to devoure : yet remember that your Saviour is the *Lord of Hosts*, who commands and orders ver. 15. all Martiall forces in the world, who can sound a retreat and call them off by one word in a moment. When we speake of Armies on Land, and strength on the Seas prepared against us ; What though Papists, Atheists and Divels were in combination to destroy us, yet the *Generalissimo* who manageth all forces and maketh all motions, is the Lord of Hosts our maker, our comforter.

4. If our trembling, misgiving hearts shall object the ruines wrought in *Ireland*, as occasions to increase dejecting fears: we should repell them, by reminding experiences of Gods former famous acts for his servants safety, when in much deeper danger, *I am the* ver. 15.
Lord thy God who divided the Sea, whose waves roared. That was *Israels* experience which is on record in holy Writ for our encouragement. We may add from Gods dispensations in this Kingdome. Who in the yeare *Eighty-Eight* sunke and scattered the Spanish Navy called *invincible*? Who broke the necke of the
 H 2 Popish

Popish powder-plot, and brought to light those under ground workings of the traitorous, bloody Papists: And who lately composed the dangerous differences betwixt *England* and *Scotland*, which threatened the desolation of both Kingdomes? Remember this God is your Refuge, and therefore be of good courage and feare not the fury of the oppressours, though in appearance ready to destroy.

Exhortation 5. To move us all to make use of our interest in God, in the behalfe of our oppressed Brethren. You know that we are bound to love our Neighbours as our selves, and to pray for them as for our selves: therefore my Inference is not forced, but naturall.

I shall be very short (as straights of time command) in this Exhortation, wherein I have bleeding, oppressed *Ireland* principally in my thoughts, and the rather because the sad troubles of our Country-men and Brethren there, is one chiefe occasion of our Congregating thus solemnely to seeke our God this Day.

Good *Nebemiah* may be propounded as an excellent patterne both to quicken and to direct this duty. He having intelligence, that the Iewes were in great affliction and reproach, and that the wall of *Ierusalem* also was broken downe, and the gates thereof burnt with fire. *Neb. 1. 4.* *It came to passe* (saith he) *when I heard these words, that I sat downe and wept and mourned certain Dayes, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven.* This holy man was warne in worldly respects, being well placed and respected in the Court of a great King, he was in the Palace of a Prince in prosperity, at a great distance from danger, though *Ierusalem* was distressed, yet you see his strong affect ons, you reade his

his religious practice, in both which we are bound to make imitation. *Remember them that are in bonds* Heb. 13. 3. (saith the Apstle) *as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being your selves also in the body.* In which words our duty is both strongly urged and well guided. You must remember them, *as being your selves in the body* (q. d.) because you are fellow-members with them in the same mysticall body (as some interpret) or (as others judge) seeing your selves are yet in the body, natures frame not being yet dissolved, you your selves are exposed to the like sufferings, and therefore should Christianly remember them. But will a sleighty, wordy minding of them be sufficient? No, (saith our Apostle) you must feelingly minde them, as though your selves personally shared in their sufferings, or as your selves would desire to be remembred if in their sad condition.

This imployment is excellently perswaded by king *David* in the 122. Psalme. 1. Because hereby we shall at once, both evidence our spirituall love and interest our selves in Gods Promise to undertake our personall welfare. *Pray for the peace of Ierusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* 2. By his owne practice. For this was his request in reference to *Ierusalem.* *Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy Palaces.* 3. Because of our neare relation unto them, whose condition calleth for our prayers. *For my Brethren and companions sakes, I will now say peace be within thee.* 4. Seeing the Religion and worship of God is there professed and practiced. *Because of the house of the Lord my God I will seeke thy good.* How tully all these Arguments reach us in reference unto distra-

Pl. 122. 6.

ver. 7.

ver. 8.

ver. 9.

cted, distressed *Ireland*, I humbly referre it to your considerations.

But you will say unto me, wherefore doe you thus perswade us? Doe you not see we are here with you to pray for *Ireland*. And is there not a monthly Fast appointed, that prayers may be continued? All this I thankfully acknowledge, both blessing God for this mercy, and honouring the Kings Majesty, with the Honourable Court of Parliament, for their religious care herein: Yet it is my duty to lay the weight of Scripture authority upon your consciences, that you may conscientiously and affectionately bestow your selves in secret daily, as in publick weekly, monthly in prayers for your oppressed Brethren.

But is this all that you have to say? I answer. No. There are two duties to be added unto our prayers, without the addition whereof, our prayers for *Ireland*, will be lesse successfull for it, and lesse comfortable to our selves. 1. We must repently returne unto the Lord from the evill of our wayes. Both *Nehe-miab* and *Daniell* tooke this course, when they sought the Lord for *Israel*. The Lord directed *Iobs* friends, to crave his prayers, promising to accept him in their behalfe. And the Prophet *Joel* calls for heart humiliation and conversion, before he directs this supplication. Spare thy people o Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God. The Reason whereby *Hezekiah* moves his people to repent is remarkeable. For if ye turne againe unto the Lord, your brethren shall find compassion.

2. We must contribute our best assistance in all kinds, according as God gives power and opportunity, for their

their reliefe and deliverance. Thus did *Nehemiah* in trading every Talent with which divine providence had trusted him, for *Ierusalem*'s welfare: He improves his favour with the King, and employes authority received by commission from him for the common good; he worketh, watcheth, warreth, commandeth, encourageth, threatneth, punisheth, &c. that he might be serviceable. In like manner should we for *Ireland*, consult, command, contribute, underwrite, encourage others or adventure our selves, according to our severall stations and abilities, as the Lord shall be pleased to goe before us by his leading providence. And truely, there is no more sincerity of heart in our suits, then there are suitable endeavours in our lives, to effect and accomplish what we pray for.

From these generall exhortations which concerne all, I now proceed unto that, which more peculiarly appertaineth unto you Right Honorable, whose servant I am, in my present employment. Give your servant leave I pray you, to perswade, to petition your imitation of God, in becomming a *Refuge to his oppressed people in the times of trouble*. The Lord is a Refuge both offensive and defensive, offensive unto the oppressors, defensive unto the oppressed. And it will be your honour, in both to be imitators of him.

From God our Tower and Fortresse, our Castle of defence, there are battering Canons discharged, thunder and lightning scattered, terrible judgments (I meane) denounced against oppressors. The Lord undertaking the prosperity and establishment of his people, addeth, *And I will punish all* Ier. 30. 30.
that.

that oppresse them. And of Christ this was prophetically foretold. *He shall breake in peeces the oppressors.* Right Honourable, I presse not rigor, but righteousness. Neither doe I take upon my selfe, the boldnesse in personall cases to counsell you. God hath made you wise, and my prayer is, that your zeale and courage may be answerable. But my zeale for Gods glory and your honour, makes me bold to tell you, that there are many, who reproachfully say, *You shew your teeth, but you doe not bite.* For my part, I shall only reade to you, two quotations out of sacred Scripture, the one suggests the comfort of doing judgement, the other intimates the danger of neglecting it. *I have done justice and judgement, leave me not to mine oppressors. Be surety for thy servant for good, let not the proud oppresse me. Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let goe out of thy hand, a man whom I appointed to utter destruction: therefore thy life shall goe for his life.*

Psal. 119.
121, 122.

1 Kin. 20.
42.

But my principall arrand is to request you, to labour to be like your God, in becomming a covert unto us from the face of the spoylers. From my Text I presse Gods owne practice. *The Lord executeth righteousness and judgement for all that are oppressed. He strengthneth the spoyled against the strong* And this was prophecied concerning Christs care of his people *No oppressor shall passe through them any more.* Yea this is reported in the commendation of the Lord Jesus, that while as man he abode on Earth, *He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed.*

Esa. 16.4.

Pf. 102.6.
Amos 5.9

Zach 9.8.

Act. 10.38

These 4. Considerations following may serve further and more forcibly to set on my present suite.

1. The fruits of oppression upon particular persons oppressed are very grievous. Surely (saith Salomon) *oppression maketh a wise man mad.* Into what extremities and confusions are many at this day apt to runne out, because bitten, or rather torne with the teeth of Prelaticall oppressours. And I am confident that the likeliest way to heale our breaches, and to compose our differences, is the removal of our oppressions. And Salomon thus againe expresseth himselte. *I considered all the oppressions that are done under the Sunne, and behold the teares of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter, and on the side of their oppressours there was power, but there was no Comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.* Many in this Kingdome have dyed many deaths under the yron hands of heavy oppressours, and truely many thousands of us shall dye many thousand times more, except you relieve us.

Ecc1.7.7.

Ecc1.4.1,2

2. The danger of the Kingdome is no lesse then desolation, except you our State Physitons apply timely plaisters to heale our breaches, by easing us of our oppressions. For thus hath the Lord of Hosts said. *Hew yee downe Trees, and cast a Mount against Jerusalem, this is the City to be visited, she is wholly oppression in the midst of her.* The people of the Land have used oppression, have exercised robbery, and have vexed the poore and needy, yea they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, &c. but I found none. Therefore have I powred out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath.

Jer.6.6.

Ezek.22.
29,30,32.

3. Those draw downe the wrath of God upon their

owne heads, who having power in their hands, continue carelesse in endeavouring the reliefe of the oppressed. *O house of David, thus saith the Lord. Deliver him that is spoyled out of the hand of the Oppressour, lest my fury goe out like fire, and burne that none can quench it.*

4. By labours of this kinde, you shall promote the honour and prosperity both of our King and this Kingdome. *Deliver the spoyled out of the hand of the oppressour, &c. For if ye doe this thing, indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house, Kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in Chariots and on horses, he and his Servants.*

The equity of this Exhortation I am confident will be confessed : but enquiry may be made, What I meane by the oppressions, from which the Parliament should deliver us.

I answer, we groane and lye grovelling under many oppressing Grievances, both in the Church and Common-wealth, yet considering my calling, it will not so well become me, to particularize our civill presures, neither need I bestow any words that way, seeing your selves have given us abundant cause to acknowledge that you have taken exact notice of them. But seeing loades which are laid upon mens consciences are most proper for me to complaine of, suffer me, I pray you, feelingly and faithfully to spread some of them before you.

1. Subscription urged upon all Graduates in both Universities, and upon all men entering into the Ministry is an heavy oppression. (Mistake me not, for I meane not Subscription according to the Statute of the 13. of Queene *Elizabeth*, which is to those Articles

ticles which onely concerne the Confession of the true Faith, and the Doctrin of the Sacraments; but I intend the Subscription commonly called and knowne by the name of the *Bishops Subscription.*) By reason hereof, many young men of promising parts and well ripened hopes, are driven from the study of Divinity, from the worke of the Ministry, because not able to get over this block. And most in the Universities, at least those who take the degree of Bachelours of Arts, are necessitated to subscribe, themselves know not to what, and so through ignorance miserably ensnare their owne consciences, as many sad experiences witnessse.

2. The pressing of the old Ceremonies in divine Administrations upon pain of Suspension, Silencing, Deprivation and Excommunication. How many deare unto God are hereby deprived of some sacred Ordinances? How many able Ministers of the Gospell have hereupon lost both liberty and livings, and their Families exposed to woefull penury? How many Congregations have beene deprived of their painfull Pastours? How many of our deare Country-men both Preachers and others, have within few yeares last past, been compelled to leave this Kingdome the place of their nativity. And certainly the continuing of this Grievance is the more inexcusable, because the most moderate men who plead for these Ceremonies, hold them things indifferent, and say they are, *tolerabiles ineptie.*

3. Conniving at an ignorant, idle, erroneous, scandalous Ministry. Under this head I complaine of foure sorts of Clergy-men (commonly so called) being heavy burthens to the Church of Christ.

1. Blind Seers, who know not Heaven-way, dumb dogs which cannot barke.

2. Idle droanes, who either preach not at all, or very seldome, or fruitlesly without care and study.

3. Mis-guiding Guides. Men Schismaticall and Hereticall, who set poyson instead of wholesome food before their people.

4. Men scandalous, who plucke downe more with their foule hands, then they build up with their faire tongues. Under this head I may place Non-residency, which breeds and feeds a Ministry, ignorant, idle, erroneous and licentious.

4. The fearefull abuse of that high Ordinance of God, a *Sacred Oath*, amongst all rankes and conditions of people in the Kingdome. In the Universities, the Oath of *Matriculation* to observe the Statutes of the Vniversity, which not one of many hundreds ever know. The Oathes of severall Officers both in Church and Common-wealth, which although I cannot specifye, yet it is my hearty request that they may be perused, to prevent the profanation of Gods name, and the ensnaring of many thousand soules.

5. In regard of Church-censures. The dreadfull sentence of Excommunication is often passed and executed upon persons for small offences, yea for acts not evill, and (which is most horrible) for doing that which both God and the necessities of their own soules require. It is a burthen intollerable, that men should be cast out of the Congregation of Gods people, banished from his publick worship, and delivered up to Satan for non-appearance at the Cathedrall Court, for buying, selling, or working on an idle holy-day, yea

for

for going out of their owne Parishes to heare a Sermon or repeating Sermons and praying with some Neighbours in their owne Families.

And on the other hand, it is no small Grievance, both to godly Ministers and their people, that those who are the true Officers of Christ in his Church, have not authority to keepe them who are palpably ignorant and notoriously, scandalously profane, from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

6. The opposition made against the power of Religion, is a grievous oppression. When such who are forwarder in holy courses then others, are derided and discouraged by reproachfull names, yea molested and persecuted for frequenting the Ordinances of grace, whither publike or private, for the building up of their soules in Christ.

And I humbly commend this to your consideration, whither the Prelaticall Government hath not bin the root of all, or (at least) of almost all these oppressions. For my part, I professe that I cannot expect a compleat deliverance from these, and other like oppressions, but by the extirpation of that frame.

Right Honourable, you have done much, yea very much for our ease already, we are sensible that many heavy burthens are taken off our backs, which crushed us grievously heretofore: and for that reliefe which we have received we blesse God, we honour our King and you. And I now heartily intreat and encourage the perfecting of that which you have so worthily begun. When *Syon* is set up in beauty, adorned and strengthened with her watch-Towers and Officers, then *God will be knowne in her Palaces for a Refuge.*

Great joyes have bin raised in our hearts by under-

ff. 48. 3.

standing from you, your intentions to call an Assembly of Divines, to consult with God concerning Church occasions, and we will daily pray for the directing and perfecting thereof, unto Gods honour and this Kingdomes welfare through Jesus Christ. But I beseech you give me leave in the name of many to request your great care in the choice of men most meet for that great worke. And for this end, I humbly commend 3. qualifications to be minded in the men to be elected. Let them be,

This was preached before the choyce of men for the Assembly.

1. Men of approved piety, whose hearts are awed with Gods feare, and unmoveably bent to advance his glory.

2. Scripture men, Men well acquainted with the records of Heaven, by the authority wherof, all doubts and differences should be determined.

3. Men not biassed with selfish partiality. Such who may come to the Consultation as white paper, capable of those impressions, which the evidence and power of truth shall imprint.

Sound Doctrine maintained, pure Worship exercised, right Discipline erected and established will conduce greatly to *Englands* peace and prosperity. *When the Lord shall have washed away the filthinesse of the daughters of Syon, &c. The Lord shall create upon every dwelling place of Mount Syon, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud and smoake by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a Defence.*

Esa 4. 4, 5.

FINIS.





Die Mercurij 29. Junij, 1642.

IT is this day Ordered by the Commons now assembled in Parliament, That *M. Ash* and *M. Hampden* shall returne thanks to *M. Ash* for the good paines he took in the Sermon he preach'd the last Fast day but two at the intreaty of the said Commons, and that he be desired to print his Sermon, And that no man presume to print it, but such as hee shall appoint, till the House shall take further Order.

H. Elsyng. Cler. Parl. D. Com.

I appoint *Edward Brewster* and *Iohn Burroughs*
to print my Sermon. *Simeon Ash.*

Self-Surrender unto God,
Opened and applyed,
IN
A SERMON

Preached before

The Honourable House of
COMMONS,

At Margarets, Westminster, at their late solemn
Fast, February 23. 1647.

BY

SIMEON ASHE, Preacher of Gods Word
at Michael Bassingshaw, London.

I COR. 6. 19. Yee are not your owne.

ROM. 12. 1. 2. I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that yee present your selves a living Sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world, but be yee transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove, what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

LUKE 15. 17, 18, 19. And when he came to himselfe, he said, I will arise and goe to my father, and will say unto him, Father, make me as one of thy hired servants.

LONDON.

Printed for E. Brewster, and are to be sold at her
shop on Ludgate-hill at the signe of the
Bible neare Fleet-bridge.

A SERMON

Preached at the House of

St. Andrew, Westminster, on the

24th of February, 1747.

By

John Tillotson, D.D. Bishop of Exeter.

London, Printed by J. Sturges, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church-yard, in the Year 1747.

LONDON.

Printed by J. Sturges, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church-yard, in the Year 1747.



T O

The Honourable House of Com-
mons Assembled in Parliament.

When your Order commanded me to preach before you, on the day of your solemne Humiliation, Feb. 23. I conceived no subject more necessary, or more seasonable, for my Sermon, then this doctrine of self-surrender unto God; for as the Lord deserves much more then your All; so the successe of all your services lies in his blessing; and the comfort of all your labours, ariseth from your sincere respects unto his Majesty through Christ. All is lost to your own soules, (though others receive benefit by you) if you doe not really intend God in your adventures and undertakings. By setting up the most High in your hearts and thoughts, dulnesse, delays, cowardlinesse, unfaithfulnesse, despondency, and wearinesse in his work will be prevented: By keeping the Lord in your eyes and aimes, love would be enlarged, zeale enflamed, diligence doubled, uprightnesse maintained, courage increased, and refreshings multiplied. And neglect of this duty cannot proceed from want of arguments to move it, for every holy ordinance which you use, and every ordinary providence, which reacheth you, doth speak strong reasons to perswade the giving of
your

The Epistle Dedicatory.

your selves unto the Lord. Every Fast you keep, every Sermon you heare, and every prayer you make, should work you more fully towards God; Honor & dishonour, safety and dangers, successe and disappointments in your Negotiations, should carry you to God. Your owne Orders, calling for Sermons, approving them, and appointing them to be printed, will rise up in judgement against you, if you do not really devote your selves unto the Lord.

[O therefore let not Gods words and works, his frowns and smiles, be lost upon your soules; Winter and Summer showers and Sun-shine, are not in vaine to the sencelesse plants and the dull earth, for they, upon the receipt hereof, give forth their strength, to the use of man. And shall men, wise men, men under various, glorious administrations, refuse to make over themselves unto their God, in all they are, and have received from him? O God forbid.

Right Honourable, The imploying, the improving of every Mans All for the Lord God, is the duty which I preached to you, and now publish to the world, according to your command, under your protection. That the comfort of this Practice may fill your owne hearts, and that the fruit hereof may spread to the glory of God through the thanksgivings of his people, shall be the prayer of

Your faithfull, though
unworthy Servant,

SIMEON ASHE



A
SERMON

Preached before

The Honourable House of
COMMONS,

At their Monthly Fast, on Wednesday, the 23.
of February, 1647.

2 CHRON. 30.8.

Yeeld your selves unto the Lord.



His Text, as I have read it, is rather a paraphrase, or an Interpretation, than the Translation of the Originall. The genuine construction of the Hebrew phrase, is, *Give yee the hand unto Jehovah.*

I finde a four-fold glosse given upon the Text in reference unto the Originall expression. First, some conceive that it implyes a professed dependance upon the Almighty, and requires a prayerfull application

77-127

Date manus.

*Prostrati Dei
opem & auxili-
um implorate ut
vos misericordia
suâ erigat. Iun.
& Tremol.*

to his Majesty, for succours according to present necessities. Deodate hath this note upon the words. *Call upon him for mercy*: And there are parallell Scriptures to justifie this sence, wherein the exercise of prayer is thus expressed, as *Job. 11. 13. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him.* And *Esa. 1. 15. When you spread forth your hands, when you make many prayers.* This interpretation therefore would be safe, and the observation thence would be seasonable (*viz.*) That in stormy, troublesome times, people should betake themselves unto God by prayer.

Cedite manum in signum obedientia (q. d.) paret. Varabl. Subjicite vos Iehova prestantes obedientiam, & c. Piscator.

Secondly, others judge, that the phrase bespeakes obedientiall subjection to Gods commands and government; and they alledge that place of Scripture, to make out this interpretation, where the obedience of *Salomons* subjects unto him, as their King and Sovereigne, is declared, by the selfe-same words, *1 Chron. 29. 24. All the Princes and the mighty men, and all the sonnes likewise of King David, submitted themselves (or gave the hand) unto Salomon the King.*

In signum fœderis. Eman. Sa.

Thirdly, some imagine, that a fœderall obligation, added unto an obedientiall resolution, is here intended. Their reason is, because giving the hand is frequently spoken of in the Old Testament, as a signe of Covenant making: As the Lord upbraiding and threatning *Pharoah* for his falshood, notwithstanding severall engagements, speaketh in this manner; *Seeing hee despised the Oath, in breaking the Covenant (when hee had given the hand) and hath done all these things, he shall not escape.* And *Salomon* in the Book of *Proverbs* thus speaketh of obligation by Suretiship, *Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties.* From this notion I might take occasion to discourse of self-ingaging unto God, both in respect of its profitableness, and our call to it, as also the right managing thereof, to our owne advantage.

Ezck. 17. 18.

Pro. 22. 26. & 6. 1.

4. There is yet another truth hinted to us by this expression, *Give the hand to the Lord.* The 70. render it thus, *Give glory to the Lord*, directing the people to determine all duties, all obedientiall endeavours in God, making his honour the highest and last end of all their services whatsoever. And doubtlesse, such are the motions of every sanctified soule, because they arise from

*Give the hand to the Lord
xviii.*

from Gods grace, therefore they are referred to his glory ; For as the Naturallists speak concerning water, that it may be raised to a Cisterne so high as the Fountaine was from whence it fell: In like manner, men under the powerfull principle of saving grace, are carried on in their course, till they center in God. The Apostle *Paul* told the *Philippians*, that his earnest heart-workings were, that the Lord might *be magnified by him, whether by life or death.* And doubtlesse these are the breathings of every gracious soule, because we are commanded to doe *all to the glory of God.*

Intantum ascendit in quantum descendit.

Phil. 1.20.

1 Cor. 10. 31.

But passing over thus briefly the severall apprehensions of learned Expositors, let us take the words as we finde them in our Translation, *Yeeld your selves unto the Lord.* This Text calls for a sacred surrender of our selves to God.

Wherein we may consider :

1. The gift, *Your selves.*
2. The givers, *Yee your selves.*
3. The receiver, *Jehovah the Lord.*

There is need of warinesse, lest according to this division of the Text, the sence thereof should be misapprehended and misapplied; therefore let these Cautions be premised, before I pitch upon the Doctrine hence to be handled.

First, this Text doth not presuppose that we are our owne to dispose of, as our selves please ; for the Psalmist assures us, that *the whole world is the Lords, and all that dwell therein,* therefore this gift is not in the givers possession to doe with it as hee lists:

Cautions.

Psal. 24. 1.

Secondly, neither is it intimated in these words, That wee have ability in our selves, to make a surrender of our selves unto God : For the Receiver (God Almighty.) enables his servants to make tender of that which he deserves and accepts:

The Holy Ghost reporting the successe of this advice given in the Text, tells us, *In Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to doe the commandment.*

2 Ch 0. 30. 10.

Thirdly, nor is it implied in this phrase of speech, that men may by any forcible resistance gaine-say and disappoint God in his eternall purpose, to make improvement of them for himselfe ; for the giver hath not thus the gift in his own power:

Psal. 31. 17.

True it is, that the commands and tenders of God are disobeyed and sleighted by *Mans* stubbornesse: In which sense the Lord complaines, *My people would not hearken to my voyce, and Israel would none of me.* Yea, I confesse also, that many motions of Gods Spirit are resisted by heart-perversnesse; In which respect, the Martyr *Stephen* speaks in this manner to the Jewes, *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and eares, ye doe alwayes resist the Holy Ghost; as your Fathers did, so doe yee.* But the Almighty by the all-conquering power of his grace, subdues all them unto his government, whom he intended from eternity, to bring unto himselfe. *All whom the Father giveth me* (saith Christ) *shall come to me.* And though the elect through the wickednesse and waywardnesse of their hearts, should say, *Wee will be like others, serving wood and stone;* the Lord will answer, *That which cometh into your minds, it shall not be.*

A. G. 7. 51.

Ioh. 6. 37.

Ezek. 20. 32.

Fourthly, neither may we hence inferre, That when we doe through the assistance of divine grace, give up our selves to the Lord, this may properly be called a gift.

2^o Roy. 28. 28.

Its a giftlesse gift,

1 Cor. 6. 20.

For 1. We give to God, that which is his owne. *Ye are not your owne* (saith the Apostle) *your bodies and soules are Gods.*

Iob. 35. 7.

Psal. 16. 2.

2. And when the Lord enjoyeth us in the fullest employments and improvements, this question may be propounded, *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine hand?* The Psalmists confession answers the question, *O my soule, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, my goodnesse extendeth not to thee:* Neither our selves, nor our services can possibly reach God; with the least advantage; for unto perfection there can be no addition at all.

My Text holds forth,

First, What is Gods due, *Your selves.*Secondly, What is mans duty, *Yeeld your selves unto the Lord.*

The Doctrine is open and evident, it lyes faire and full in the face of the Text,

Doctr. me.

That people of all sorts, should yeeld themselves unto the Lord.

This is the counsell, the command of the Text; and it is considerable, that herein no more was required of inferiours, then

was endeavoured by Superiours of all sorts, towards the promoting of this service.

It is in mine heart (saith King Hezekiah) to make a Covenant with the Lord God of Israel. He gathered the Rulers of the City, and went up to the house of the Lord. And the Princes also, went throughout all Israel and Judah, according to the Commandement of the King, saying, Yee children of Israel, turne again unto the Lord. 1 Chron. 29. 10.
Vcr. 20.
cap. 30. 6.

Neither can any justly except against this Doctrine, as though it held forth to Christians an Old Testament exercise. For Gospel mercies are mentioned by the Apostle Paul (that Gospel-Preacher) to perswade it, *I beseech you (saith he) by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* Rom. 12. 1.

And it is recorded to the great commendation of the Macedonians, *That they gave their own selves to the Lord.* 2 Cor. 8. 5.

The words which surround my Text, discover the severall arguments, whereby this practice was pressed upon this people, which I will briefly point at, and leave it to your consciences to consider, whether they concerne not us, even our selves this day. Reasons.

First, From this glorious Title of God, *Jehovah*, which hints unto us both his Independency and Fidelity. 1. His Independency. The Lord revealed himself to *Moses* by this Name, *I am that I am*; What I am, I am, of and from my selfe, neither needing creatures, nor receiving advantage from creatures. Wee have in our times notorious experiences of many men, yeelding themselves as servants to men, because of their dependance upon them, though their supporters are also supported by another power. How much rather should we give up our selves to an Independant God. Exod. 3. 14.

2. His Fidelity. *I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob* (said the Lord unto *Moses*) *by the Name of God Almighty, but by the Name Jehovah was I not known unto them.* The meaning of which words is manifest, that although manifold providences had abundantly proved his great power, yet in the faithfull performance of his promises, he had not been so clearly discovered, as now he intended to discover himselfe. Exod. 6. 3.

Alas, many amongst us enslave themselves to false-hearted men, who are neither faithfull to God, nor to their friends: much rather should we make resignation of our selves unto Iehovah, whose wayes are mercy and truth, whose promises are yea and amen in Iesus Christ, unto all those who humbly wait upon him.

Κυρία τῷ Θεῷ
Ἰσραήλ.

Pr. v. 27. 10.

Secondly, from their relation to his Majesty. The 70. render the word *Iehovah*, by these words, *The Lord God of Israel*. And it followes immediately after the Text, *Serve the Lord your God*. In the 6. verse, the exhortation is thus expressed, *Ye children of Israel, turne againe unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel*. Here I remember the counsell of *Salomon, Thine owne friend, and thy fathers friend, forsake thou not*. I appeale to your consciences, whether I may not with more strength of reason, give this advice; To your owne God, and your fore-fathers God, dedicate your selves religiously. Is not *Iehovah* the only true God? our God by publike profession, and by manifold severall engagements; our appearing before his Majesty in the duties of this day, is a reall acknowledgement of him, as our God: And which of us knows, how many times, upon Sacrament dayes, Fasting dayes, and upon various occasions, we have by solemne Covenant taken the most High to be our God? Therefore *yeeld up your selves* unto his Highnesse, as to your God.

Thirdly, From his providences, both towards others, and themselves.

1. Towards others; Gods providences had been destructive. *Your brethren trespassed against the Lord God of their Fathers, whotherefore gave them up to desolation, as you see, v. 7*. Many of us have seen the black foot-steps of bloody warre. How many thousands have lost their lives by the mercilesse Sword? And what wofull spoyles have been made by the prevailing enemies? Many sadly complaine of the breaches made in their neere relations, and say with sighs, that their houses have been demolished, and themselves in their outward estates are utterly impoverished. In this respect, God expecteth our submission unto him. *Towers are desolate* (saith the Lord) *I have made streets*

zepl. 3. 6. 7.

streets waste, their Cities are destroyed. I said, Sure y thou wilt feare mee, thou wilt receive instruction.

2. Towards themselves, the providences of the Lord had been defensive. *You are escaped out of the hand of the King of Assyria, ver. 6.* How various and glorious Gods administrati- ons have been for your preservation, in your persons, possessions, relative comforts, and your faire opportunities of publick ser- vice, I leave it to your selves to consider. But when you have surveyed them, I beseech you let this be the result, the im- provement. We will therefore *yeeld our selves unto the Lord.*

Fourthly, From his pretious promises. Both to themselves, and unto their brethren.

First, that God might subdue them unto himselfe, hee pro- miseth to them, *1. The cessation of his anger. Serve the Lord, that the fiercenesse of his wrath may turne away from you, vers. 8.* This argument was strong in *Hezekiah* his thoughts, quickning this engagement. *Now it is in my heart, to make a* ^{2 Chro. 29.10.} *covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turne away from us.* Let us, I pray you, apply this to our selves. Amongst what sort of people in this Kingdome are there not coales of divine displeasure kindled? our schismes, and sidings, our factions, and fractions, (I know not how many) our divi- sions, both in regard of Church and Common-Wealth con- cernments, doe discover the flames of Gods anger burning a- mongst us. Now what gracious hearr desires not to tread out the sparks of divine vengeance? Are we not assembled this day, to powre out buckets upon these burning flames. Therefore let us *yield our selves unto the Lord. 2.* The continuation of his favour. *Hee will not turne away his favour from you, if yee re- turne unto him, ver. 9.* Oh how sweet is Gods love, in it selfe, and in the fruits thereof, unto the soule which hath been scort- ched with the expressions of his displeasure? Doubtlesse, in his favour is life, and his *loving kindnesse is better then life.* In him we live, move, and have our being. If wee may have Gods smiles, we shall not need to feare mens frownes: His good-will sweetens all our sorrowes, betters all our comforts, supports us under all our pressures, and adds very much to our advantage, in all concernments and conditions of life, whatsoever; There- fore

Psal. 63.

fore let this argument prevaile with you, thus to resolve, wee will yield our selves unto the Lord.

Secondly, Gods grace gives out promises, extending to their brethren as to themselves, upon this condition, of a right selfe-dedication unto his Majesty, both compassions and reparations.

1. Compassions. *If you turne againe unto the Lord, your brethren and children shall find compassion.*

2. Reparations, *They shall come again into this Land.* ver. 9.

And that these promises may be credited, notwithstanding this peoples unworthinesse, the reason of all is rendred, verse 9. *For the Lord your God is gracious and mercifull.* Now to bring these encouragements of Gods grace home to our selves, by way of argument. This day wee should have bowes full of bowels towards all our suffering brethren: poore *Ireland* especially may challenge a great share in this dayes prayers; Alas, alas, how inexcusably hath that wasted, and almost lost Kingdome been neglected! And I am perswaded that every good heart here, akes for bleeding *Ireland*, and gaspes after the speedy repairing of the wofull breaches there. Therefore to the use of other meanes, for the effecting of your poore brethrens deliverance, add this, *Yield your selves unto the Lord.*

Thus from the interpretation of my Text, and the confirmation of the doctrine thence collected, I proceed to the application of all by way of use, and the uses which I shall insist upon are of two sorts, the one of Reprehension, and the other of Exhortation.

Reproof.

I begin with reproofe, wherein I premise two things by way of request. 1. That if any shall judge me sharp, it may be remembered, that I speak for God, and therefore may be bold, and must bee faithful. 2. That every mans conscience may by selfe-reflexion make a particular application of that which I shall onely in generall propound unto consideration.

First sort re-
proved.
The Devils
vassals.

There are 4 sorts of people, whose courses are inconsistent with that selfe-surrender unto God which my Text calls for. First, those who yield themselves up unto Satan; so God and the Devill are *Asustata*, they are at as great a distance as Heaven and

and Hell, light and darknesse. *What fellowship is there* (saith the Apostle) *betwixt Christ and Belial.*

This charge I believe will be acknowledged just, but few or none will be willing to owne it, as reaching themselves. Every one will be apt to ward off this blow, to avoid this blame, as imagining that it belongeth not unto them; therefore let us enquire, the characters of those, who ate in this kinde blame-worthy.

First, All Witches, Wizards, Conjurers, and such like creatures, who by compact sell themselves to Sathan, upon condition that he will be serviceable to them, in the accomplishment of their malicious, mischievous desires. But these I look upon as too fowle to be spoken of in this Assembly.

Secondly, those who abide wilfully ignorant, of the things of God, the matters of Religion. The Devils are called, *The rulers of the darknesse of this world.* Hereto accords the speech of the Apostle *Paul*, reporting the end of his spirituall Commission to the Gentiles; It was (saith he) *to open their eyes, to bring them from darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan to God.* These words imply, not onely, that men under Satans power, are unsubdued to God; but also, that men in darknesse, men willingly buried in ignorance, are in the Devils dominion. I wish that all those who contemne the knowledge of God in his worship, and the government of his Church, &c. would seriously consider of this matter. There is a generation who say to God, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* If they may understand how to buy and sell, to save Eph. 6, 12, and gain, to converse with men, for their owne credit and advantage, they list not to learne how to discern betwixt truths and errors, things that differ in matters of Religion; doubtlesse these yeeld not themselves unto the Lord, but rather contentedly continue in servitude to the Prince of darknesse. Iob 21, 14.

Thirdly, such who notwithstanding the light of knowledge which they have attained, and whereof they boast, doe yet stubbornly persist in courses of known disobedience to God. The Apostle thus characterizeth them in whom the Prince of the power in the ayre exerciseth his authority. *Children of*
C dis-

Ep^h. 2. 3.A^uth^or^{it}at^{is}.

Ioh. 8. 44.

Non per suadebis
etiam si per sua-
seris.The second
sort to be re-
proved, The
worlds drud-
ges.

Matth. 6. 24.

Iam. 4. 4.

Hos. 7. 14.

Mat. 23. 14.
Simulata Sancti-
tas est duplex
iniquitas.

disobedience, children of no persuasion, as the Originall imports, who will not be prevailed with, by any persuasive arguments to order their conversations according to holy Scripture, but they walk according to the manners of the multitude, and the imaginations of their owne hearts. Our Saviour himselve speaks home to the consciences of these men. Ye are of your father the Devill, and his works ye will doe. A man that comes to the Congregation, Sabbath after Sabbath, Fast after Fast, and yet is resolved in himselve thus farre, and no further will hee proceed in reformation of himselve, whatsoever God by his Messengers shall make known; he will doe thus much, and no more; this man (I say) is marked out by Christ himselve, to belong unto the Devill, and not to God.

Secondly, those who are the slaves of the world. This I intend not against them, who are in bondage to the men of the world, (so I shall deale with them under the next head of reproofe) but this I direct unto the drudges of the world, who make it their maine businesse, to scrape and heape together the poore, low, under-moone contentments of this transitory world. For our Saviour saith, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* And the Apostle James renders the reason of the inconsistency hereof, *Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses, know ye not, that the amity of the world is enmity to God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.* Inordinate affection to the worlds vanities, can no more consist with loving subjection unto God, then whoredome, with chaste conjugall communion. This assertion will not be denied, because it is so open and evident in the language of the Holy Ghost.

But the question will be, How may persons herein blame-worthy, be discovered?

Answer. They are such, who make the world their end, in the profession and practice of Religion. *They assemble themselves* (as the Prophet complaines) *for corne and wine.* They set up Family-duties, frequent Sermons, keep Fasts, &c. to feather their owne nests, to make themselves and others rich and great in the world. *Wo to you Hypocrites* (said our Saviour) *you devoure Widowes houses, and for pretence make long prayers, therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*

2. The strength, the streame of their heads, hearts, interests, and all abilities run out much more world-ward, then after God, in advancing him, and enjoying communion with him. *They mind earthly things.* This is their *unum necessarium*, their businesse, as though they were brought into the world (as Factors are sent into forraigne Countries) for no other end then to get wealth.

This is notably set forth by the practice of that earth-worm spoken of in the Parable, *He thought within himselfe, saying, what shall I doe? and he said, this will I doe.* Dialogue-wise he debated the businesse with himselfe. Himselfe asked the question, and himselfe returned answer. He layed forth his abilities to gather or store up the fruits of the earth; but we read of no forecasting, no projecting, to grow rich in grace, or to make Gods Name glorious in the world: He did the work of men about earthly concernments, but labours not at all for Gods honour, or his own eternall happinesse.

3. They sit down satisfied in the enjoyment of sublunary accommodations; having stored their houses, filled their purties, provided large portions for their posterity, they settle, as the stone in the center: Here they live, and solace themselves as the Fish in the water: Like that Worldling, of whom I spake before, when his barnes being enlarged, were filled, he saith to his soule, *Now take thy rest, for thou hast goods layed up for many yeares.* Now he sings a *Requiem* to himselfe; now his dayes work was done, he thinks he may goe unto bed and rest. And there is one circumstance more considerable (*viz.*) that he calls the fruits of the earth, his *goods*, looking upon them with highest respects: I call upon your consciences, to make application of this particular, when the securing of outward estates, and the settling of civill liberties, is satisfactory, though matters of Religion continue unreformed, and the government of Jesus Christ in his Churches is neither perfected, nor established. This frame of heart argues that men rather yeeld themselves to the world, then unto the Lord.

4. Their consciences can contentedly dispence with things displeasing to God, and dishonourable to him, that they may serve their owne turn, in compassing worldly accommodations.

II

Phil. 3. 19.

φρονητες.

Terrestria curant. Rebus terrenis dediti sunt Piscator.

Luc. 12. 17. 18.

διελογίζετο

εἰ ἀπὸ.

Mirè convenit verbum, quoniam istiusmodi homines totam vitam in subducendis rationibus consumunt.

Beza.

Diruit, edificat, mutat, quadrata rotundis.

Luk. 12. 19.

τα ἀγαθά με,

Non sine causa hoc additum.

Nam id genus hominum divitias bona appellat, non tantum populari loquendi modo, sed quod nihil melius illis existimat. Grotius

in loc.

2 Tim. 4. 10.

Demas hath forsaken me (saith Saint Paul) having loved this present world, and is departed. What cared he for the truths credit, or the Apostles comfort, if he might gaine the world? And of like sort, were those spoken of in the parable, who sleighted Gods invitation to ordinances of Communion, in comparison of a *Farm purchased, Oxen bought, and a Wife newly married.* *Orphab* in hope of marriage-preferment in her own Country, will leave her mother in law *Naomi*, her Religion and her god also. So the rich young man in the Gospell will goe crosse to Christs counsell, hazzard eternall life, and forsake Christ himselfe, rather then sell his faire estate. Directly thus it is with many amongst our selves; what care they what becomes of the Covenant, conscience, Christ in his government, or the work of Reformation in the Kingdome, if themselves may be enriched, raised to places of preferment, and bee made great in the world? There is no question to be made of it, but these persons yield themselves to the world, and not unto God.

Luk. 14. 13, 19,

20.

Ruth. 1. 16.

Math. 19. 21, 22

The third sort
reproved, the
servants of
men.

1 Cor. 7. 23.

Math. 23. 10.

Thirdly, those who are in willing servitude to men. The Apostle *Paul* saith, *ye are bought with a price, bee ye not the servants of men;* And the Evangelist gives the reason, *for one is your master, which is Christ.* The Levellers of these times may be apt to inferre from these expressions, that all subordinations in civill societies should cease amongst men, that there should not now bee any more King and Subjects, Master and Servants, but parity and equality amongst all. I may not digresse to speak against this wild phancy, the birth of mans intolerable pride: But the Apostle himselfe in his words foregoing, doth sufficiently discover his dislike of this conceit. *Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant, care not for it; (q. d. perplex not thy heart, with the thought of this thy condition) for he that is called being a servant, is the Lords freeman.* And it followes, *Brethren, let every man, wherein hee is called, therein abide with God.*

1 Cor. 7. 20,

21, 22.

23.

The meaning of the Apostle is, That in matters of Religion and Conscience, no man professing a servant-like relation to Christ, should pinne his opinion upon another mans sleeve, and enslave his judgement or practice unto another mans will and

and way. But as the Lord hath distributed to every man, as the ver. 17. Lord hath called every one, so let him walk.

Now here it will be demanded, who are these servants of men, whom you reprove, who doe not yield themselves unto the Lord? I answer, 1. Such, who in the things of God make mens opinions, precepts, practices, their rules and standards, whose feare (whose way of worship) is taught by the precept of men, as the Prophet *Esaiah* speaks. And who willingly walk after the Commandment, as another Prophet expresseth it. You may know them by their language, by their queries in matters of controversie, what is the judgement of such a person in this particular, what way walketh such a prevailing party in, in regard of this difference amongst brethren; like unto the enquiries of old, *Doe any of the Scribes and Pharisees believe on him?* Ioh. 7. 48. Doe the Grandees, the masters of these times, practice, or approve such a course? These servants of men will stee according to their masters compass; set their watches according to his diall; dance after his pipe. As *Luther* before Christ converted him, yielded himselfe to the Popes pleasure; so many to prevailing and overpowering great ones amongst men. 2. Who aime at mans appl. use as their mark, in their appearing for Religion, either by word or action. All their works they doe, (saith our Saviour) to bee seen of men. And as the foolish wien cackles when shee hath laid an egge; so these men desire that Trümpets may be blowne, to sound out, farre and neare, their brave exploits. *Come with mee* (saith *Jehu*) *and see my zeale for the Lord.* These men-pleasing men, still so set their wills, that the wind of mans applause may fill their sayles. And therefore to honour them, whom they Idolize in this kinde, they will adventure both credit and conscience too. As *Herod* st. etched out his hand, to vex certaine of the Church, and hee killed *James*, the Brother of *Iohn*, with the sword; And because hee saw it pleased the Jewes, hee proceeded further to take *Peter* also. The practice of *Pisai* proved him to be a man of the same make, who notwithstanding caveats given by his Wife, and checks received from his owne conscience; yet to gratifie the tumultuous, mutinous multitude, passed the sentence of condemnation upon *Iesus Christ*. And I heartily wish,

Esa. 29. 13.
Hof 5. 11.

Prostratum pedibus me tibi offero cum omnibus que sum & habeo; vocem tuam vocem christi in te presidentis & loquentis agnoscam. Luthers letter to Pope Leo 10. 1518.

Math. 23. 5.

2 Kin. 10. 16.

Act. 12. 1, 2, 3.

Math 27 18,
24, 25, 26.

wish, that there were none in this age, who accuse, revile, persecute, and prejudice their brethren, even against their owne professions, and the verdict of their owne consciences, being carried on headlong with an impetuous desire to bee approved and applauded by some men. Oh that this sort of people, men of this generation, would seriously and sadly consider the words of the Apostle *Paul*, *Do I now perswade men, or God; or do I seek to please men; for if I yet pleased men, I should not bee the servant of Christ.*

Gal. 1. 10.

The Fourth
sort reprov'd,
selfe-seekers.
Mat. 16. 24.

Fourthly, Those who make themselves their own Masters, whereas if selfe bee not denied, Christ cannot be followed, as appears by his owne words. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himselfe, and take up his crosse and follow mee.* Take this truth with caution; for doubtlesse the Lord allowes men to seek their owne credit, liberty, and other outward comforts; yet selfe in these things must not be supreme, but should be sought in subordination to farre higher ends. There is also a spirituall selfe-seeking, in studying peace with God, groweth in grace, communion with Christ, and more full conformity to his government; and this cannot bee separated from a sacred selfe surrender unto the Lord. But the *selfe-seeking* which I reprove, as inconsistent with giving up selfe unto God, is that selfe-Idolizing which is common amongst men, whereby they set up themselves as their own last ends, either onely, or principally, minding *selfe ease, selfe-advancement, selfe-advantage* in all their negotiations, whether civill or sacred, personall, or more publique.

Here it will be enquired how selfishnesse in this sense may be detected.

First, By consulting with carnall reason alone, in holy undertakings; Like that people, who being disswaded from burning incense to the Queen of Heaven, they review their former plenty enjoyed, in that superstitious course, and therefore sleight the Prophets counsell; *Wee will certainly doe whatsoever thing goeth forth of our own mouth, for then had wee plenty of Victuall, and were well, and saw no evill; but since wee left off, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword.* This (I am afraid) is the reasoning of many in this Kingdome,
in

Ier. 4. 17, 18

in reference to the work of Reformation begun amongst us. When wee had our old way of *Divine-Service*, and when *all were admitted to the Sacrament without any examination*, how well was it then with our forefathers and with our selves? Thus people argue the case, from fence, not having recourse to Gods word, for satisfaction. In like manner, many reason against the Presbyteriall Government, the exercising of it, is likely to bee an hinderance to us, in our callings, our credit, our commands, and gainfull courses, and therefore we will not assent unto it. As the King of *Navarre* told *Beza*, that hee would not adventure on Sea, for Religion, any farther then he might see a safe passage to shore againe. I leave the application of this, in respect to your concernments, unto your own spirits. Sure I am, when Gods grace had wrought *Paul* unto Christ, he saith (and his practice proved the truth of it) *I consulted not with flesh and blood.* Gal. 1. 16.

Secondly, By making carnall-selſe, in the injoyment of sub-lunary contents, the last and chiefe end, in Religious services. The Lord by the Prophet *Zacharye*, blames old Israel for this fault. *Yee fasted to your selves, and not to me; And did you not eat and drink to your selves?* How low and unworthy were the spirits of *Hamor* and *Sechem*, in moving their Citizens to accept of Circumcision (which was an holy ordinance of God, and a seale of his covenant with his people) because by this means they might enrich themselves. *If every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised, shall not their cattell, and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours?* Such a bent of heart upon persons in these times of more full and glorious light, is more abominable, and much more inexcusable. Should men now make their pretences to Religion meerly stirrups whereby to raise themselves, that they may sit in the saddle of greatnesse and rule, they would fasten upon themselves a blot not to be wiped off. I have heard it reported, that some great ones have said, that the onely end of our Solemne-National-League and Covenant, was to bring in the Scots, for our assistance in the time of our need. Oh tell it not in *Gath*, and publish it not in *Askelon*; Alas, alas, that ever such words should be spoken in *England*, as though our use of an ordinance so high

high and ho'y, our obliging our selves to reform our selves and families, and our engaging our selves to reform the Church according to Gods word, was meerly to serve our owne turne, in the day of our distresse Questionlesse men thus minded, gave themselves up to themselves, and not unto God, in their covenanting.

Thirdly, By fiering more, upon wrongs and affronts offered to selfe, then for dishonours done to the great God. How many are *Gallio like*, not caring at all what disgrace is cast upon the government of Christ, and his Embassadors, and yet will be all on a flame if their own credit be touched, their free-holds shaken, and carnall hopes disappointed, as it was with them who made *silver shrives for Diana*, when *Paul* by his preaching did undermine that vanity.

Thus have I in generalls suggested the courses which are inconsistent, with a right selfe-surrender unto God. Do not, I pray you, in the application put them off unto others (as children, when looking-glasses give the representation of their owne faces, say, they see Babies) but let every one labour by self-reflection to discover their owne defects, and upon humiliation resolve upon future amendment. And thus from reproofe I proceed to Exhortation.

My exhortation is, *come and let us joyne our selves to the Lord*. Oh that all our hearts might joyntly resolve,

Wee will yseld our selves unto the Lord.

In the enlarging of this use, I will 1. Lay open this duty, because it is large and comprehensive. 2. Perswade the practise thereof, because it is necessary, and yet there is a wofull waywardnesse in our Natures to submit unto it.

I begin with the unfolding of this service, of *selfe-surrender* unto God, which (as I conceive) comprizeth these particulars.

First, A minding of *our own selves*, both first and most in references unto God; Whereas the Hypocrites say, *but do not; They bind heavy burthens upon others, but themselves will not move them, with one of their fingers*. It's an easier thing to command others, then to obey our selves. But in our language to others, we should learn alwayes, to take in our selves. *Come,*
let

Act. 18. 12, 13.
17.

Act 17.

The use of
Exhortation.
Ier. 50. 5.

The things
comprehended
in devoting
our selves
to God.
Math. 23. 3, 4.

let us goe to the house of the Lord. He will teach us of his waies, and wee will walk in his paths. Esa 2. 30

Secondly, *Consulting with God* in all our religious concerns. *I am thine* (saith David) and *I have sought thy precepts; I am thy servant, give mee understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.* Wee must yield our understandings to be informed, and our judgements to be rectified by the Lord, not daring to entertaine any opinions, or to adventure upon courses, in matters of Religion, but such as God approves. Ps. 119. 54. 125.

Thirdly, *Reall resolutions of obedience.* *His servants you are,* (saith the Apostle) *to whom you yield your selves as servants to obey.* Knowledge aggravates disobedience; And it's a sure note of an Hypocrite; to propound questions without purposes to submit unto truths discovered. The Prophet *Jeremiah* had to doe with such people: *Yee dissembled in your hearts* (saith he) *when ye sent me to the Lord your God, saying, pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according to all that the Lord our God shall say, declare unto us, and we will do it: And now I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of Lord your God in any thing, for the which he hath sent me unto you.* It is a most sad thing and an argument of *Non-dedication* to God, when Gods Messengers are called to attend a people from Fast to Fast, with the messages of the most High God, and yet that people refuse to yield obedience. Rom. 6. 16. 1 Cr. 4. 20, 21.

Fourthly, *Integrality* in regard of person. *Glorifie God both in your bodies and in your spirits;* And *yield your selves,* saith my Text. God will not take up with halves; Hee will not accept any partner, he cannot indure any competitor; Hee will either have all, or none at all. The counsell of *Samuel* was, *If you returne to the Lord with all your heart, serve him onely.* If you bring your bodies, without your hearts, hee will not accept your present, it's a vaine oblation; And if your soules come in, your bodies will not, cannot, be kept back. 1 Cor 6 20. 1 Sam. 7 4. Math. 5.

Fifthly, *Universality*, in respect of duty. I remember the answer of the governour of *Abahs* children, sent to *Jehu* his challenge; *We are thy servants, and we will do what soever thou commandest.* Sure I am, it is more reasonable to resolve this, in regard of God. And this is most certaine, that they do no-

thing for God conscionably, who obry not universally: but the words of the Prophet *Ieremias* may be applied to them. *They have done nothing, of all that which the Lord commanded them.*

Ier. 31. 23.

Phi. 10. 3.

Iudg. 5. 9.

Sixthly, *Spontaniety*, *Thy people are a willing people*, saith God to Christ, This offering up of our selves unto God, must in the sense aforesaid, be a *free-will offering*. *You your selves, yield your selves*, is the counsell of my Text.

Be not haild per-force to God in holy performances, but come freely, : It added much to their commendation, who *offered themselves willingly*, to God in his service. Let this incourage us to doe the like.

Rom. 14. 8.

Ier. 3. 10.

Math. 16. 24.

Act. 21. 13.

Tit. 2. 14.

Iud. 18. 24.

Seventhly, *Sincerity*, Respecting both Gods call and glory in this selfe-surrender. *Whether we live* (saith the Apostle) *we live to the Lord, or whether we die, we die to the Lord; therefore whether we live, or die, we are the Lords*. If God be not intended as our ultimate end in this work, we lie open to that re-prooffe which was charged upon the people in the Reigne of *Iosiah*, of whom God thus complaines; *Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly*; because the command of the King, and respect to company, did more cooperate, then respect to God, in that their conversion.

Eighthly, *Willingnesse*, not onely to doe duty, but also to indure *hardship for God*. Hee that followes Christ, must as well *take up his crosse*, as betake himsele unto his work. The hand must be ready for action, and the back for burthens, for blowes.

Herein Saint *Paul* gave us good Example. *I am ready, not to be bound onely, but also to die at Ierusalem, for the Name of the Lord Iesus*.

Ninthly, *Zeale*, Gods peculiar people *should be zealous of good works*. And is there any concernment in the world, which should so much fire our hearts, as the things of God? *Micah* gathered a company, and made after them, with an out-cry, who had taken away his Idols, and his language expressed much passionatenesse; *You have taken away my gods, and what have i more, and what is this that you say to me, what ayleth thee?* Oh blush for shame, you luke-warm men, who under pretence of moderation, can contentedly suffer God, the onely

true God, in his ordinances, in his truths, in the government of his Sonne, to be dishonoured in your Families, and in the Kingdome also, both by opinions and practices which are intolerable.

Tenthly, *Constancie*. The Lord taketh no Apprentizes for term of yeares, but wee *must serve him all the dayes of our life*. Luk. 1.75. And I pray you consider, whether those reasons which may perswade a servant-like subjection unto God, once, will not be found as strong, to prevaile with you, to yield your selves to him for ever. Doublesse that man loved his Wife but little, who wished her like an Almanack, that he might have another the next yeare; and he that desires to be set free from his engagements to God, loves him not at all. The servant that *loved his Master*, would not *go out free*, but was content to be *bored through the eare*, that he might *serve him for ever*. Exod. 21.5,6.

Eleventhly, *Concord and hearty affections towards all them, who will associate with us for God*. When James, Cephas and Iohn (saith the Apostle Paul) *saw the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship*. Our Solemne League and Covenant calls for our Harmonious holding together, that we may, by united endeavours, perfect the work of publique Reformation. The combination of our common adversaries, requires our conjunction for Gods glory, and our owne comfort. And it is a very lamentable thing, that when Religion lies at stake (as it were) men should drive private personall designs, and make parties to serve their owne turne, though to the increase of our divisions, and to the dishonour of God.

Twelfthly, *A calm and contented committing of our selves, with our All, to the disposall of God, as may seem good in his sight*. The practice of David may be our pattern in this particular: When his credit, his Crowne, and his life, were endangered by the rebellion of Absolon, these were his words; *If the Lord say, I have no delight in thee, here am I, let him doe to mee as seemeth good unto him*. And upon the practice of this selfe-surrender, in the forementioned particulars, wee may with much confidence and comfort, put our selves with our concernments, upon the stream of Gods providence, to be

carried to shore, sooner, or later, with more, or with lesse, as may stand with his good pleasure.

Arguments to
perswade the
yielding of
our selves unto
the Lord.

The First mo-
tive from E-
quity,
Rom. 12.1.

Gods Right
fourfold.

Ezek. 18.4.

Pf. 100.3.

1. By Creati-
on,

2. By Preser-
vation.

Neh. 9.6.

3. By Redemp-
tion.

1 Cor. 6.20.

Ezek. 16.8.

4. By Federa-
tion

Judg. 11.35.

Thus having laid forth the duty of the Text, in the com-
prehensions of it, I now proceed to perswade the practice
of it, by Scripture arguments; and I shall give in the argu-
mentative enforcement of this *selfe-yielding* unto God, under
four heads of motives.

The first is taken from the *equity* thereof. The Apostle saith,
It's your reasonable service. This will appear by three Consi-
derations.

First, Because the Lord hath a more full right to us, then
either our selves, or any other can claim: *All soules are mine,*
saith the Lord.

1. And the Psalmist gives one reason: *For hee hath
made us, and not we our selves, we are his people,* who organi-
zed our bodies, who created our immortall soules: dare any
other challenge right to us in these regards?

2. Another reason is rendered in *Nehemiah 9.* Thou art
Lord of all, for *Thou preservest them; In him wee live, wee
move, and have our being.* The whole frame of nature would
fall into pieces, if Gods hand did not hold all together.

3. Hereto might be added, other works of God more pe-
culiar, *viz.* our redemption. *You are not your owne, you are
bought with a price; therefore glorifie God, both in your bodies
and in your spirits, for they are Gods.* Here the consideration
of the slavery from which Christ bought us, and the price paid
for our ransome, would add much strength to the argument.
Another work of God engaging us to his Majestic, is our ju-
stification. The Prophet Ezekiel, thus expresseth it, *I covered
thy nakednesse, and thou becamest mine.* But these things I only
name, without enlargement.

4. Besides these administrations of God us-ward, whereby
we are obliged to become his, by our owne acts wee have
many times made over our selves unto him. Here, our federa-
tions sacramentall, our promises, protestations, vows personall,
and our Solemne Nationall League and Covenant might be
remembered. In respect unto all, we have cause to say, as *Ieph-
shab* when he had vowed, *I have opened my mouth unto the
Lord*

Lord, and I cannot go back. Do not all these particulars prove Gods propriety in us? The Apostle perswades, *Render to all their dues*; And our Saviour counselleth, *Give unto God the things which are God's*: Therefore, *Yield your selves unto the Lord.*

Rom. 13. 7
Mat. 22. 21.

Secondly, Because Gods right hath long been detained from him. How much of our first strength and best time, hath been lavished out in the pursuit of vanities, and in the service of foolish, hellish lusts? Is it not therefore most equal, that what remaines should be resigned up to God? This is the argument of the Apostle Paul: *I speak after the manner of men. As you have yielded your members servants to uncleannesse, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousnesse, unto holinesse.*

Rom. 6. 19.

Thirdly, Because God Al-sufficient tenders himselfe in the operations of all three persons in the God head, to be enjoyed by us; and it is through our faultinesse, that we doe not possesse and improve him. *Heare O my people, I am the Lord thy God, open thy mouth wide and I will fill it; But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.*

Pf. 81. 8, 10, 11.

I leave the enlargement hereof to your owne meditations. How infinitely is the Almighty better then the best of Creatures? In how many thousand regards doe we need him? How happy may we bee, in receiving him, and in living upon him? whereas his Highnesse, neither needeth us, nor can receive the least advantage from us. Therefore seeing hee offers himselfe unto us, it is most equal, that wee should returne our selves unto him.

The Second argument may be gathered, from the necessity of this selfe-dedication to the Lord; These may be made manifest, by taking notice of these three particulars.

The second
motive from
necessity.

First, That necessary *Supplies* cannot else-where bee had: *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* (saith the Psalmist) *God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; therefore it is good for me to draw neer unto God.* Remember how this necessity brought the poor Prodigall, with a servant-like subjection unto his father. *Hee said, how many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough, and I perish for hunger? I will rise and goe to my father.*

Pf. 73. 25, 26,
18,
Luk. 15. 17, 18.

This we read, as one complaint in *Jeremiah* his Lamentations; *We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians to be satisfied with bread.* If want wrought their submission to Heathens, how much more should our need work us to willingnesse, to give the hand unto the most High? for alas, where else can we hope to have bread? can solid, satisfying supplies, be received from any other hand?

Ier. 3. 22, 23.

Secondly, That *safety* cannot be had from any other. From this ground, repenting Israel resolves upon a returne to God. *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God; Truly in vaine is salvation hoped for from the hills, or from the multitude of mountaines: Truly in the Lord our God is the Salvation of Israel.* Noah his Dove came back again to the Ark, and yielded her selfe into his hand, when shee could not else where find rest: Hills, and houses, and high trees were all covered over with waters; therefore without danger of drowning shee could fall nowhere, but upon the Ark. I need not make application of this story, because every one with ease apprehends it. Where, on this side God, can we possibly be secured from dangers, which threaten Church and State, our persons, our liberties, and our begun Reformation? A Parliament, and an Army, will appeare to be weak, insufficient, unsafe refuges; therefore *let us yield our selves unto the Lord.*

Ps. 73. 27, 28.

Thirdly, That ruine from Gods hand of judgement, cannot in any other course be escaped. *Loe, all they that are farre from thee shall perish;* Therefore said the Psalmist, *It is good for mee to draw neer unto God.* In this case (beloved) wee must either yield up our selves to God, or be destroyed. I pray you consider it; either yield, or die.

The Third
motive from
utility.

The third argument is fetched from abundant *benefit* to be received by devoting our selves unto the Lord. Under this head, I shall only briefly hint three things.

First, Hereupon we shall be in a fit *posture*, to attend upon God, in the use of his Holy Ordinances. The words immediately following the Text, speak this, *Yield your selves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary.* I may no here shew how much preparednesse for any good employment, is comprized in this one practice (*viz.*) *A regular selfe-resignation to the Lord.*

Secondly,

Secondly, This being done, we may confidently lay claim unto God, as our God. *Thou hast confirmed to thy self, thy people Israel, to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou Lord, art become their God.* For, as the reason of our love to God, is because he loved us first; So his giving himselfe unto us, causeth us to give our selves unto him. Therefore in this holy claim, we may reason from the effect to the cause, with much assurance; *I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.* If God will acknowledge us, to be his, we may challenge him to be ours. *I am my beloveds,* (saith the Spouse) *and my beloved is mine.* And oh, how great is the sweetnesse which from hence flowes into the Soule.

² Sam. 7. 24.

Zach. 13. 9.

Cant. 6. 3.

Thirdly, Those who have made over themselves unto God, may boldly plead their cause before him by holy prayers, upon all occasions. *I am thine,* (saith David) *save mee.* And the people of God, having made many suits of great concernment, conclude all with this argument, *we are thine*: For thus the Lord is moved from self-love, to see unto the welfare of them, who acknowledge themselves more his then their owne. In this manner (having yielded our selves to the Lord) we may humbly expostulate with his Majesty. Lord, although we know no worth in our selves, we finde no reason wherefore thou shouldst consider us for our own sakes: yet it's most reasonable, that thou shouldst see to thine own possession; therefore for thine own sake appeare for thy people, according to their necessities, for *we are thine.*

Pf. 119. 34.

Esa. 63. 1, 2.

The last argument relates to the sad consequences, of refusing to yield our selves unto the Lord. This stubbornnesse will expose us to a threefold danger.

The Fourth motive from their danger who yield not to God.

First, To be cast under the Tyranny of cruell men. *When Shishak King of Egypt had taken the fenced Cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem, Shemaiah the Prophet came to Rehoboam, and the Princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem, and he said,*

² Cor. 12. 4, 5.

I thus saith the Lord; Yee have forsaken mee, therefore also have I left you in the hand of Shishak. And though they humbled themselves, and acknowledged Gods righteousnesse, whereupon he resolved upon some mitigation of the judgement, yet

yet

yet this is threatned, *They shall be his servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the Countries.* We have already in this Kingdome beene enslaved to men (and what yokes are for the present upon our necks, I forbear to mention, though multitudes feele them;) Oh that wee might at length learn to be so wise, that our perverse withstanding the government of Christ, may not yet further sink us under that tyranny and those oppressions whereof we have just cause to be afraid.

Secondly, *To bee left unto the servitude of accursed corruptions.* This judgement is ten thousand times worse, then to bee enslaved unto the worst of men. A soule mastered with hellish lusts, is in a more sad condition, then a body possessed with a Legion of Devils. Now this judgement of judgements all you lie open unto, who gain-say the government of God. *My people* (saith the Lord) *would not hearken unto my voice, and Israel would none of mee; so I gave them up to their owne hearts lusts, and they walked in their owne courses.* And the Lord looking upon poor Israel under this bondage, laments their misery, as knowing it to bee extraordinary, *O that my people had hearkened unto mee;* Tremble therefore, and refuse not to stoop unto God.

Psal. 81. 10, 11.

ver. 11.

Luk. 19 27.

Psal. 50. 22.

Thirdly, *To be slaughtered by Gods revenging hand;* And how can better bee expected, as the consequence of the fore-mentioned curse? *As for those mine enemies* (saith Christ) *who would not that I should rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before mee.* What hope of safety, when the judge himselfe proceeds against the Malefactor, as his enemy? And how great is that severity, when the judge himselfe will see execution done upon the offender before his face? *Now consider this, you that forget God, lest he teare you in pieces, and there bee none to deliver.*

These arguments have, I hope, affected your hearts; therefore put not God off with a deniall, or with delay; say not only, we will think of this motion hereafter. For if this bee not done, you are undone. *Now therefore be not stiffnecked, but yield your selves unto the Lord,* according to the counsell of my

Text. The Psalmist thus expelleth the comming in of the Gen-
tiles

tiles in Gospell times. *Aethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God*, or thus, shall make her hands to run unto God. Oh with what speed will a converted heart, under the command of grace post unto God. *Zacheus made haste and came*, upon Christs call: The Lord wing your spirits, *that to day, while it is called to day*, you may give your selves unto the Lord. And if God shall conquer your hearts to come in unto him, you may not, you will not, you cannot be content to come in alone, but you will seriously seek to bring in others also, by counsell, by command, and by example also; As *Hezekiab* in this History, layeth forth his power, and his interests, that his subjects with him selfe, might yield themselves unto the Lord. *Andrew* brought his brother *Simon* to *Iesus*, and *Philip* brings *Nathaniel* along with him.

Psal. 68. 31.
Aethiopia cur-
rere faciet ma-
nus suas.
Notat celerita-
tatem actionis
rei aut perso-
nae. River in
L. cum.

John 1. 40. 42.
44.

This I might perswade, 1. From holy selfe-love, that our selves may have the comfort of this good endeavour. 2. From good will to others, that they also, with our selves, may be advantaged by their attendances upon God. 3. From respects to God, that his Name may be advanced, in the comming in of more servants unto his government. But I may not enlarge these things any further.

And now *Right Honourable*, seeing your command called me hither, to attend upon your selves in the present service, I humbly crave leave to make a fair and faithfull application of this Text unto your consciences, in few words.

First, Remember your sinfull man-pleasing, and selfe-seeking, with your former defects in this self-surrender to God; Be humbled, repent and pray, that what hath been faulty may be fully forgiven, through Gods rich grace in Christ.

Secondly, Resolve for hereafter to *Yield your selves unto the Lord*; For, as publike persons, as Parliament men, as gifted men, as trusted men, as men of parts, and as men of power; you owe more to God then to any other, then to all others whatsoever.

Did not God call you hither? Hath not he continued you here, in life and safety hitherto? therefore in all your authority, abilities, interests, and opportunities, *Yield your selves unto the Lord*. You shall expresse your reallity herein, by employing your power to rectifie the Universities, to propagate the

Gospell throughout the Kingdome, and to perfect the work of Church-Reformation, which you have begun. I heare, that according to your own order, an ordinance is in readinesse for report, for the suppressing of swearing, cursing, the profanation of the Sabbath day, and Fasting dayes; call for it I beseech you, that further dishonour to God in these kindes, may by your care be prevented. Disregard not their comforts, disappoint not their hopes, who have served God, and you, with their prayers, purses, persons, and with all that is neare and deare unto them in this world. And take I pray you, these two hints along with you, in all your Negotiations. 1. Make Gods word your Rule. 2. Make Gods honour your End.

When you think of wayes of Accommodation, resolve to yield so farre, and no further, then Gods word doth allow, and will stand with his Honour; Enquire whether yielding to connive at Heresie and Blasphemy, and to give a boundlesse toleration in matters of Religion, can possibly consist with right selfe-yielding unto the Lord. And as in Gods presence ask your hearts this question (to which you must answer at the day of judgement) Whether witting, willing, deliberate Covenant-breaking can stand with a sincere selfe-surrender unto God.

When you say amongst your selves, we must not suffer our honour to be blemished, or the Authority of Parliament to be trodden under foot by Malignant Pamphliteers; I intreate you add this interrogation, May we permit the Scriptures of truth, the word of God to be traduced and blasphemed? May we suffer the Son of God, the Spirit of God, to be undified by mens tongues and pens, without manifesting dislike, without making opposition? Can we in these and such like cases be silent, and yet say truly, we yield our selves to the Lord?

I beseech you for the Kingdoms sake, for the Churches sake, for the Lords sake, to yield your selves unto his Majesty, vigorously, effectually, and for ever. Meditate, Speak, Act for the Lord. Consult, Confer, Vote, Adventure, live and die for the Lord. This is indeed right *yielding of your selves unto the Lord.*

FINIS.

The Mayor of London

Received of the Corporation of London
the sum of £1000
for the purchase of the
land of the late Sir
John Mordaunt
situate in the parish of
St. Martin in the County
of Middlesex
the said land being
the same as is
mentioned in the
order of the Court
of Chancery bearing
date the 10th day
of June 1711
in pursuance of
the Statute in that
 behalf made
the 10th day of
June 1711
in the 11th year
of the said King
George the First
and the said sum
of £1000 is hereby
acknowledged to
have been paid
into the hands
of the said Mayor
for the use of
the said Corporation
of London
in full discharge
of the said
order of the Court
of Chancery
bearing date
the 10th day
of June 1711
and the said
sum of £1000
is hereby
acknowledged
to have been
paid into the
hands of the
said Mayor
for the use
of the said
Corporation
of London
in full
discharge
of the said
order of the
Court of
Chancery
bearing
date the
10th day
of June
1711
and the
said sum
of £1000
is hereby
acknowledged
to have
been paid
into the
hands of
the said
Mayor
for the
use of
the said
Corporation
of London
in full
discharge
of the
said order
of the
Court of
Chancery
bearing
date the
10th day
of June
1711
and the
said sum
of £1000
is hereby
acknowledged
to have
been paid
into the
hands of
the said
Mayor
for the
use of
the said
Corporation
of London
in full
discharge
of the
said order
of the
Court of
Chancery
bearing
date the
10th day
of June
1711

Witness my hand and seal
this 10th day of June 1711
John Mordaunt
Mayor



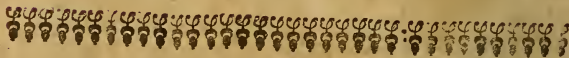
Die Mercarij, 23 Febr. 1647.

ORdered by the Commons assembled in Parliament, that Mr. *Rose* doe from this House give Thanks unto Mr. *Ashe*, for the paines he took in his Sermon preached on this day at *Margarets Westminster*, before the House of Commons; and that he be desired to Print his Sermon: Wherein he is to have the like priviledge in printing of it, as others in the like kind usually have had.

Hen. Elsyng, Cler. Parl. D. Com.

Appoint *E. Brewster* to print this Sermon.

Simeon Ashe.



GODS
INCOMPARABLE

Goodnesse unto

ISRAEL.

Unfolded and applyed :

In a Sermon preached at *Margarets*
Westminster before the Honourable
House of Commons Assembled in Parlia-
ment, At the last Solemne Fast,

✓ April 28. 1647.

By *Simeon Ash*, Preacher at *Basingshaw*,
London, and one of the Assembly.

Published by Order of the House of Commons.

*Happy art thou o Israel, who is like unto thee! O people saved by the Lord,
the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy Excellency, Deut 33. 29.*

*For what Nation is there who hath God so neare unto them, as the Lord
our God is, in all things; that we call upon him for, Deut. 4. 7.*

*. I the Lord do keepe it, I will water it, every moment, lest any hurt it, I
will keepe it night and day, Esa 27. 3.*

LONDON,

Printed by *W. Wilson* for *Edward Brewster*, and are to be
sold at his Shop on Ludgate-hill, at the Signe of the Bible
neare Fleet-bridge, 1647.





To the Honourable House
of COMMONS Assembled in
PARLIAMENT.

Right Honourable,

THis Sermon was preached, and is now
Printed, in humble obedience to your
Commands. In both these services,
I have (according to my weaknesse)
sincerely endeavoured to approve my
selfe faithfull to God, and to your
consciences. The subject I judged
seasonable, for all the duties of the day, not knowing a-
ny argument so kindly breaking the heart for sinne, or
more forcibly perswading prayer to God, obedience to
his Word, and serious Covenant-renewing with his
Majesty, then his abundant goodnesse. And my thoughts
could not fasten upon any discourse, more probable to
quicken the fruitfull improvement of your present Au-
thority and trust, then by propounding God himselfe, in
his goodnesse towards his Israel, as your pattern for gui-
dance and encouragement. This Sermon is plaine, as
best suiting with my spirit, and in that regard best a-
greeing with the day of Humiliation, wherein God would
have those Robes laid aside, which at other times may

be better born with. The foode is savory, though not curiously Cooked. Truth, not words doe feede the soule: and I much rather desire in my Ministry to profit, then to please my Auditory. Consider I pray you, that all the Fast Sermons which you heare (besides many others) the most whereof are made publique, will be upon Record against you, if you doe not conscientiously act, according to the counsell given in them, in the Name and authority of the great God. The Lord give you continually to remember that his holy eyes are alwayes open upon your hearts and ways: and that you must be judged according to his Word, at the last day. Such thoughts will double industry, move selfe-denyall, make single-hearted in your ends and aimes, increase your zeale, and add much to your courage for Jesus Christ. And that you may proceed with this glorious frame of heart, to do worthily for this our Israel, in imitation of our God, is and shall be the prayer of

Your faithfull, though unworthy
Servant, SIM: ASH.



A

SERMON

Preached before the

Honourable House of

COMMONS at their monethly

Fast, April 28. 1647.

Psalms 73. 1. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such who are of a cleane heart.



THE Title of this Psalm, is *A Psalm of (or for) Asaph*. But whether *Asaph* was the Pen-man, or whether *David* penned it, and committed it unto *Asaph* for publique use, Interpreters doe not accord.

And where the holy Ghost is silent, we shou'd not, we need not be curiously inquisitive.

This is most apparant in many passages of the Psalm, that

B

the

the Psalmists smarting sufferings occasioned this good Psalm.

Gods rods were frequently upon his backe, hereupon Satan (who watches for oportunities to doe mischief) makes sore assaults upon his soul, and many unfull diitempers break forth from his Spirit. This sharpe conflict made way for this Scripture, which hath been for many ages, and still is on record for the Churches use. Hence wee may note, That *the sufferings of Gods servants, tend to the Churches advantage.*

Doctrine.

Phil. 1. 12.

The Apostle Paul reports the experience hereof, *Phil. 1. 12. I would ye should understand brethren, that the things which happened unto me, have fallen out to the furtherance of the Gospel, &c.*

How many parts of Holy writ have wee for our edification, which were the happy consequences of the afflictions and faults of Gods people.

Use.

This meditation is marvellously comfortable in these times of so great distractions and uncertainties: for doubtless these storms this winter weather will produce an happy harvest, either for this age, or for succeeding generations. And I may boldly speake it in the words of the Psalmist, *Psal. 102. 18. The people which shall be created, shall praise the Lord.*

Psal. 102. 18.

More particularly, its enquirable, from whence the good mans inward trouble and temptation arose? He saw the wicked sit safe and warm, sheltered from dangers, and filled with contents, whilst himselfe was wet & weather-beaten, with an inundation of Crosses. This perplexed the holy mans Spirit. Hence we learn, *The prosperity of the wicked is sometimes a matter of offence unto suffering Saints.*

Doctrine.

The reason hereof, the Psalmist himself renders, *vers. 22. So foolish was I and ignorant.*

Through darknesse they misse their way, and are in dangers to be misled. Some Interpreters conjecture, that David was thus offended in his younger days, before hee was well acquainted with Gods various administrations in the world, towards his foes and towards his friends.

Use.

Præmonitus
Præmunitus.

This may be an *item* to us to take heed of this rock.

Beware of misprision of Providences.

And for your security, take this short direction. Interpret all Gods workes out of his word; Make the holy Scriptures a
construing

construing booke, to the booke of Gods providences. Judge neither better of prosperity, nor worse of adversity, then Gods word warrants. This was the Psalmists cure, his experience did put a *probatum est* unto this prescription, *vers. 16 .17.* When I thought to know this, it was too painfull for me, untill I went to the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.

I proceede. In the body of the Psalm, we hear the Psalmist groaning under his daily burthens, wee see him violently assaulted by Sathan, and find him wounded by sundry sinfull distempers, (*vid.*) *Envy, Infidelity, Discontent, &c.*

But in the Text and else-where towards the conclusion, wee meet with him as a Conquerour, in the pursute of his enemies, and we heare him singing the triumph. *Truly God is good.*

Hence observe. That notwithstanding the forest assaults of Satan, the world, and corruption, the servants of the most High shall get the victory. Doctrinē.

The Apostle John gives us the true reason hereof, which holds in reference to all oppositions, though he makes a particular application, *1 John 4. 4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, then hee that is in the world.* Although children, yea little children in regard of their own weaknesse, yet conquerours through the strength of the Almighty. 1 John 4. 4.

This may wonderfully encourage Gods people to hold out the conflikt, to keep the field, though the strength of the battell come upon them. Although worsted, disordered, routed for the present, yet rally, gather up broken strength, face about, and give a fresh charge, for the day shall undoubtedly be yours. Say to the insulting adversaries, as *Mic. 7. 8. Rejoyce not against me o my enemy, when I fall, I shall rise, when I sit in darknesse, the Lord will be a light unto me.* Yea this is comfortably applyable, in reference unto Christian-Soul confliks, when the vnderstanding is darkned, thoughts distracted, affections distempered, conscience wounded, the Devil gratified, and God provoked; yet be not discouraged, but chear up with the words of David, *Psalme 42. 5. 11. Why art thou cast downe o my soule, and why art thou disquieted within me; still hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him.* Mica. 7. 8.
Psalme 42. 5. 11.

Further observe, that the Psalmist gives God the glory of this victory, *God is good.*

The more deliverances, and the better successes, a gracious heart receives, the more it admireth and advanceth God.

And indeed, Gods manner is, many times to make the battle the more hot, and the success in appearance more doubtfull, that the conquest in conclusion, might be the more to his praise.

Use.

Hereby, learne to judge aright of the temper of your owne Spirits. How doe your hearts behave themselves God-ward, upon the perusal of the great things which hee hath done for you? Is God the higher in your estimation and affections? Do you the more magnifie him in your conversations, because hee hath prospered your Counsels, and Armies for your honour, and the Kingdomes welfare? I propound the question to your consciences, let your soules return right answers to the Lord.

And once more mark (as another generall) *That a personall experience is improved to an universall advantage.*

One *Asaph*, or one *David*, is rescued from the power of Satan and sin: but the inference made, is for the comfort of the whole Church. *Truly God is good to Israel.*

This is very remarkable, together with the ground of it, in the practise of the Apostle *Paul*, bringing that unto common use, which was spoken to *Joshuah* many ages before, *Heb. 13. 5; 6.* *He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee:* So that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper.* For God in his Covenant and affections towards his people, is *Iehovah* who changeth not, throughout all generations.

Heb. 13. 5, 6.

Use.

1 Be instructed to trade the providences of God for the good of others, unto your owne particular profit.

Psalm 22. 5, 6.

David in an estate of desertion, hath recourse unto Gods gracious dealings with his fore-fathers, *Psalm 22. 5; 6.* *Our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou didst deliver them. They cryed unto thee & were delivered, they trusted in thee & were not confounded.*

Use.

2 Be perswaded to impart your owne experiences for more common use. Conceale not within your bosome, those things the communicating whereof may be for publique profit. And in this regard it is very desirable, that Gods many marvellous

administra-

administrations in this Kingdome, in this age, may be handled to posterity. Oh that they might be recorded, and reported to the encouragement of succeeding generations. As this my Text is here registred for our use and edification this day. *Truly God is good to Israel.*

Having thus briefly pointed at these few observations, in my way to the Text, I now come more close to the consideration of the words: *Truly God is good to Israel.*

In which words we have, 1. A precious priviledge propounded. *Truly God is good.* 2. The sharers in it described, 1. By a Title, *Israel.* 2. By a qualification. *Pure, or true of heart.*

I will take the words, as our translation renders them, and shall undertake (through Gods grace) the handling of this proposition. *Truly God is good to Israel.* In the handling whereof I shall endeavour, 1. The explication of the words here used; 2. The confirmation of that truth, in the latitude of it, which is hence tendered. 3. The application of the point, that it may be fruitfully improved.

I begin with the first. And in the proposition, I consider,

1. The subject. *Israel.*

2. The predicate. *Truly God is good.* Wherein note 1: the assertion. *God is good.* 2. The asseveration. *Truly.* The word *Israel* signifies a prevailer (or) one strong with God. And primarily it was a name of honour put upon *Jacob* by God himselfe upon his prevailing prayer made: in the time of deepe distresse, *Gen. 32: 28. Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel, for as a Prince hast thou power with God.*

Afterwards this title was commonly given unto his naturall Posterity, sometimes more largely, and sometimes more strictly: which now in Scriptural discoveries, I may not looke after. But here neither All, nor only *Jacob's* children according to the flesh are meant. Nor all the outward visible members of the Church Christian, as the last words of the Text (*which are Exegeticall*) doe declare. *Such who are cleane of heart.*

It is here observable, with what cautiousness the holy Ghost serves out Gospell Cordials. He neither doth carelessly lavish them out unto all, without exception: nor unto all professors of Religion, without a speciall limitation: *Even those who are*

cleane of heart: Our Lord and Master in the dayes of his flesh said, *It is not meet to give the childrens meate, to dogs.* The Lord make Ministers & people wise in applying Gospel prerogatives.

Next; the severall words in the predicate come to be opened. *God.* The originall is *Elohim*, a glorious title of the great God, the only true God, which word suggests unto us 1. Both the Omnipotency. 2. And the Subsistency of the God-head. *Elohim* signifies strength, ability. And *Elohim* (in the plurall number) holds forth the Trinity of the persons in the Deity. As *Gen. 1. 1. Elohim created.* The work of creation belonging to Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost.

Good: The word is little, but very comprehensive. It is used in Scripture to signifie good of all kindes, and in all degrees. The goodnesse of the Creature, both in its being and well-being. But we are here to consider it only as applyable to God. *God is good.* And God is good Essentially, *Math. 19. 17. There is none good but one.* God is only good, eternally, infinitely, independently. In this sense the Lord is the same good God, both in reference to *Israel* and *Ishmael*; to the godly and the wicked. As the Sun is the same goodly glorious body, whether it shine upon a stately Pallace, or a ruinous prison, a pleasant garden, or an unsavory Dunghill.

2. *Operatively*, *Pf. 119. 68. Thou art good and dost good.* And thus God is good in his administrations, 1. Either in a way more common to all creatures, *Pf. 145. 9. The Lord is good to all.* 2. Or in a manner more peculiar to his people, *Pf. 86. 5. Thou Lord art good, ready to forgive, plenteous in mercy.* Now in this latter and better sense, God in the choycest wayes of his providence, is good to *Israel*.

There is but one word more to be interpreted, *Truly* its but a particule: But the smallest filings of gold are gathered up. Little pearls are of great price. And this small particule is not of small use, being rightly applyed and improved.

First, take it (as our late translators give it us) as a note of Affeuration. *Truly.* Its a word of faith, opposite to the Psalmists sense, and Sathans injections. Whatsoever sense sees or feeles, whatsoever Sathan insinuates and sayes; yet precious faith, with confidence asserts: *Truly, verily God is good.* He is not only

Gen. 1. 1.

בונן.
Bonum utile,
honestum, jucundum.

Math. 19. 17.

Pfal. 119. 68.

Psa. 145. 9.
Pfal. 86. 5.

78.

only good in word, but in deed also. Not only seemingly, but certainly good.

Secondly consider it as an Adversative particle; Yet, so our olde Translation. *Ainsworth* renders it, *yet surely*: taking in the former & this together. And then the sense runs thus: How ill soever things goe in the world, how ill soever it fares with Gods Church and people amongst men, *Yet God is good to Israel.*

*Adversative
capitur pro ve-
runtamen.
Calv.*

Thirdly, some conceive, that the word carries *Admiration*, oh how good is God to *Israel*. Where expressions and apprehensions faile, there the Psalmist takes up Gods providences with admiration, oh how wonderfully, how transcendently good is God to *Israel*.

*Quam bonus
est, or per-bonus
est Deus.*

All these things in the unfolding, in the construction of the words being premised: Now take the doctrine in its latitude and full sence. *That the mighty God, Father, Sonne and holy Ghost, is really, constantly, singularly good in his administrations to his Church and people. Truly, yet, oh how good is God to Israel.*

The second thing premised in my discourse, follows (*vid*) the confirmation of this point which I shall give you, in the three branches which are distinct in it.

First, *God is truly, really, good to Israel*, not only in appearance but in practise, not in words alone, but in his works also. And this is manifest under these two heads.

1. In that he confers all needed good upon them, *Pf. 84. 11* *No good thing will be withhold from them that walke uprightly.* Its most manifest in experience that many things are with-held and withdrawn also, from Gods faithful people, which they highly prize, and much desire: But nothing which God in his infinite wisdom foresees, might be for their true good, is either denyed or removed.

Psal. 84. 11.

2. In that he converts all events to good unto them. Thus saith the Lord *Ier. 24. 5.* *God of Israel. Like those good figs so will I acknowledg them that are carried away captive of Iudab for their good.* Though the antecedents and consequences of captivity were grievous, yet God intended and effected his peoples good. Blowes, blood-shed, banishment, losse of liberty, lively-hood, and the lives of many in neare and deare relations, with the want of holy Ordinances, the comfort, the life of their lives.

Ier. 24. 5.

The

The reproaches cast upon themselves, yea upon their God in his government, sacred administrations, and present providences, by his and their enemies, (which things to gracious hearts are more bitter then death) were all for good.

Rom. 8. 28.

We know (saith the Apostle, Rom. 8. 28.) *that all things shall worke together for the good of them who love God.* Do not sever providences, which God would have considered together, and you shall be able to make out this pretious truth.

Secondly, God is constantly good. *Yet, God is good.*

This yet (as I conceive) hath a three-fold reference into the body of the Psalm. For as Interpreters observe, though these words are set in the beginning, yet they suggest the conclusion of the Psalmists conflict. And the Psalmist seems to begin somewhat abruptly: *Yet God is good.* But having filled his thoughts with his former foiles and fears. And now seeing himselfe in a safe condition both for the present and the future, he is full of confidence and comfort: and that which was the strongest and chiefest in his heart, now breakes out first: *Yet God is good.*

Verse 14.

1. This yet relates unto his sufferings; *vers. 14. All the day long have I been plagued and chastned every morning.*

Notwithstanding the variety and frequency of the Saints sufferings, *yet God is good.* Though sorrow salutes them every morning, at their first waking, and trouble attends them to bed at night, *yet God is good.* Though temptations many and terrible make batteries and breaches upon their spirits, *yet God is good to Israel.*

Verse 2. 3.

2. This yet reflects upon his sinnings, the frettings & wranglings of his distempered heart, *ver. 2. 3. My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt, for I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* And *ver. 2. 1. My heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*

Verse 21.

Though sinfull motions doe mutinye in the soule against Gods wise administrations. Though there bee foolish proud quarrellings with divine providences, and inexcusable distrust of his faithfull promises. Though fretfulnesse at others prosperity, and discontent at their owne adversity: *yet God is good.*

Israels sinfull discontents cause not the Almighty to change the course of his accustomed goodnesse. While corruptions are kept

kept from breaking out into scandall, while the soule contends against them, and is humbled for them (as this Psalmist was) this conclusion must be maintained: yet God is good.

3. This yet looks back upon his misgivings. There had been distrustfull despondency upon the good mans heart. For from both the premises (*vid* his sufferings and sinnings) hee had inferred this conclusion, *vers. 13. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vaine, & washed my hands in innocency.* As if hee had said, I have kept Fasts, observed Sabbaths, heard Sermons, made prayers, received Sacraments, given Almes, avoyded sins, resisted temptations, withstood luits, appeared for Christ and his cause and servants in vaine: yea to his heart had added an asseveration (*verily*) to this faithlesse opinion: but now he is of another mind. Yet God is good. The administrations of God are not according to the sad surmises of his peoples mis-giving hearts. For though they through diffidence are apt often to give up their holy labours, as lost, and all their conscientious care and carriage as utterly cast away; yet God is good to Israel.

Thirdly, God is superlatively good to Israel.

This transcendency of divine indulgence towards Israel, I will discover in fixe particulars.

1. Hee gives himselfe to be possessed and improved as their God, *Luke 1. 68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.*

He is not ashamed to be called their God, *Hab. 11. 16. He is (take in, this thought humbly, and admire rich grace in it thankesfully) as truly theirs, as his owne.* All Gods attributes and excellencies are Israels through rich grace, to bee employed as really for their advantage, as for his owne advancement.

And is not this superlative goodnesse? As much as God is better then all created comforts, so much is his goodnesse to Israel greater than to other men. Though *Esau* hath the fat of the earth, yet *Jacob* (in this sence) hath the dew of Heaven. The wicked are Lords of worldly accommodations, they have in outward regards many times (as this Psalmist expresseth it, *vers 17.*) more then heart could wish, yet God the portion of *Jacob* is not like them (as the Prophet speakes, *Fer. 10. 16.*) For hee is the former of all these things. Marke that clause. Besides all his owne All-sufficiencys, and all existent comforts in heaven and

*Subest Anti-
thesis inter pra-
vas imaginati-
ones quas sugge-
rit Satban, &
hoc vere pieta-
tis testimonium,
in quo nunc se
confirmat.*

Calv.

*Plus aliquid
vult intelligi,
quam verbis
exprimit.*

Calv.

Luke 1. 68.

Hab. 11. 16.

Jer. 10. 15.

earth to be communicated to them for good, he can with ease create new refreshings, and doubtlesse will, rather then they shall lacke any thing which might doe them good.

Jer. 14. 8.

2. He is their hope, *Jer. 14. 8. O thou the hope of Israel. God is Israels hope.*

Psalme 39.

Not only 1. Objectively, as *Psalme 39. Lord what waite I for, my hope is in thee.*

The soule through its high, incomparable estimations of God, being with loves and longings in expectation of nothing so much as of God, to bee more and more enjoyed and improved.

2. But also (and that principally) effectively.

Propheta hic ad perpetuam fœderis respicit. Calv.

Rom. 4. 18.

Take it thus. True hope is the vigorous daughter of precious Faith. And hope lookes out for the performancè of that promise, which faith believes as true. Faith assents to the truth of the promise, Hope expects the good promised. As is cleare in *Abrabams practise, Rom. 4. 18. VVho against hope, beleevd in hope. And the reason is added, verse 20, 21. Hee was strong in faith, and fully perswaded, that what he had promised hee was able to performe*: When neither sence, nor reason, nor experience, can make out the probability or possibility of receiving the good, held forth in the promise, then God holds up *Israels hope and heart both together. And certainly when the Hypocrites hope shall be as a Spiders webb, Job 8. 14. And as the giving up of the ghost, Job 11. 20.* then this will be found a very choise, sweete priviledge, which is peculiar to *Israel. That their God, the God of all grace, is the upholder of their hopes.*

Job 8. 14.

Job 11. 20.

Jer. 14. 8.

3. He is the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble (as it follows in the same Scripture before quoted) *Jer. 14. 8.*

There is more in the original, then our translation expresseth: *In tempore angustie, In the season of distresse.*

Two things seeme to be intimated. 1. That God is a mighty Saviour to *Israel. He saves from distresse, when plunged over head and eares into perplexity, when walled up (as it were) with surrounding dangers, when there appeares no promising meanes of deliverance, when men and means faile then hee can save. He that quickeneth the dead (as the Apostle speaks) 2 Cor. 1.*

2 Cor. 1. 9.

Psal. 44. 4.

9. He can by his word command deliverances for *Jacob, Ps. 44. 4.*

His word workes what he wills, both with ease and speede.

2. That God is a wise Saviour. The wise man (saith *Solomon*) observes both time and season. Now God saves seasonably. He takes the first, the fittest oportunity for Israels rescue. *The Lord waites that he may be gracious*, *Esay 30. 18.* As the Scripture reports of *Joseph*, *Psalme 105. 18, 19. Whose feete they hurt with fetters, he was laid in irons untill the time that his word came.* *Esa. 30. 18. Psalm 105. 18, 19.*

The seasonable time. Its the same word in the originall. And as *Job* speaks of himselfe, *Job 23. 10. VVhen he hath tryed me, I shall come forth like gold.* Men who melt such pretious metall, will use care and skill that they may lose no oportunity of advantage to themselves.

4. *Jesus Christ*, who is the Spring head, the fountaine of all Christians supplies and refreshings, belongs to them.

He is called *The consolation of Israel*, *Luke 2. 25. & vers. 32.* *Luke 2. 25. The glory of Israel.*

Remember that in the opening of the words, you heard, that *Elohim*, all the three Persons in the blessed God-head, are singularly good to *Israel*: In the fore-going particulars you were acquainted with God the Fathers goodnesse to *Israel*: Now this imparts goodnesse communicated from the Son, and this is indeed the ground both of what went before, and follows after in Israels priviledges.

But you may aske what prerogatives issue from *Jesus Christ* to *Israel*. I answer, 1. both grace, 2. and the comforts of grace. You shall find both together in *Acts 5. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins.* *Acts 5. 31.*

1. *Repentance*. Many graces are comprehended in this one, (*vid*) conviction, humiliation, conversion. Sight of sin, sorrow for sin, and amendment. The penitent reflects upon sin, with shame, sorrow, hatred, feare, resolution to forsake it. He looks towards God with love, longings, estimation, and an obedientiall disposition. Now these and all other graces Gods *Israel* receives from Christ.

2. *Forgiveness of sinns*. Well may I call this the comfort of grace, for the *Psalmist*, *Psalme 32. 1. Speakes of the Blessednesse of them whose iniquity is pardoned, and whose sin is covered.*

Hence issues tranquility and joy of heart, bold addresses to God upon all occasions, and fiduciall expectation to have all gospel promises seasonably accomplished, both for sanctification and salvation. Now these and such like Cordials flow from Christ, into the soules of the *Israel* of God.

Gal. 6. 16.

5. Peace, *Gal. 6. 16. shall be upon the Israel of God.* Look upon this as the good work of the Spirit, the third Person in Trinity, *Gal. 5. 22. Rom. 15. 13.*

Gal. 5. 22.

Rom. 15. 13.

Here I will not expatiate to speake of peace in generall, or the divers kinds of peace, but shall only wish you to take notice of the worth of this peace, from the expressions of the same Apostle, *Phil. 4. 7. The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keepe your Minds and hearts through Christ Jesus.*

Phil. 4. 7.

ὡπρὸς νοῦν
καὶ τὰς καρδίας

From whence you may observe, 1. The excellency of it; *It passeth all understanding.* I pray consider the phrase. *It is not.* It is as great as words can set forth. *Nor thus:* It passeth the reach of mans language. *Nor thus;* It is as excellent as mans reason can comprehend. *Nor yet thus;* It exceedeth the comprehension of ordinary understandings. But it passeth all (even all) understanding. No mind can fathom it.

σπουδαίως

Fræsidiæ custo-
dient.

2. The efficiency of it, Shall keepe as with the guard of a Garrison. The whole soule is secured, both in the actings of the understanding, and motions of the affections, which might divide the heart from God. This peace preserves against the batteries both of earth and hel. That Christian best knows how to prize this peace, who can tell experimentally what it is to be besieged by Spirituall adversaries.

Pax deivus cu-
stodiet, ne pra-
vis cogitationi-
bus, aut deside-
riis deficiatis
a Deo. Calv.
John 14. 27.

Hence the inference of our Saviour from this Legacy bequeathed, is very notable, *John 14. 27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, let not your heart be troubled, nor be afraid.*

6. God makes over his marvellous mercy unto *Israel.* This follows in the same place, produced to prove the former peculiar prerogative appertaining to *Israel*, *Gal. 6. 16. And mercy shall bee upon the Israel of God.*

Psalme 145. 9.

It is most true (as I hinted before in *Psalme 145. 9.*) that the mercies of God are over all his works. These common compassions which shelter, succour, and support in a sort the wicked, are not to be slighted. But speciall mercies, Covenant mercies be-
long

long alone unto *Israel*. Hence that passage, 1 *Pet.* 2. 10. is considerable, differencing Gods peculiar people from others; *You* (saith he) *had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 10.

And how admirable is this priviledge, for oh, how sweet is this mercy. It is sin pardoning mercy, *Mica* 7. 18. It is corruption killing mercy, *vers.* 19. It is soule sanctifying mercy. This mercy seasons all comforts, sweetens all sorrowes, easeth under all burthens, vanquisheth all temptations, upholdeth under all discouragements, and procureth the acceptance of all services, *Dan.* 9. 18. And that I may at once, give all, in one word. This mercy estateth, interesteth us in all the precious promises of the Covenant of the richest grace. For the Covenant is grounded upon mercy, *Luke* 1. 54, 55. *He hath holpen his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy. As he spake to our Fathers, &c.* *Mica* 7. 18. *Dan.* 9. 18. *Luke* 1. 54, 55.

And in this last handfull, you have more tendered then your hearts or heads can hold. O take into your consideration I pray you all these rich dispensations of Gods goodnesse unto his *Israel*, that you may give full and firme assent unto the doctrine under hand; *That God is really, constantly and transcendently good to Israel.*

Thus having cleared the words of the Text, and having also confirmed the Doctrine offered from them, in the third place according to promise, I proceed to the application, which I shall give in without much amplification in seaven uses.

I. Confutation. This truth (which stands firm upon Scripture bottoms) gives check to the irreligious, Atheisticall conceits of all them who imagine the wayes of holy addresses to God, to be altogether unprofitable. The Pen-man of this Psalm, in time of temptation, had a touch, a taint of this error, *vers.* 13. as you heard before. *Verily* (said he in his heart) *I have cleansed my heart in vaine.* Use.

But he tooke shame to himselfe for this mistake, *vers.* 22. upon better consideration. *So foolish was I and ignorant, and as a beast before thee.*

And the Text bespeaks him a man (upon coole consideration) of a sounder judgement. *Truly God is good, yet God is good,* Whatsoever Sathan hath suggested, and I have imagined, yet if I should speake thus (I have cleansed my heart in vaine) *I should offend*

offend against the generation of thy Children, verse 15.
 The Lord takes himselfe to bee unworthily dealt with by
 men of this mind, *Mal. 3. 13.* Your words have been stout against
 me (saith the Lord of Hosts) you have said it is in vaine to serve
 God. And well he may make this interpretation of such words,
 as spoken against himselfe. For he hath openly and often asser-
 ted both by word and workes the truth of the Doctrine under
 hand, *Esa 55. 19.* I have not said to the seede of Jacob seeke ye me in
 vaine? Therefore how can it be lesse then blasphemy thus im-
 pudently to give God the lye to his face.

But I may spare this Language here, seeing your comming
 together this day, in this extraordinary manner to seeke God,
 doth prove that you be of a better mind. And I beseech you so
 to behave your selves in the use of Gods Ordinances, both Ser-
 mons and prayers, that it may appear you account them not
 vaine unprofitable dispensations.

Use. For humiliation, which is more seasonable and suitable
 to the service of the day. Is God thus admirably, and abun-
 dantly good to *Israel*? And hath this our *Israel*, have wee his
Israel, had experimentall prooffe hereof to our great comfort?
 Oh how then should our ill requitals of Gods goodnesse break
 our hearts. Have not we returned to our God evil for good,
 and even hatred for his good will? What else meane, the low-
 ing of the Oxen, and the bleating of the Sheep which I hear?

Doe not errors broached, and blasphemies belched out a-
 gainst God in this Kingdome proclaime it? Doe not cruel op-
 pressions, wherof many of your Committees stand guilty, pub-
 lish it in all the corners of the Land? Doth not the contempt
 of Christs government, Ordinances, Officers, witnesse it, farre
 and neare? What else speakes our crying downe the Solemne
 Nationall League and Covenant, which makes the ears of our
 Brethren in Forreign parts to tingle? What else is discovered,
 by a bold pleading for tolleration of all Sects, under pretence
 of indulgence to tender consciences. Alas, alas! Might not
 Gods Messengers speake to us, as *Moses* did to *Israel* of olde,
Deut. 32. 6. Doe ye thus reward the Lord, ye foolish people and un-
 wise, &c.

I might here shew you that the abuse of Gods goodnesse doth
 much

much aggravate sin, and greatly endanger the sinner, *Jer. 2. 19, Jer. 2. 19, 20.*
 20. It is an evill thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that there is not in thee the feare of my Name. For of old time I have broken thy yoake and burnt thy bonds..

But I know, that there is nothing which more deeply wounds an ingenious, a gracious heart upon the remembrance of sin, then injury offered to so good a God. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, was Davids mournfull complaint, *Psal. 51. 4.* *Psalme 51. 4.*
 It runnes not thus in his lamentation. Against my house, my Kingdome, my selfe have I sinned, though there was truth in all that, as the History declares. And now I believe he had in his thoughts Gods goodnesse, whereof *Nathan* before had remembred him, *2 Sam. 12.*

And no marvail that this consideration doth paine a pious penitent heart, for this unworthinesse, this worst kind of unthankfulness, doth put God himselfe upon complaint and lamentation. *2 Sam. 12.*

The Prophet *Isaiab* brings in God upon such like returns for his goodnesse, bemoaning himselfe (as it were) before the sencelesse creatures, *Isa. 1. 23.* *Esa. 1. 23.*
 Heare o heavens, and give eare o earth, for the Lord hath spoken it. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The Oxe knoweth his owner, and the Assse his Masters crib. But Israel doth not know, &c. *Ab sinfull Nation*

God is burthened with such baseness, and therefore sighingly sayes; Ah, I will ease me, *vers. 24.* The Lord command your consciences to bring this home for your humiliation, both in reference to miscarriages publique and personall. For how much or how little better you be for all your deliverances, God and your consciences best know. And though our selves be not scandalously guilty, yet the sins of others in our *Israel* should in this regard afflict our hearts, *Gen. 34.* Its said of *Jacobs* Sons, The men were grieved (in reference to *Sechems* sin) because hee had wrought folly in *Israel.* *Gen. 34.*

3. For Information. How unlike unto God are all those who thinke ill, wish ill, speake ill, plot ill, and practise ill, against the *Israel* of God. *Use.*

In all the fore-mentioned particulars, expressed in the Doctrine

ctrine, they are contrary to God. For they 1. really, 2. unweariably, 3. with the heate of the highest displeasure make opposition against Gods people. Their heads, their hearts, their hands, their purses, their pens, their votes, their Swords, their friends, are all against the welfare of *Zion*, the wel-doing of Gods *Israel*. Though Gods word chide them, crosse providences check them, and their owne consciences troublefomely recoyle upon them, yet will they furiously, desperately engage against Gods people.

Doubtlesse these are not God-like. But *Edom-like*, who cryed against *Ierusalem*, Psal. 137. *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground.*

Pfisme 137.

Numb. 22. 6.

And *Moab-like*, who said to *Balaam*, Num. 22. 6. *Come curse this people.* Sending to hell for helpe, to lay waste the Church of Christ.

1 Pet. 5. 8.

Yea Devil-like, who like a roaring Lyon seekes whom hee may devoure, 1 Pet. 5. 8. And might he have his will, he would not suffer a true *Israelite* to live.

I know that Israels enemies are of severall kinds, some appeare in wayes of open hostility, others oppose more covertly and subtilly. But the Manner and meanes of their way-laying Gods people in their comforts and hopes, are all knowne to God, who accounts them his adversaries, and will deale with them accordingly.

Pfalm 83. 1. 69

Gods Church being assured of this truth, doe under this notion turn the edge of their prayers against them, Psal. 83. 1. 59. *Keep not thou silence ô God, &c. For loe thine enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee have lift up the head. They have taken crafty counsell against thy people, and consulted against thy bidden ones. They have said, come, let us cut them off from being a Nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance, &c. persecute them with thy tempest, &c.*

Use.

4. For examination. It nearely concernes us all, to prove whether we be true *Israelites*.

1. Who desires not to know his right to this prerogative now laid open, which is so pretious, and so comprehensive, as you have heard. Men of the world imagine that they can never make sure enough their title to earthly accommodations. O that we were so wise for our soules.

2. All

2. All are not Israel, who are of Israel saith the Apostle, Rom. 9. 6.
 9. 6. Neither every naturall Israelite, who issued out of Jacobs loyns, nor every visible member of the Christian Church, must now bee admitted into the fellowship of that Israel which my Text speaks of.

3. And we who by naturall descent are Gentiles, may yet by a spirituall Interest, be sharers in the priviledges of the Israelites of olde. Ephes. 2. 19. Yee (saith the Apostle to the Ephesians) Ephes. 2. 19. are no more strangers, nor forreiners, but fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God, &c.

4. The knowledge of our propriety in the immunities, liberties of this Israels Charter, wil wonderfully conduce to our spirituall advantage, both in point of service and comfort. The Apostle speaks much to this purpose, in his Epistle unto the Ephesians, that they might admire Gods rich grace in Christ, and make a fruitfull improvement thereof in their conversation. Now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken downe the middle wall of partition betwixt us, &c. And we have accesse by one Spirit to the Father, &c. Eph. 2. 13, 14, 17, 18.

Now the discovery of a right borne Israelite in the sence of the Gospel, may be made by these foure notes following.

First, A conforming of our course according to Canonicaill Scripture. This note lyes faire, Gal. 6. 16. So many as walke according to this rule, the Israel of God. Gal. 6. 16.

There are two things notable in this Character, 1. The true Israelite in all doubts and ambiguities hath reference to the holy Scriptures, for direction and satisfaction.

It is not the judgement of such and such men, which alone carries him, nor the phantasies of our owne brains, which are by many called Revelations, and new lights. Some for Independency; Others for Presbytery. A third for Episcopacy. A fourth sort for Newtrality, waiting only in policy to see w^{ch} way may be most advantagious in accomplishing their own inferiour ends. No, no, but the true Israelite desires to know the minde of the holy Ghost in Scripture, whether it agree or disagree with his own designs, engagements, associates.

2. The true Israelite walks according to his Scripture light

Irridet obliquè
 vanam pseudo-
 apostolorum ja-
 stantiam, què
 de carnali A-
 braha proge-
 nie superbiebāt.
 Duplicem itaq̃
 fecit Israelem,
 unum larvatum
 qui in hominum
 conspectu appa-
 reat, alterum
 Dei. Calv.

Luke 1. 6. As Luke 1. 6. It is said of Zachary and Elizabeth. They walked in all the Commandements and Ordinances of God.

Not as many, who only professe, and prate according to Scripture rule the originall word walk translated, signifies (as Beza wel observes) both exactnesse and constancy, in steering our course according to Canonically Scripture. Whereas the Hypocrites say and do not, Matth. 23. 3.

Secondly, A minding of the inward man, in the course of obedience. This my Text tells us, Gods Israel is cleane or pure of heart. And St. Peter affirms, Acts 15. 9. That God puts no difference betwixt us Gentiles, and the best of Jewes, having purified our hearts by faith.

The Apostle Paul speaks out clearly and fully to this character, Rom 2. 28, 29. He is not a Jew, (in sense its the same, which he is not an Israelite) which is one outwardly, But he is a Jew, with is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit. The true Israelite lookes inward, works inward, both in avoiding sin, and doing service.

Therefore the gawdy outside Pharisees, must not goe for right Israelites, who are like gilded Sepulchers, who honour God with lips, but their hearts are far from him.

Thirdly, A true Israelite is Nathaniel-like, a man in whom there is no guile, John 1. 48.

He desires not to cozen the world with faire flourishes. Hee had much rather be good, then appeare good. Not shewes but substance is in his heart and endeavour.

This cuts the combs, and crusheth the hopes of those people who only desire to be seene of men. As Matth. 23. 5. our Saviour describes the Hypocrites. A plaudite from men, is much more contenting to them, then an *Engge bone serve, et fidelis. Well done good and faithfull servant from God, Matth. 25. 23.*

4. A genuine Israelite may bee knowne by his trading with God in prayer. For hence it was, that *Iacob* originally received this Name, Gen. 32. 28. as I hinted before.

I know that the Rabbins vainly fancy, that the Angell with whom *Jacob* wrestled, was *Esau his Angell*, who now way-laid *Jacob*, and hindred him in his course: but the history it selfe in many passages sufficiently confutes this conceit, and therefore

I shall

Incident. Mibi videtur sicut aliquid amplius quam negare, nempe ita incidere, ut certum ordinem teneas, et quasi lineam non transideas.

Acts 15. 9.
Rom. 2. 28, 29.
Quia apud Judaeos sola sere restabat manualis circumcisi.

John 1. 48.
Verè dicitur esse, qui re ipsa talis est, qualis esse viderur.
Calv.
Matth. 23. 5.

Matth. 25. 23.
Gen. 32. 28.

I shall not beflow any words about that conceit: but will shortly characterize his prayer, for the proove of yours, and consequently to manifest to your consciences, whether you be true Israelites. Now in *Jacobs* prayer, (which I give in as a touchstone to try yours) these things are considerable.

1. It was an occasional prayer, suiting with his present condition, *Gen. 32. 11. Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother, the hand of Esau.* A new danger occasions a new prayer. Gen. 32. 11.

Although I dare not condemne all set forms of prayer as sinfull, yet I confidently affirme, that they are not fully satisfying unto a true Israelite, who will vary in his transactions with God, according to the variation of providencies. For both love to the Lord and self-love, causeth the right bred Christian to poure forth all new concerns into Gods bosome.

2^d. It was secret, *Gen. 32. 24. Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled.* Gen 32. 24.

Though the true *Israelite* refuseth not to pray with others, yet hee cannot be content, except hee sometimes grapple with God hand to hand. (Beare with my bold expression, for the Scripture calls prayer wrestling.)

Every gracious heart hath somewhat to whisper into Gods care alone, which is not so meet to speake out in company, & warme loves will seeke secret converse and communion.

Let the *quere* here be, whether your hearts can take up contentedly, with prayers in company.

3^d It was penitentiall. The Prophet *Hosea* having occasion to review this History, tells us that *Jacob wept & made supplication,* Hosea 12. 4.
Hof. 12. 4. And why wept the good man? As his teares expressed his fervency in prayer: So it is probable, that they were effects and expressions of his sorrow, for that *tricke of Leger-demaine,* that sinfull deceit, whereby he deceived his old Father, and cheated *Esau* of the blessing: which fraud of his provoked his Brother, *Gen. 27. 41. Esau hated his brother because of the blessing.* And this is the rather credible, because the Angel by asking his name, *Gen. 32. 27.* and his repeating it (my name is *Jacob*) might put him in mind of that miscarriage, which *Esau* long before said, did suite well with his name, *Gen. 27. 36. is he not rightly named Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two times.* Gen. 27. 41.
Gen. 32. 27.
Gen 27. 36.

The true *Israelite* desiresto wet the ground where he wrestles with teares, that if he be foiled, his fall may be the more easie: He reviews with sorrow his sins against God, when he presents his prayers before him.

Men of flinty remorselesse spirits, may in this respect question their Spirituall estate, who commonly stand up under the remembrance of sin, with dry eyes, and sencelesse hearts.

4th. It was humble. *Jacobs* humility appeared divers wayes.

Gen. 32. 10.

1. In his reviewing his former bare & low condition, *Gen. 32. 10. With my staffe I passed over this Iordan, bringing nothing else. The Chaldee* exponnds it, *my selfe alone*. Doe you frequently, conscienciously reflect upon your personall, domesticall, politicall lownesse, that your hearts may not swell before God.

Gen. 32. 10.

2. Acknowledging God the Author of all his encrease, of his happy change, *Gen. 32. 10. The mercies which thou hast shewed to thy servant*. Not idolizing selfe-industry, vigilancy, policy, (though much hereof was in him, as the History relates) but he lookes as farre as Gods hand and blessing. Doe you cast your eyes beyond your owne Counsels, and your Armies courage in your successes. I mention not more secret concernments.

Gen. 32. 10.

3. Confessing himselfe, *lesse then the least of all these favours*, with which the Lord had now filled him, *Gen. 32. 10. The proud Hypocrite* lookes through selfe-conceite upon his *All* as too little: but the true *Israelite* freely acknowledgeth himselfe lesse then the least of the blessings which God bestoweth, and thus much he here freely expresseth before God in prayer.

Gen. 32. 24.

5th. It was fervent. This is implied, in that his praying is called *wrestling*, *Gen. 32. 24. Wherein* there is both intention of mind, and extention of bodily strength. Both dexterity and ability are exercised in wrestling.

So in right prayer, all the faculties of the soule, (*vid*) the understanding, memory, will, affections, and all the graces in the heart are seriously set on work.

The Apostle *James* gives a full description of it, *Iames 5. 16. The effectuall fervent prayer.*

It is a working prayer. Lip-laboured prayers, well-worded supplications, are no good arguments to prove a true *Israelite*. Much lesse will yawning, sluggish, bed-ridden devotions evidence a mans interest in this prerogative.

6th. It was fiduciall. This appeares 1. By his pleading Gods promise, *Gen. 32. 9. 12. Thou saidst returne unto thy Country and to thy Kindred, and I wil do thee good, &c.* Faith in right prayer takes hold on the engagements of God grace, when it cannot fasten elsewhere. Gen 32. 9. 12.

2. By his closing with the Angel, *who was Christ.* Holy faith, though humbly, yet adventurously strikes in with Jesus Christ, being in regard of his humanity our neere Kinlman, and our Mediator, according to the appointment of the Father. And the obedientialnesse of his heart to Gods command, was a manifest signe, that his faith was right, *vers. 9. Thou saidst returne.* As though he had spoken in more words, thus, Lord I am come hither in obedience to thy call and command, therefore doe not disapoint the hopes of thy servant. True faith which embraceth the promise, doth submit to the command of God also.

7th. It was for a Blessing, *Gen. 32. 26. I will not let thee goe,* Gen. 32. 26.
except thou blesse me.

This I conceive was not only for deliverance from the approaching imminent danger, but for some manifestations of his love; that in some kind, according to his promise he would doe him good, *vers. 9.*

The Psalmist gives in this as an infallible mark of the true Israelite, *Psalm 24. 6. This is the generation of them who seeke thee, who seeke thy face.* As David expresseth himselfe, *Psalm 4. 6. Many say, who will shew us any good, but Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.* Psalm 24. 6.
Psalm 4. 6.

The smiles of Gods face are rather begged then the the gifts of his hand. Loves rather liberality in outward contentments, are looked for, and longed after by the gracious heart.

8th. It was constant & persevering, *Gen. 32. 24, 25, 26. There wrestled with him a man till the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he rouched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacobs thigh was out of joynt as he wrestled with him. And he said let me goe, for the day breaketh. And hee said I will not let thee goe except thou blesse me.* From these words note, that he continued praying, 1. Notwithstanding Gods delays. Although God give no answer, yet the true Israelite will not give

off prayer. He must and will continue this worke, though he receive not wages.

2. Notwithstanding Gods denyals. Faith interprets denyals, in this case, as tryals, which rather quicken then dishearten. And the gracious heart keeps Gods command in the eye, and therefore will doe duty, though comfort be denied.

3. Notwithstanding Gods opposing pinching providences. Though *Jacob* suffer in continuing his contest, yet he will rather suffer then sinne. The losse of the use of a limb, will not cause him to come off from his God. Bring all this home to your hearts. I pray you. Good Christians, can experimentally subscribe to such sad dispensations from God to whom they no answer. 2. They read down-right denyals in some of Gods pray. 1. They have providences. 3. Yea, their condition seems to grow worse and worse. Losses are encreased, Crosses renewed, temptations multiplied, yet they continue praying.

Use. 5th. For consolation. Consider, *Deut 33. 29. Happy art thou O Israel, who is like to thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy helpe, and who is the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liers unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.*

How sweetely fruitfull is this Scripture for the comfort of Gods people. But I must leave the enlargement, & the improvement hereof to your own meditations.

I might here remember you of all the Cordials given out to Gods *Israel* in the prooffe of the Doctrine.

But I shal onely briefly point at the amplification of this use under two generall heads, *vid.* 1. The removing of discouragements. 2. The propounding of encouragements to every true *Israelite*.

1. This truth improved, will take off our greatest discouragements which most ordinarily arise from these 4. grounds.

First, Our owne weaknesse, Either to discharge service, or to resist assaults, To bear afflictions, or to fill relations. For God is the strength of *Israel*, *1 Sam. 15. 25.* And is not this a Cordial to the soule that is ready to faint under its owne feeblenesse, to understand that it hath interest in the abilities of the Almighty.

2. Our own unworthinesse. The soule which surveyeth its own

sinfulnesse, is wont with sighs to say: Alas, I deserve no good, from the hand of God, no guidance, no assistance, no supply, no comfort: yet in this case, Gods mercy may cheare, when merit cannot be pleaded. *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy,* Psal. 130. 7.

Psalme 130. 7.

3. *Our manifold future necessities, considered with our unanswerableness to former favours.* These are the common complaints of gracious hearts. My receipts from God have beene many and great already, but I have not improved them, I have abused them rather: why therefore should I look for any further knowledge. But yet should *Israel hope.* For *with the Lord there is plentiful redemption,* Psal. 130. 7. Former failings bewailed, shall not interrupt the course of future kindness. Although old debts be not payed, yet God will give his *Israel* leave to goe upon a new score.

Pfal. 130. 7.

4. *Our various and beynous provocations.* If yet the poor soule say, I am not only weake and unworthy in my selfe, or only unthankfull for, and unsuitable to former mercies in my conversation: but alas, how many evils arise in my heart against his government, and break forth in my life unto his dishonour: yet is there comfort. For *God will redeeme Israel from all his iniquities,* Psal. 130. 8. I only point at these things, not having leizure to enlarge them.

Pfalme. 130. 8.

2. This Doctrine applyed by faith will administer marvelous encouragement in every change and condition of life whatsoever unto Gods *Israel.*

For 1. Though amongst men they are despised as the *off-scouring of all things.* Yet *Israel is Gods peculiar Treasure,* Psal. 135. 4. The difference which God puts betwixt an *Israelite* and a *Cananite*, is greater then men make betwixt their Jewels and dirt in the street.

2. Though friends forget their labours and adventures of love (as many in these times of so great changes have too much cause to complain) yet thus saith the Lord, *Esa 44. 21. Thou art my servant o Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.* God keeps a Catalogue of their Names, their services, their sufferings, and of every thing which may render them acceptable to himselfe.

Esa. 44. 21.

3. Though men leave us to shift for our selves, taking no care

care for our safety. As some of your servants (pardon my boldnesse) whom you formerly sheltered, are now neglected both in their credit and comforts. Yet God, who keepeth Israel, doth never slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord himselfe upon thy right hand. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evill, &c. Psal. 121. 4, 5, 7. And he who hath Gods guard, may without danger want mans protection.

4. Though there be nothing in us to deserve Gods favourable dispensations for our welfare, Yet his honour is engaged to accomplish it, as the Lord himselfe by the Evangelicall Prophet expresseth it, Esa 46. 13. *I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.* And doubtlesse his Majesty will maintaine his own glory, how low, how little soever we be in our own eyes, or the account of others.

Use.

6th. For admonition, which is two-fold. First, to Gods Israel. Let them be hence warned, to take heed of a double rocke. 1. Of envy, whereof they are in danger when the wicked prosper. 2. Of discontent, to which they are disposed when themselves suffer.

I shall not need to travail out of this 73. Psalm, for the enlarging of this Use: For this very Psalmist acquaints us experimentally. 1. Both with this double disease with which he was distempered. 2. And with the medicines, the means whereby he was well cured.

I laid open these maladies before, in the particular prooffe of the Doctrine: therefore now I shall only name the severall ingredients in the medicine, or antidote, which may be for our preferuation or recovery.

First, To prevent or remove enviousnes arising in the heart, because bad men fare so wel in the world. Consider with your selves, that all their enjoyments are 1. Empty deceiving appearances, gay nothings, ver. 20. *As a dreame when one awakes, so is the Lord when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*

They are as men in a dream who judg the worlds vanities, to be better then unsatisfying shadows unto a wel awaked soul.

2. Unreforming. *These men are wicked though they prosper,* vers. 3. 12. Their large possessions have no such influence either into their hearts or lives, as to make them better.

Unde tanta fortune impiorum admiratio nisi quia sopor mentes nostras occupat. Imago hic significat quod vulgo dicimus apparen- tiam Calv.

3. Corrupting, v. 7, 8, 9. 11. *Their eyes stand out with fatness. They are corrupt, and speake wickedly concerning oppression; they speake loftily. They set their mouth against heaven. They say how doth God see.*

As wines and cordials to a man in a fever, enflame the blood and increase the disease. So are these men worser for their honour and worldly abundance. They are the more sinful because God is so bountifull.

They cannot possibly preserve their owners from perishing, *vers. 18, 19. Thou castedst them downe into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment. Envy not that gallantry which can neither keep off a storm nor the scorching Sun.*

Secondly, to staunch murmuring, and supresse discontent in respect of our owne wants and afflictions.

Consider that you are upright, have rather reason to raise up your hearts in the admiration of Gods incomparable goodnes, in the words of the Text. *Oh how good is God.* Mind I pray you for this end foure remarkable passages in this Psalm, which I must only name, without illustration or enlargement.

1. Wee have soule-satisfaction in God, *vers. 25. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* All the necessities of the heart are answered, and all the capacities of the soul are filled, out of the Al-sufficiency of God; and therefore there is no repining. *I have all saith Jacob, Gen. 33. 11.* The originall so expresseth it. Gen. 33. 11.

2. They have sure preservation from him, *vers. 23. I am continually with thee, thou hast bolden me by my right hand.* When dangers draw nigh, God is more high, to secure from al threatning mischiefs both temporall and spirituall. Now at this time the Psalmist was ready to be carried headlong upon rockes, but the hand of Omnipotency secured him. *Gratias agit, quod in illa ruina proclivitate retentus ab illo fuerit, ne prorsus excideret. Calv.*

3. We have his speciall direction, *vers. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsell.* In wayes of darknesse and danger a good guide is comfortable. What our present times be in regard of pernicious errors, &c. I need not say; therefore the season adds to the sweetnesse of this engagement of Gods grace for the guidance of his word and Spirit.

4. God undertakes, with the communication of all needfull comforts here, our full glorification hereafter, *vers. 24. And afterwards thou shalt receive me to glory.* The promise is very com- *Terum felicitatis nostrae cursum complectitur. Calv.*

Heb. 13. 5.

prehensive, containing the communication of all needfull contentment upon earth, & the inheriting of happinesse in heaven. From all these considerations, I may conclude my counsel with the words of the Apostle, Heb. 13. 5. *Be content with such things as ye have. For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* The originall is very Emphaticall, for there are 5. Negatives.

ἐ μὴ ἂν ἔ μὴ ἂν I will never not leave thee, no, never not forsake thee.

Jer. 33. 9.

Secondly, the admonition to all others follows. Seeing God is so good to Israel, take heed of doing them any hurt, Jer. 33. 9. *The Lord said to Jeremiah the Prophet, all the Nations of the earth shall heare of all the good that I doe to Israel, and they shall feare and tremble for all the goodnesse, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. Yea, I remember the Speech of the man who told*

2 Sam. 18. 10.
12.

Joab, the reason wherefore he killed not Absolom the Traytor, when he found him hanging by his head upon an Oake. Though I should receive a thousand sheekles of silver in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the Kings Son, for in my hearing, the King charged. Beware that none touch Absolom. Here take notice of Gods inhibition and former readinesse to vindicate their

Psalme 105. 12.
14, 15.

wrongs, Ps. 105. 12. 15. 16. *When they were few, yea very few, he suffered no man to doe them wrong, but he reprov'd even Kings for their sakes, saying. Touch not mine Anointed, nor do my Prophets no harme. And I appeal to your consciences, whether Gods charge concerning his people, should not more prevail then Davids in respect of Absolom.*

Zach. 2. 8, 9.

2. How apprehensive he is of their miseries, accounting them as reaching himselfe, Zach. 2. 8, 9. *He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of mine eye.* Together with the danger incurred, though done ignorantly. As appears in the case of Saul, why persecutes thou me saith Christ, Act. 9. 4. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* Beware of a design or vote against Gods Ministers and servants.

Acts 9. 4.

Use.

Psal. 73. 28.

7th. Exhortation. 1. *To draw nigh to God, Ps. 73. 28.* This was the inference of the Psalmist. Both prudence and self-love may put us upon this improvement, from the hearfay of Gods goodnesse: and the rather should this perswasion prevail with you who have had in variety of experience, prooffe of Gods goodnesse unto this our Israel. Now this is to be done two wayes

1. By selfe-resignation. 2. By supplication.

First, By self-reignation to God. This improvement of my doctrine was long since foretold to be made in Gospel times, *Zach. 8. 21, 22, 23.* The Inhabitants of one City shall goe to another, saying, *23.* come, let us goe speedily to seeke the Lord. Yea many people and strong Nations shall come to the Lord, &c. Saying, wee will goe with you, for wee have heard that the Lord is with you.

It is reported, *Hest 8. 17.* That upon the famous deliverance *Hester 8. 17.* which God wrought for the Jewes from *Hamans* conspiracy. The Jewes had joy and gladnesse, and many of the people of the Land became Jewes. Oh that the thoughts of Gods goodnesse to *Israel* might work upon many hearts.

This might be strengthened, by considering that *Israels* receipts from God are,

1. For quantity, the greatest. 2. For variety the choysfest. 3. For quality, the sweetest. 4. For security, the surest. 5. For duration, the lastingest. Whereas the contents of them, who keep at a distance from God, are 1. Scanty, short, and not satisfying, 2. Few, and not extending to our severall necessities. 3. Unfavory and vexing. 4. False and fading. Now this selfe-surrender to God, in Covenant renewing, should be

1. *Rationall*, from the apprehension of our engagements to him, and satisfactions to be received from him.

2. *Totall*. For the whole man is due unto him, and our All is too little for him. Therefore yeeld your selves unto the Lord, *2 Chron. 30. 8.*

3. *Voluntary*. Gods people are a people of willingnesse, *Psalme 110. 2.* Where can the will find so compleat, so pure, so suitable an object to choose as God is.

4. *Sincere*. Intending Gods honour as truly as our owne gain, in this selfe dedication. *Glorifie God both in your bodies and spirits, for they are Gods, 1 Cor. 6. 20.*

1 Cor. 6. 20.

5. *Constant*. To serve him in holinesse and righteousnesse before him all the dayes of our life, *Luke 1. 74, 75.* If you can finde any point of time, wherein God deserves not your service, or wherein you need not his grace, then with-draw your selves from him.

Luke 1. 74, 75.

Secondly, By supplication, *Jer. 14. 8, 9.* O thou the hope of *Israel*, &c. Wherefore shouldest thou be a stranger. We are called by thy

Jerem. 14. 8, 9.

Name, leave us not. Have not wee reason to make the same use of this Doctrine?

Hosea 12. 4.

That place in *Hosea* 12. 4. is very remarkable, where the Prophet relating to *Jacobs* successefull prayer, speakes thus. He found bin in Bethel, and there he spake with us. *Rivet* hath this note upon the place.

It was a Proverb amongst the Hebrews. *Que patribus acciderunt signum sunt filiis.* The Fathers concernments were the childrens documents. They applyed their Fore-fathers experience unto their owne proper encouragements. And this doth seasonably concerne us in regard of our opposites. For *Israels* God can subdue the rebellious, calme the mutinous, and rectifie the erroneous; in a word. He can beatead us in regard of all other concernments whatsoever. Therefore bee more frequent in prayer. And I beseech you be more reverent in your approaches to the Almighty by holy prayer.

Secondly. To imitate God in his goodnesse to *Israel*. Here remember 2 *Sam.* 9. 1. 7. The ingenuity, the gratitude of *David* towards *Jonathan* in his respects towards his Allyes. Is there any to whom I may shew kindnesse for *Jonathans* sake, &c. Surely we should be kinde to the godly, for Gods sake much more.

1. Be really kind. Doe not feed them only with fair words, 1 *John* 2. 17, 18. I *Iohn* 2. 17, 18. My little children (said the beloved Disciple) let us not love in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

When they petition you according to their severall necessities, and grievances, doe not thinke it enough to tell them, that you will in due time take their case into consideration. Right Honourable and Beloved, our God is not only verbally good unto his *Israel*; it is not his manner to put off Petitioners with good words. 2. Be singularly favourable to such, *Gal.* 6. 9. Do good especially to the Household of Faith. Let the world know that you will put a difference betwixt a Saint and a Malignant; and that your actions distinguish betwixt them who have bene faithfull to God and you, and such who have bene false both to you and God. Let piety rather then private interests, and self-seeking draw forth your favour. Mind this I beseech you both in your acts of charity, and in conferring offices, places of honour, advantage and trust. Let mee be

your

your remembrancer in particular, in behalf of the wounded soldiers who have lost their limbs for you : and in the behalfe of poor widowes, whose husbands have lost their lives in your service.

Doubtlesse both religion and reason doth call for that, for which I humbly move. 3. Be constantly friendly to them, Gal. 6. 9, 10.

Be not weary of well-doing. This was commended in the Hebrews, Heb. 6. 10. You have Ministered to the necessities of the Saints, & doe yet minister.

Oh never let it be truly said that Englands Parliament growes cold-hearted towards old true-hearted friends. I might here mind you of that change which appears in you, both towards Gods faithfull Ministers and others, who have been your fait and faithfull friends in the times of your greatest needs. Our Saviour gives you three admirable encouragements, Mat. 25. 10 practise this duty in imitation of your heavenly Father. These offices of love shall finde with Jesus Christ.

1. Kind acceptance, vers. 40. In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.

2. Firm remembrance, vers. 34, 35, &c. Then shall the King say I was an hungred, and ye gave me meate, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drinke, &c.

At the day of judgment all particular expressions of love shall be recorded.

3. Large recompence, vers. 34. Come ye blessed, inherit the Kingdome prepared for you. The activity of faith wil add efficacy to these short hints.

Thirdly, to requite Israels God I remember 2 King. 4. 13. the speech of the Prophet to the woman who had beene kind to him.

Tbou hast had all this care for us, what shall wee doe for thee. Yea the Heathens yield to the law of retaliation in reference to men, Mat. 5. 46, 47. and therefore Christ saith. This is no singular thing.

And shall we be worse in relation to God? O God forbid. But you wil aske me the question in Job 22. 2. Can a man be profitable to God, as hee that is wise is profitable to himselfe?

And I must answer, that the question implies a strong negation. For Psal. 16. 2. Our well-doing doth not extend to God by way of advantage.

And our Saviour hath taught us to say. When we have done all, Luke 17. 10. that we are unprofitable servants. Yet a gracious heart will be enquiring, Ps. 116. 12. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me.

Knowing that God may be glorified by man, in a way of manifestation, though not by addition of any thing to him, who is both perfect and infinite. And this may be done by your Covenant.

keeping,

E 3

Gal. 6. 9, 10. Heb. 6. 10. Math. 25. 2 Kings 4. 13. Math. 5. 46, 47. Job 22. 2. Psalm 16. 2. Lu. 17. 10. Ps. 116. 12.

keeping, *Pf. 116.12.14.* This was one part of the Psalmists answer unto the fore-mentioned demand. *I will pay my vowes.* Wherein should be endeavoured, 1. The conforming of your owne lives to Gods commands, according to the advice of *Ioshuab* to others, & his resolution in regard of himself, wherof we read at large in the 24th. chapter of his Book. 2. The reforming of your Families. The practise of *Iacob* should be your pattern, who said, *Gen 35.2.* *To his household and all that were with him, put away the strange Gods that are among you, and make you cleane.* 3. And the promoting of Gods publike worship, *Exod. 15.2.* *The Lord is my strength & song (saith Moses & Israel) and he is become my salvation, he is my God, and I will prepare for him an habitation.* The things which I onely name, are of mighty concernment, and they more concerne you then your Fore-fathers, as in many other regards, so in respect of your Solemn League and Covenant w^{ch} should never be forgotten.

EXO. 15.2.

Phil 2.12.

Here I humbly crave leave to entreat you (Noble Senators) for Gods sake to be good unto his *Israel*. I now speake of *Israel* as a politique body. The Apostle calls the Church the *Commonwealth of Israel*, *Ephes. 2. 12.* And seeing God hath called me this day to speake in his Name to you, as to speake in Christs name for you, I will be faithfull. I told you before, that *Israel* is Gods peculiar treasure. And should ^{not} crown Jewels be cared for?

*Tametsi
totum orbē
moderetur,
Ecclesiam
tamen su-
am, quam
tuendam
suscepit
proprie
intuitu
dignatur.
Hæc ratio
est, cur
propheta
Israelem
nominet.
Calv.*

Now mee thinkes I heare you whisper, what would the man have? Doe you ask, What would the man have? The Minister of Christ, and your servant (Right Honourable) would have the *Israel* of God minded, the wel-fare of the Church more endeavoured. We have liberty to speake to God for *Israel*, and therefore may be bold to speake for *Israel* to the chiefest of men. I beseech you be good to the Church abroad, and to the Church at home. As for the Church abroad, I shall now looke no further then into *Scotland* and *Ireland*.

For *Scotland* I request, 1. A thankfull remembrance of their brotherly love and assistance in the time of our great need.

2. Sympathizing bowels towards them in regard of the fires which yet burn there, together with constant prayers.

3. Care to continue firm the brotherly League of Love, and zealous withstanding all overtures to the contrary.

4. And readinesse to perform all good offices for that Church and

and Nation, as occasion may be offered in way of reall requitall.

For bleeding *Ireland*, As I earnestly petition from you and all Christian praying hearts, teares and prayers, in wayes ordinary and extraordinary, till the Lord be pleased to subdue the Rebels there, and to settle peace with truth amongst them. So I beseech your care;

1. That such Forces may be speeded thither, as in probability may (through Gods blessing) dispatch the work there. Alas, alas, why are our motions so slow for our brethrens relief and deliverance. Their estates, liberties, blood, lives, cry to you for reliefe. Take heed lest through your neglect, their blood cry to God for vengeance.

2. That the Army there, and to be sent thither, may be comfortably and constantly supplied for their encouragement. For you know by experience, what it is to promote the succesfull service of Souldiers by filling them with accommodations, and what it is to break them, by with-holding means of subsistence and comfort.

Now for the Church at home, what shall I say for distracted, divided *England*. You know our diseases, our disorders, our breaches, our dangers, and God hath given you power and oportunities to doe us much good. You have heads and hands, the good Lord give you hearts also more and more to be faithfully serviceable to himselfe and unto *Israel*.

And here for *Zions* sake I must not be silent, but shall make bold to Petition sixe things, by the granting whereof I am confident, you shall honour God, and well provide for *Israels* well-fare.

1. The speedy setting of Church-governement through the Kingdome. And herein I intreat you be *God-like* for our *Israel*.

1. In Reality, 2. In Constancy. 3. and Singularity of endeavours.

I acknowledge with thankfulness your good beginnings, and I desire that *Nehemiah-like* yon may not cease till the work be finished.

Our God when he hath begun a good worke in us, *hee will perfect it*. And in the parable he is counted an unwise builder, who begins and makes not an end, *Luke 14*. An

An half-faced government will make us a scorn to our enemies at home, and a wonder to our friends abroad. I beseech you let Gods house bee built and governed according to his own pattern. Remember *Moses* exactnesse, in acting to rule, *Heb. 5.* And the commendation which the holy Ghost gives of his faithfulness. I intreat you to proceed from good motions to good actions, and in good actions to perfections. And let your hearts speak as *Psal. 137. 5, 6.* *If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I doe not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roose of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefe joy, or the head of my joy.* You should rather be content to be cut short of all comforts, to be disabled for any employment, then grow regardlesse of Gods Church. The flourishing estate of the Church should be more in your hearts and aimes, then your own houses or the Common-wealth.

*Magistratus
& custos u.
riusue tabule.*

2. The setting up of good Magistrates in every Countrey, who may be at hand to countenance the exercise of Ecclesiasticall government. Therefore let not Parentage, parts, and partymony be looked upon as the only, or the chiefe requisites in a Justice of Peace, or such others who are to be invested with authority from you to manage the affaires of State. But set up men according to *Jethro* his direction, *Exod. 17. 22.* *Men of courage, fearing God, hating covetousnesse, dealing truly.* You should know them well whom you intend to trust with the civill Sword, for the consequence of such a trust is marvellous. great.

3. The enlivening of old laws, and the making of new ones, for the punishing of old sins, and the suppressing of new disorders. It is worthy your time and study to find out the best medicines to cure our growing diseases.

*Ex malis mori-
bus bonæ nas-
cuntur leges.*

You have made good overtures to see unto the better observation of the Sabbath day, and Fasting dayes, I beseech you practically prosecute those and such like motions. You know that execution is the life of the Law.

Lately you appointed a Solemn generall Fast that we might be humbled before God, and pray, in regard of the inundation of Errours and Heresies. Give mee leave to aske you whether you only intended to speake to God, and to act nothing. If you doe not act according to your Orders and Prayers, God

will judge you as hypocriticall abusers of his Name and Ordinance. Doubtlesse proportionable to your sincerity in appointing that Fast, will be your zeale to suppress that, for which you professed humiliation before God.

4. The regulating of the Army. That the Souldiers may neither, 1. Oppress the estates. 2. Nor infect the souls of poor people.

Its reported that your best friends are worst dealt with. Faithfull Ministers and others, who have done and suffered most for your sake, are most pinched by quartering, and that many known Cavalliers are entertained and maintained in our Army. Its too notorious that all sorts of Errors abound and are abetted there. Either these reports which common fame carries abroad, are true or false.

If false, then upon examination let the Army be cleared by some Act of yours. But if true, then I humbly Petition, that for the credit of the Army, the peace of the Kingdome, the well-fare of the Church, that for *Israels* sake you would speedily bethinke your selves how your army may be throughly purged.

5. The reforming of the Universities. I hope you desire both a Learned Magistracy and Ministry, therefore the Universities should in no case be neglected.

1. Encourage the good work begun at *Cambridge*, by providing honourable maintenance for the Masters of Colledges, that they may be able to live there, in that sort as may become their places. If this bee not done, they must either relinquish their charge there, which would be destructive to the worke of Reformation, or else be non-residents, which will be scandalous.

2. Speed the desired, much needed, long looked for ^{comission} ~~coun-~~ sels for the purging of polluted *Oxford*. You cannot be ignorant how much matters are out of order there, both in reference to errours, yea heresies impudently broached, and also in respect of professed Malignants continued. I am credibly informed, that some Parents remove their children from thence, because the Univerfity is so corrupt, and their hopes of a Reformation are tired out through disappointments.

Give me leave humbly to petition your serious, your zealous care, that piety may be cherished, learning encouraged, errors suppressed, profaneness punished, and notorious incorrigible Malignants checked in both Universities.


6. The encouraging of pious painfull Ministers. Had you no regard of them, as Christs Embassadors, and such who under him are to bee Saviours to your soules: yet I pray you remember how your work hath been carried on by their hands. Therefore I humbly move; that neither their Callings may be contemned and reproached as Antichristian by them who are factious and impetuous.

2. Nor their administrations interrupted by such who are Malignants profane or seditious.

3. Nor their due maintenance fraudulently or violently withheld upon any pretence whatsoever. In this particular I professe that I speak for my Brethren the more boldly, because my selfe through Gods goodnesse have no reason through want to speak for my selfe. Right Honourable, I beseech you slight not my faithfull advice from God and for God. Remember you are Gods *Stewards*, and must bee accountable to him how you spend your time, improve your parts, trade your Interests, use your authority. The worke is worthy, and such as may wel become the greatest among men, for it is Gods own work to care for the good of *Israel*. And it will bee your honour among men to be repairers of our breaches, yea it will be your comfort before God here and hereafter, when you call to mind the faithfull service which you have done for his servants, his house and Name.

I conclude all with this request (which was the first in mine eye in the choise of my Text) that you would in imitation of our God, be really, constantly, and abundantly good unto his *Israel*.

FINIS.



Die Mercurij 28^o Aprilis, 1647.

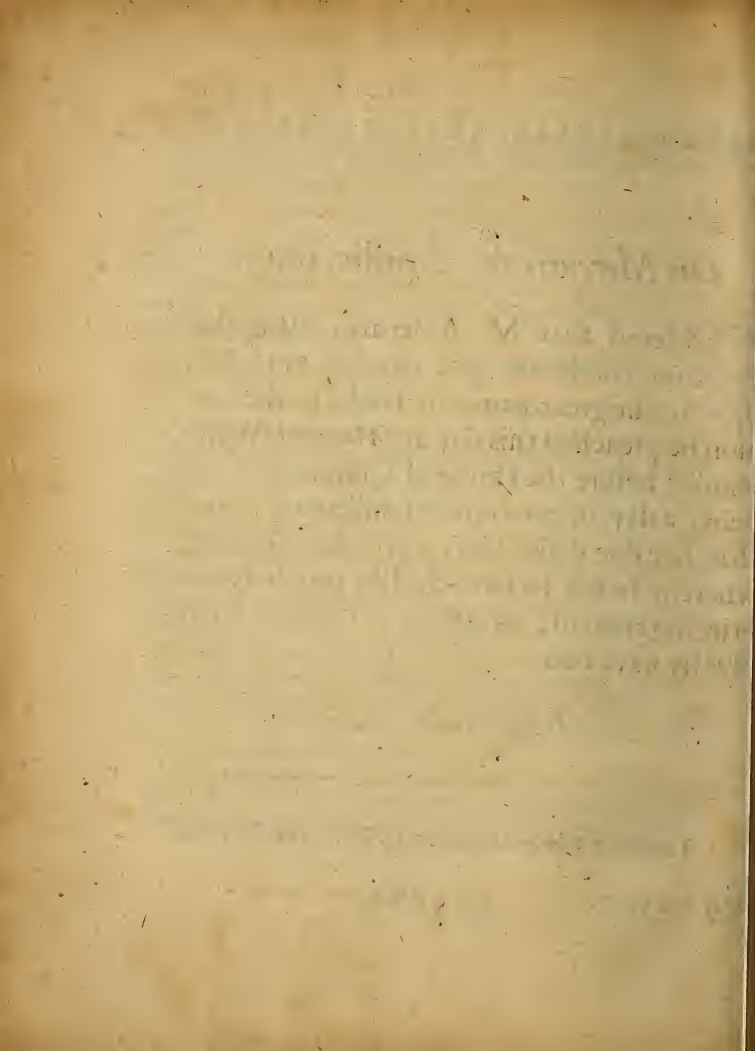
ORDERED that Mr. Alderman *Atkin* doe from this House give thanks unto Mr. *Ash* for the great paines he tooke in the Sermon he preached this day at *Margarets* Westminster before the House of Commons, (it being a day of publique Humiliation) And that hee doe desire him to print his Sermon, wherein hee is to have the like priviledge in printing thereof, as others in the like kind usually have had.

H. Elsing. Cler. Parl. D. Com.

I appoint *Edward Brewster* to Print this Sermon.

May 25. 1647.

SIMEON ASH.



Reall Thankfulnesse :

O R,

A SERMON PREACHED

In *PAULS* Church *LONDON*,

Vpon the second day of *November*, 1645.

At a Publike Thanksgiving for the taking in of the
Towns and Castles of *Caermarthen* and *Mounmouth*
in *Wales*, it being the first *LORDS*-day after the inaugu-
ration of the Right Honourable *Thomas Adams* now
Lord *Major* of that famous City.

By *Simeon Ash* Preacher at *Basingshaw*, *London*, and one
of the Assembly of Divines.

P S A L. 50. 14.

Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most high.

P S A L. 50. 23.

*Who so offereth praise, glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his
conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *G. Miller* for *Edward Brewster* at the Sign of the Bible
on *Ludgate-hill* neer *Fleet-bridge*, M. D C. X L V.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THOMAS ADAMS
Lord Major of the famous City of
LONDON, together with the right worship-
full the Aldermen and Sheriffs thereof.

Right Honourable,



When I prepared this Sermon to attend your commands, it was very farre from my purpose or thoughts, to make it more publike then in the Pulpit. And although I finde in my self an utter avernesse (in many regards) to appear in print, yet your Lordships earnest desire (which I account a command) set on by the solicitations of some others, hath conquered my unwillingnes, to transcribe this Sermon for the Presse.

I presume upon this Dedication, not only because the Sermon was preached, and is printed at your command, but also that I might hereby make an open, gratefull acknowledgement of your love divers waies expressed towards me.

My Sermon is for substance the self same, which you heard, know not any one particular head, which I have either added or diminished, only some phrases are changed (for my memory could not reach the same expressions) and the words of Scripture-quotations are given in more largely, then when I preached. My subject is seasonable for these times, wherein the Lord hath been pleased to give us in this City occasion to celebrate many daies of Thanksgiving. The practice of our praise, is that which God expects, and I perswade.

Unto how many in our Assemblies (when we meet to sing praises) may our God say, *Quid verba audio, cum facta videro* This people draweth nigh to me with their mouth,

and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is farre from me. Loquere, ut te videam. Let your lives answer your language. When shall your works witnesse your thankfulnesse? My Lord, I have often heard you use these words, Quid retribuam Domino? Give me leave to be your Lordships remembrancer; your obligations to the Lord are now much increased, and with them God hath added opportunities of more publike service to himself. Divine providence hath set you in a place of Honour, Authority and Trust, wherein much is expected from you: Magistratus virum indicat. A man is that in truth, which he is when tried. The world will judge of you for the future according to this years service. You be likely to meet with many temptations, to draw you aside both to the right hand and to the left: but I beseech you remember, whose you are, and unto whom you must give a striēt account of all your waies. Advance God in your hearts, design the welfare of Sion; consult most with them, who counsell from God and for God according to his Word, and I beseech you all, often, and seriously minde your selves, and remember others of the solemne Nationall Covenant, that the Almighty may not be further provoked by the neglect and violation of it. For the Sword under which we smart and bleed, doth avenge the quarrell of Gods Covenant, Lev. 26. 25. Therefore let every one thus speak unto the Lord, Praise waiteth for thee ô God in Sion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed, Psal. 65. 1. I will sing praise unto thy Name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows, Ps. 61. 8. Right honourable and right worshipfull, the Lord hath conjoynd you as brethren, in the great work of the Government of this renowned City, I pray God you may be of one minde, soul and way, for the true welfare thereof, and the encouragement of all such in it, who sincerely seek to set up the holy government of Iesus Christ, in whom I am

Your humble Servant,
SIMEON ASH,



Thanksgiving realiz'd.

PSALM. 105. 45.

That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.



His Psalm is Eucharisticall, and this day is a day of Thanksgiving, therefore the subject of the Psalm, and the service of the day, doe well sute. In the Psalm the high exercise of praising God is, First, commanded and partly directed, in the four first verses, *O give thanks unto the*

Lord, &c.

Secondly, Perswaded, in the remaining part of the Psalm.

The arguments used to presse Gods people unto this Angelicall employment, are considerable under two heads.

1. The quality and variety of divine administrations for their comfort, *Remember his marvellous works, that he hath done, his wonders, v. 5. &c.* And that this might be the more prevailing upon their hearts, a large Catalogue of kindeneses conferred, is given in; wherein we have an enumeration of glorious, remarkable providences, in almost fourty verses together.

2. The end which the Lord propounded and aimed at, in all these many and memorable dispensations. And this is held forth in my Text, *That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.* Whereas the life of thanksgiving, lies in *thankesliving*, in a well-ordered obedience to the *God of our Salvations, the God of our mercies.* This is the subject matter of my Text. Wherein are considerable.

1. The titles, whereby the rule of mans obedience is expressed, *Statutes, Laws,*

2. The termes whereby the regularity of deserved obedience, is suggested, *Observe, Keep.*

3. The way or means whereby this regular obedience, is promoted, *viz.* All the wonderfull works of the most High, for his servants, and against their enemies. For the Psalmist having particularized a great number of them, he concludes in the Text. *That, or (as the old Translation renders it) to the intent, they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.* If any should enquire (upon the perusal of these famous providences) the reason, wherefore the Lord wrought wonders so many, so great for *Israel*: the Text gives an account, *That they might observe his statutes and keep his laws.*

From the division of my Text, I proceed to the explication of the severall words used in it: wherein I will be but brief, though something must necessarily be spoken, to make the fairer way, unto that which afterwards must from thence be observed and improved.

You heard before of the two titles given in this Text unto the rule of mans obedience. The first is, *Statutes.* I finde the originall word translated, 1. *A decree,* Psal 148.6. *He hath made a decree which shall not passe.* As all the motions of creatures inferiour to man are bounded by the decrees of Gods dominion (*which are often called the ordinances of Heaven*) So all mans operations should be ordered and limited by his Commandments.

2. *A Portion,* Prov. 31. 15. *She giveth a portion to her Maidens.* And truly Gods commands are a good portion to his people, *I have esteemed the words of his mouth (saith Job) more then my necessary food,* Job 23.12. And, *Thy testimonie. (saith David) are my heritage for ever,* Psal. 119.111. Unto a gracious heart, Gods work is wages, and imployment is preferment.

The second word, is, *Laws.* The originall word is most ordinarily used to signifie the morall law, the Decalogue, that constant standard, or standing law, by which all Nations, in all ages of the world, have been, and shall be bound to order their conversations before God.

Thus much of the words used, to expresse Gods revealed will to guide mans course: It follows, that I explain those words, which suggest mans regular respect thereunto.

The first is, *Observe*, which imports, i. either to minde or reserve in memory. As old *Jacob* is said to *observe the sayings* (the dreams) of *Joseph*, *Gen. 37. 11.*

שמר

2. Or to preserve in safety. In this sense, the same *Jacob* used the word, in his prayer or vow, *Gen. 28. 20. If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, &c.*

And this sense answers the true meaning of the next word, *Keep*, which properly signifies to keep with care and vigilancie, as ammunition is preserved from fire, and false hands, when an enemy is expected, *Nahum 2. 1. He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face, keep the munition, watch the way.*

נצר

Now these notions from the original, are not vain, they are both profitable, and such as answer the more open language of the holy Ghost elsewhere. The laws of the Lord should be treasured up in the cabinet of mans heart and memory, *Prov. 3. 1. My sonne, forget not my Law, but let thine heart keep my Commandments.*

And all the precepts of God, should be secured from violence, that no breach be made upon them, *Keep my Commandments and live, and my Law, as the apple of thine eye, Prov. 7. 2.*

These things I only touch, as I passe forward to that point, on which I purpose to pitch, both because it is the main intended in the Text, and also being most seasonable for the service of the day.

That mans regular observation of all Gods Commandments,

Doct.

is the end of all his glorious administrations for mans comfort.

More short. *The end of Gods bounty, is mans duty.*
Or thus, in reference to the instances of the Psalm, and the experiences of our times. *Therefore the Lord taketh vengeance upon his adversaries, and therefore the Lord worketh the deliverance of his servants, that they might observe his statutes and keep his laws.*

My beloved! Who can number up in order, the great things, which our God hath done for us, now of late, as heretofore?

Our friends have been relieved, our foes have been routed, our prayers have been heard, our hopes revived, our forces prospered, our enemies discomfited. I pray you, fill your thoughts with the particulars, which this day have been mentioned, and upon other occasions specified: And then adde unto the remembrance of all, this Doctrine which now I am to deal in. That Gods end and aim in all, is this, *That we might observe his statutes, and keep his Laws.*

In the handling of this weighty point, well worth our serious considerations, I shall according to my accustomed plainnesse endeavour two things.

1. The explanation of the truth, that it may be rightly understood.

2. The application of it, that it may be fruitfully improved.

I begin with the former, wherein I will be but short, lest I should want time to speak unto the later, which I chiefly intend, it being of greatest and most seasonable concernment.

And here by way of caution, to prevent mistake in this matter under hand, I wish that these four things may be observed.

1. Mans obedience is the end of Gods gracious providences in regard of his precept, though not alwaies in regard of his secret, eternall purpose. I well remember the words of the Psalmist, *Psal. 92. 7. When the wicked doe spring as the grasse, and the workers of iniquity doe prosper, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.* But here I speak not of Gods end in regard of his everlasting, righteous decree, which he is pleased to keep close within his own bosome.

As for the end of his command, revealing his pleasure to the children of men: the words of *Moses that man of God* are plain and pregnant to our purpose, *Deut. 10. 12, 13.* where after an enumeration of various, marvellous favours vouchsafed unto *Israel*, he speaks thus, *And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his waies, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes.*

2. It is the end of God, in (the fore-mentioned) intention, though

though too, too seldom in execution, God having engaged man to obedience by his bounties, he expecteth an obedientiall improvement, though his Majesties expectations are commonly disappointed. The Lords sad complaint of his vineyard, *Isa. 5.* expresseth this fully, *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wilde grapes?* ver. 4. *He looked for judgement, but, behold oppression, for righteousness, but behold a cry,* ver. 7. And our God hath very much occasion of the like lamentation, in this Land, yea in this City at this day, notwithstanding the admirable deliverances, and victories wrought for us. Alas, alas, how few, how very few do any where answer the expectations of his highnesse, in reformation of their waies, and in obedience unto his holy Laws.

3. Although mans observation of Gods statutes, be one end, yet is it not the only end of his manifold favours. For amongst many other aims, which are alwaies in his majesties eye, such is his fatherly indulgence unto his people, that he doth give out cordials on purpose to cheer their drooping spirits, and to facilitate their passage thorow the wildernesse of this world, *Let the Lord be magnified, who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants,* Psal. 35. 27. *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people: for the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity,* Psal. 125. 2, 3.

4. Mans serviceable subjection unto divine injunctions, is not Gods last and chiefest end, in all his glorious dispensations. The ultimate, the supreme end of all Gods purposes and providences, is his own honour, *He doth all things for himself,* Prov. 16. 4. In them who are not obedientially conquered by his kindenesse, he will be glorified. Proud, hard-hearted Pharaoh stubbornly withstood all the assaults of God, made upon himself and his people, both by plagues and deliverances, yet God saith, *Exod. 14.* 4. *I will be honoured upon Pharaoh and upon his host.* And those who are made obedientially fruitfull, by the showres and Sunshine of divine indulgence: they being filled with the fruits of righteousness, are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of

God, Phil. 1. 11. So that all administrations doe at last determine and center in the honour of the most high God, who is the authour and orderer of them.

Yea beyond the duties of obedience, the welfare and happinesse of them who are sincerely obedient, both here and hereafter is ordained and intended by God himself, as an end subordinate unto his own eternall praise, *Oh that there was such an heart in them* (saith the Lord) *that they would keep all my commandments alwaies, that it might be well with them,* Deut. 5. 29. And the Apostle, having provoked the believing Romans unto the work of sanctification, addeth these words, *Ye have your fruit unto holines, and the end everlasting life,* Rom. 6. 22.

Having premised these cautions, these propositions to prevent misapprehensions, and that the meaning of my Text and Doctrine might be truly understood, I proceed unto the Application thereof, which is the second thing promised in the prosecution of the point.

Use. The improvement of this seasonable instruction (thus far unfolded) is that which I had principally in mine eye, in the choice of this Text, and I pray God, so to assist me in this last, and the greatest part of my Sermon, that I may reach your hearts, unto your edification and spirituall advantage. All that I shall say by way of Use, I will give in, under these three heads.

1. Information.
2. Reprehension.
3. Exhortation.

The two former sorts of Uses I shall dispatch quickly, but I shall crave leave to enlarge the last, because most profitable, and most pertinent unto this Congregation, and most conducing to promote the realizing of those praises, which this day we present unto our God.

Information Hence it naturally and necessarily follows, That the disobedience of those persons is most abominable and inexcusable, who have been under the most, and best administrations of the Almighty.

Such offenders doe not only violate the Laws of Sovereignty, but of Amity. Their neglects, their miscarriages, are not only undutifulnesses,

ducifulnesses, but unthankfulnesses and unkindnesses.

It is here considerable how the holy Ghost doth ordinarily cast this circumstance, as a loading aggravation upon the sins both of Nations and persons, to break their hearts in the deepest humiliation, and to justifie God in his sharpest corrections. Thus *Samuel* sets upon unsubdued *Israel*, *1 Sam. 12. 6.* And *Samuel* said unto the people, It is the Lord that advanced *Moses* and *Aaron*, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of *Egypt*. Now therefore stand still that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers. When *Jacob* was come into *Egypt*, and your fathers cried unto the Lord, then the Lord sent *Moses* and *Aaron*, which brought forth your fathers out of *Egypt*, and made them dwell in this place, &c. And the Lord sent *Jerubbaal*, and *Bedan*, and *Jephthah*, and *Samuel*, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies, on every side, and ye dwelled safe. Here is the commemoration of mercies. Now follows the sin thereby aggravated. And when ye saw that *Nahash* the king of the children of *Ammon* came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your king. Beloved, I may not spend time in paralleling these passages, with Gods providences towards this poor Kingdom, and this Kingdoms miscarriages towards the Lord. Do it your selves, I pray you, and I doubt not, but the serious doing of it, will be advantageous both in the advancing of our God, and in the abasing of our selves before him. *Englands* deliverances and mercies. *Londons* deliverances and mercies have been more and greater then of other Kingdoms and Citics; therefore *Englands* sins, and *Londons* sins are more hainous, horrid, high provocations of the most high God.

And as the evils of a people are thus aggravated by the Lord; so are the offences of particular persons also. In this manner *Samuel* greatens the disobedience of King *Saul*, *1 Sam. 15. 16.* Then *Samuel* said unto *Saul*, Stay, and I will tell thee, what the Lord said unto me this night. When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast not thou made the head of the tribes of *Israel*, and the Lord anointed thee King over *Israel*? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners,

1 Sam. 11. 6.

7.

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1 Sam. 15.

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19 *the Amalekites, and fight against them, till they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst flie upon the spoyle, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?*

I will not glosse upon this Scripture, which might truly be applied unto many of the richest and chiefest rank in this City: but I humbly beseech you to remember from what low and little beginnings, the Lord hath advanced many of you; and then reflecting upon your lives; consider what account you can give unto his Majestie, for your obedience (or for your disobedience rather) to his holy Commandments. Yea, this course God hath been wont to take with his own dearest servants, to work them unto true repentance. *Davids scandalous fals are well known (I might say they are ill known by too many, who thence take encouragement to offend) and I believe you are not ignorant of that course, which his God took by Nathans ministry, to present his sins as very sinfull in his own sight, 2 Sam. 12.7,8. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, And I gave thee thy Masters house, and I gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee, such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to doe evil in his sight? &c. Herein, herein, lies the aggravation. Wherefore hast thou? Thou so preserved, thou so preferred. How canst thou answer this?*

Give me leave to touch one instance more, which I doe the rather adde, because it concerneth men of mine own cloth and calling, that you may be convinced: We Ministers desire to aggravate our own faults, by the self-same circumstances, whereby we greaten yours. *Eli his sinfull indulgence to his wicked sons is notorious; now mark how a Messenger from the Lord paints out this his provocation, in black colours, 1 Sam. 2, 27. Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaohs house? And did I choose him out of all the Tribes of Israel to be my Priest, to offer upon mine Altar, to burn incense before me? And did I give unto the house of thy father, all the offerings made by fire of the children*

2 Sam. 11.

7.

8.

9.

1 Sam. 2 27.

28.

29.

children

dren of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, &c. And honourest thy sons above me? We, who are the Ministers of the Lord should look upon our aberrations, as the more loathsome, because God hath honoured us with an high and holy imployment in speciall attendance upon himself.

I might much enlarge this meditation, by acquainting you, that guilt under this notion, is most grievous unto a truly gracious, repenting heart. It was this that cut good *David* to the quick, when he cried out, *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, Ps. 51.4.*

But I must leave this Use, because not so fully suitable unto the peculiar service of this day.

The next Use follows, which is for the just reproof of two sorts of persons, whose practices do point blank oppose this purpose of God, in conferring favours, which my Text makes report of.

Reprehenſion

First, who in handling this doctrine, can hold his hand off them, who are the lesse obedient and the more dissolute in their lives, because of Gods long-sufferance and loving kindenesse. This sticks, as a black brand upon King *Rehoboam*, *2 Chro. 12.1.* *It came to passe that when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the Law of the Lord.*

It may be truly said of many, that they had not been so bad and base in their lives, if God had not bin so bountifull to them in his bestowings. Herein men discover their egregious folly, which can no way be excused, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish people & a wise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, & established thee? Remember the days of old, &c. De. 32.6,7*

Yea, herein appears the vile malignity of our natures, the inbred poysonous disposition of our unhallowed hearts, which Spider-like suck venome out of those sweet flowers, from whence the little laborious Bee draweth wax and honey.

I have three things to say unto such persons, which I heartily wish may tend unto their humiliation and amendment.

1. That this hainous abuse of Gods bounties, is a sad sign of an unregenerate estate. *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness, in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, Isa. 26.10.* I have heard the Hypocrite somerimes compared to a Top, which goes no longer then it is lashed.

The expressions

pressions of the Psalmist concerning such unsound hearts, are here notable, *Psal. 73. 34.* *When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and they enquired early after God, &c.* Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant.

2. That in this particular, idolaters expresse more respects unto their vain, dumb, idle Idols, then these people do unto the only, true, living, world-governing God, God blessed for ever. For observe how the Prophet *Hosea*, bringeth in the idolatrous, reasoning for their Idol-worship, *Hos. 2. 5.* *I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool, and my flax, mine oyl, and my drink.* In which respect, we may take up against these malefactours, the patheticall complaint of the Lord, *Jer. 2. 9.* *I will yet plead with you (saith the Lord.) For passe over the Isles of Chittim and see, send unto Kedar and consider diligently, and see if there be any such thing. Hath a Nation changed their gods which are yet no gods? but my people hath changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, ô ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord &c.*

3. That this carriage is no better then brutish, *Jesurun* (saith *Moses*) waxed fat and kicked, thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatnesse. Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation, *Deut. 32. 15.* The Metaphor is taken from the foolish Ass, which being kept low, will come to the Masters hand, but being put into a full pasture, waxeth wanton, and either runs away from his feeder, or else turns heels, and strikes him.

And the zealous Prophet *Jeremiah* doth with much sharpnesse speak in like manner unto these beastly kinde of men, *When I fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the Harlots houses. They were, as fed horses in the morning, every one neighing after his neighbour. wife. Shall I not visit for these things (saith the Lord) and shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation, as this?*

The Lord awaken the sleeping consciences of such, whom thi
quic

Jer. 2. 9.

10.
11.

Jer. 5. 7.

2.

9.

quick reproof doth reach, that they may be the better for it through his rich grace in Jesus Christ.

The second sort to be blamed I shall touch with a more gentle hand (*viz.*) all those whose ends and aims, in seeking, and in bestowing favours, are directly contrary unto the command and practice of our blessed God. I here point at offenders, in the same kinde, under a double head.

Use 2.
Reproof.

1. Such who in the pursuit of outward advantages and accommodations for themselves, do only intend the gratifying of the flesh, the satisfying of their own hellish lusts. The Apostle *James* checketh these men, *Jam. 4. 3. Ye ask amisse, that ye may consume upon your lusts.* And there is a smart rebuke of *Baruch*, wrapped up in that Question, which the Prophet *Jeremiah* propoundeth to him, *Jer. 45. 5. Seekest thou great things for thy self?* Those must take this home to themselves, who minde nothing so much, as *Rich, sensuality, pride, luxury, revenge*, and the like, in coveting and hunting after vast estates, places of honour and command in the world.

2. Those who in conferring places of profit, authority, employment and trust upon others, doe principally (if not only) aim at the making of a party, the strengthening of a faction, against the government and waies of Jesus Christ. I will make no instances, but leave it to your wisdom and consciences to make application and improvement of this generall Item.

If there be any, whose purses, power, votes, vigour, are to fill offices with men, whose mindes, hearts, hands are against the power of godlinesse, the purity of Gospel-ordinances, the progresse of our Church-Reformation, I wish they would consider, that they are not herein acted by the Spirit of God. I will not make any application of *Balaaks* promise to promote *Balaam*, if he would endeavour to discomfit *Israel*, lest I should seem over-tart. Neither would I be thus interpreted in that I have spoken, as though I purposed to strike secretly, any who labour in the sincerity and simplicity of their spirits, to make Jesus Christ glorious in the world. Let my tongue rather cleave to the rooff of my mouth for ever, then that I dare to utter one word wittingly and wilfully against the honour of our Lord Christ Jesus.

Numb. 22.

Use 3.

Exhortation

Now I come to the last Use, which is to persuade us all unto a double duty, and accordingly is to be divided into two branches:

I. Branch.

First, We are hence to be moved to praise God for this his indulging providence, in that he is pleased by means of kindnesses to seek the winning and working of our hearts unto his holy obedience.

This inference is made to my hand, in the words immediately following the Text, *Praise ye the Lord*. Now to quicken our hearts unto the admiration and adoration of God, in this regard, let these following short meditations, be seriously considered.

1. That mans obedience makes no whit at all unto Gods advantage, *Can a man be profitable to God? Is it any gain to him, that thou madest thy waies perfect? Job 22. 2, 3. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he at thine hand? Job 35. 7.* These interrogations carry along with them vehement negations. That it is not possible to profit God in the least measure, by our best obedientiall endeavours.

Men hire servants, because their work tends to enrich them. But in references to the Almighty, Allsufficient God, all must say, *When we have done all those things, that are commanded, we are unprofitable servants, Luk. 17. 10. My well-ding* (saith David, though a man according to Gods own heart) *doth not extend unto thee, Psal 16. 2.* For unto that, which is infinite and perfect, no possible addition can be made.

2. That mans disobedience doth not in any degree prejudice God, *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? Job 35. 6.* The Sun is not obfcured by mans refusing to behold it, or to commend the light of it.

The self-same beauties, perfections, happineffe, which the Lord enjoyed in himself from eternity, he shall possess for ever, though no creature should servicesably attend upon him.

Amongst men it is otherwise, for a stock cannot be traded, a trade cannot be managed, many necessary works would be undone,

done, if we had not the assistance of servants. The Crown needs the Plow, the chiefest could not subsist, but by the support of the meanest. The feet uphold the head, and the whole body.

3. That Gods rich, meer mercy did move him, to make manifest his minde unto man; that man might understand what carriage would content his blessed Majestie, and in this regard (if God had not added any further motive to obedience) we are obliged to honour his highnesse, *He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgements unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his judgements they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord, Psal. 147. 19, 20.*

What if the Lord had left us all in our naturall darknesse, as Heathens unacquainted with his Commandments, yet should we not have had any occasion to except against his Majestie.

But how great is our engagement to our God, who having given some light of knowledge, doth liberally give in favours, to move the obedientiall improvement thereof?

4. Suppose that the Lord (suspending all waies of love and liberality towards us, should only by threats and blows, have endeavoured our obedience, yet in that respect there would have been cause of thankfulness, for it is much better to be beaten to Gods work, then to neglect it. *David* was of this minde, *Psalm 119. 67, 68. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word. Thou art good, and dost good. And. vers. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.*

Therefore the waies of fairnesse, and fatherly indulgence, whereby God seeks to conform our hearts and lives unto his Commandments, should endear him to our hearts; and draw forth our souls in thanksgiving.

5. The worke and worship of the Almighty, which we take in hand, is alwaies more or lesse defiled; Gods excellencies are much obscured, his name sundry ways dishonoured, by our imperfections which ever attend our best performances. There is iniquity in our holy offerings, *All our righteousnesses are like unsightly rags.* Isa. 64.

when good *Nehemiah* reviewed his famous services for God and his house, upon the discovery of his sinfulnesses, he cries out, *Neh. 13.22. Lord, pardon me according to thy great mercies.*

Now all this God knows, yea he fore-knew all our future aberrations, when he showered down favours, to move our obedience, *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance, Psal. 90.8.* And *David* testifieth, *Psal. 139.2.* That God knows his thoughts as farre off. Is it not therefore to be very much admired, that the Lord should by renewed and multiplied favours labour to prevail with our hearts, *To observe his statutes, and to keep his Laws?*

6. Lastly, (as though all that I have spoken were too little) the Lord hath herein further manifested and magnified his unsearchable grace, that he hath undertaken abundantly to recompence all our obedience, *In keeping of his Commandments there is great reward, Psal. 119.11.*

Every self-knowing Christian, who is wont with any seriousness, to compare his returns to God, with his receipts from God, will freely acknowledge that he is alwaies infinitely behinde hand with his Majesty: therefore considering his former favourable providences, to perswade obedience, together with future precious promises, to crown obedience, we have all reason to call upon our selves, *Praise we the Lord:* and to say unto one another, *Praise ye the Lord.*

2. Branch.

The second branch of my Exhortation follows, which I have had principally in my minde and aim, all this while.

To perswade your conscientious care to improve all Gods favourable providences unto the promoting and bettering of obedience, according to his purpose and appointment, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Rom. 12. 1.

If my Exhortation upon this ground be not reasonable, lay it aside, *I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.* Beloved, I am very serious in this my message, being not only feasonable, but of exceeding great concernment, and I shall be very unwilling to goe off with a deniall unto this my reasonable request,

which

which I make in the Name of God for your good.

Manifold examples might be produced to presse this Exhortation. That double, that treble resolution of *Israel*, raised from this consideration, is notable, *God forbid, that we should forsake the Lord, for the Lord our God he it is that brought us up, and our Fathers out of Egypt, from the land of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, &c. Therefore we will also serve the Lord.*

Motive 1.

Josh. 24. 14, 16
vers. 17.

18.

And again, when *Joshua* seemed by his words to suspect their sincerety, *The people said unto Joshua. Nay, but we will serve the Lord.*

21.

And yet once more, *Joshua* putting them to it unto purpose, *The people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.*

24.

But I will come lower, then *Israel* professing dependance upon God. The very Heathens, wicked ones, moved only by morall principles, will requite kindeneses in respect to the law of retaliation, *If you do good to them, which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do the same.* And yet in reference unto God, I now request no more. Doe but Christianly endeavour to answer Gods kindeneses with an obedientiall carriage, and I call for no more.

I remember, when cruell *Saul*, plotting and practising *David*s death, was yet by *David*s forbearance to slay him (having power and opportunity) to overcome, that he brake forth into these words, *My son David, I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day,* 1 Sam. 26. 21. Gods long-sufferance and loving kindenesse to us-ward, doth wonderfully exceed all that *David* either did or could expresse towards *Saul*: He hath not only with-drawn his own revenging hand, though we have infinite times provoked him to his face, but he hath also held the bloody hands of cruell men, who have desired our death: yea, we doe not only enjoy safety, but rich supplies of comforts from our God. How much rather therefore should we resolve no more to dishonour God by our disobedience, but to observe his statutes, and to keep his laws.

2. This gratefull obedience, the Lord will graciously accept,

as a full contenting recompence for all his bounties. When *Moses* had numbred up multitudes of blessings bestowed upon *Israel*, he adds, *Deut. 10. 12, 13.* *And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to walk in all his waies, to keep his Commandments?* As if he had said, this is all, he will be satisfied with this, he looks for no more. O beloved, how deeply are we indebted unto the most high God, and yet such is his indulgence, that upon sincere observation of his laws (which by vertue of our being reasonable creatures, we are bound to yeeld) he will cast a *quietus est*, a full acquittance into our bosomes.

But if this consideration cannot prevail with you, yet I pray you consider on the other hand, how unkindly the Lord taketh their disobedience, towards whom he abounds in benefits. How patheticall is that complaint of God himself against his *Israel*, breathed forth by the Evangelicall Prophet, *Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth, for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me. The Ox knows his owner, and the Ass his masters crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* *Ab sinfull Nation.* In reference unto this lamentation, which the Lord maketh over stubborn, unthankfull ones, I will only say thus much; Have you not yet offended your God enough, but will you proceed to grieve him still.

3. This practising of Gods praises will be many waies beneficiall to our selves.

1. It will render us wise, in the account of all such, who with any seriousness consider our great obligations unto God. *Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and understanding, in the sight of the Nations which shall hear of these statutes, and say, Surely this great Nation is a wise and understanding people. For what Nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things, that we call upon him for?* *Deut. 4. 6, 7.* Is it not wisdom to observe him, who secures our persons and comforts; whose ever-waking and all working providence is for our good in every kinde? And how can man more manifest his wisdom, then by making Gods eads, his ayme

in every thing? Now Gods end in the administrations of his love is, *That we may observe his statutes, and keep his laws.*

2. This obedientiall improvement of Gods goodnesse, will evidence the uprightnesse of our hearts. Mark *Dauids* argument which he pleads before the all-knowing God, *Psal. 26. O Lord, I have walked in mine integrity, ver. 1. For thy loving kindnesse is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth, ver. 3.* Threats and blows drive hypocrites to duty, but cords of love draw the gracious heart unto exact walking with his God.

3. When former favours produce better obedience, then may we boldly expect the multiplication of future mercies. *Moses* having, *Deut. 29.* specified some of *Israels* rich receipts from Gods good hand, from *vers. 2.* to the *9th*, he thus concludes, *Keep therefore the words of this Commandment, and doe them, that ye may prosper in all that ye doe.* The self-seeking husband-man will cast precious seed with a liberall hand into a fruitfull soyl, which is wont to return an answerable crop. God hath the end of his bounties, in our obedience. And his promises to follow and to fill them who are obedient, with blessings of all sorts, are manifold in the holy Scriptures.

Deut. 28. 1-14
Lev 26. 1-12

4. Many and heavy are the judgements threatned against them who continue stubbornly disobedient, notwithstanding the sweet assaults made upon them, by Gods gracious administrations. That commination in *Deut. 28. 47, 48.* hath often affected and affrighted my heart, in reference to this trembling Kingdome, *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladnesse of heart, for the abundance of all things (mark that, for the abundance of all things), therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send upon thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakednesse, and in the want of all things, and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, untill he hath destroyed thee.* When *Samuel* had pressed the bettering of obedience, by Gods remarkable works, (which is the very exhortation, which I have now under hand) he sets it on by the self-same Argument, *1 Sam. 12. 24, 25. Fear the Lord, and serve him in truth,*

truth, with all your heart ; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still doe wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your King. Beloved, we know to our sorrow, that both our King and his Kingdoms are in a wasting condition. God forbid, O God forbid, that our continued disobedience should work our utter consumption and desolation.

This which I have said is sad, and I have made mine own heart say by saying it ; yet that is much more lamentable, which the Apostle *Paul* reports concerning Gods judgement upon poor, purblind Heathens, for their ingratitude, in not living up to their light, to their receipts, Rom. 1. 21. *Because when they knew God (it is meant of knowledge attained by Gods works) they glorified him not as God, neither were thankfull, &c. Wherefore God gave them up unto uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves* vers. 24. The penalty inflicted upon the immortall soul is the more heavy, because of the souls excellency. And meer torment upon the well-awakened soul is not comparably so grievous as it's servitude to sinfull lusts. Now this, this judgement or judgement is incurred, by not answering obedientially our receipt from God. And let none thinke to put this off, by saying, This concerned Heathens, but we are Christians : for consider, I beseech you, whether the danger be not hereby increased ? Is our light greater ? Have Gods works amongst us held forth more grace and glory ? Then questionlesse our disobedience will expose us to us great, or greater judgements.

I have done with the Arguments prepared to enforce my Exhortation : and I hope they have so farre prevailed with you, (at least with some of you) as to move resolutions, to make an obedientiall improvement of your experiences. I now proceed to acquaint you with some few rules to direct this your obedience your reall thankfulness unto God, with which I shall conclude. And for brevity sake, I will only mention such, as issue naturall and necessarily from my Text and Doctrine.

1. Therefore God should rather be obeyed, then any man whatsoever. I am farre from dissuading dutifull observance unto lawfull Superiours of any quality or degree : but I propound th

Question

Question of the Apostles, *whether it be better to obey God or men, judge ye*, Act 4.19. & 5.29.

Let him, who doth most and greatest favours for us, receive the largest and frequentest respects from us. Give the chiefest attendance unto the best benefactor. Now who, or what is he, that shall dare to stand in competition with God? No doubt but Joseph, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had so much ingenuity, as to acknowledge with gratitude their obligations unto their Superiours, yet being acted by their stronger, higher engagements unto God, they refused to gratifie them in things displeasing unto his Majesty. And I shall not need to tell you how farre the bestowings of God in quantity, quality and variety, doe transcend all that kindenesse, which either hath been received, or can be expected from any humane hand.

2. Therefore we should obey God with our All. *Both riches and honours come of thee, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. All things come of thee*, 1 Chro. 29.12,14. Is it not reasonable that all which is received from the Lord, should be employed for the Lord? You Merchants expect thus much in justice and equity from your factours beyond seas, that whatsoever commodities you convey unto them, should be disposed of to your advantage. Now I pray you turn the Tables, and deal you with God, as you require men should deal with you. Who doth not acknowledge strength in the Apostles argument? 1 Cor.6.20. *Glorifie God both in your body and in your spirit, which are Gods*. Therefore if we grant the premisses, it will be our weaknes to deny the Conclusion.

Consider what I say. If any of you enjoy any wisdom, strength, authority, estates, parts, interests, opportunities, which you received not from the Lord, then refuse to lay them forth for the Lord. But let me appeal unto every individual soul here present, in the Apostles words, *What hast thou which thou didst not receive?* 1 Cor.4.7. The inference therefore comes with force upon you, *Thou shalt love* (and consequently thou shalt obey) *the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy thought, with all thy might*, *Cum omni valde tua*: O it is an unequall and unreasonable thing, to make any deeds of reservation in our dealings.

with our God, the *God of all grace and of all consolations* whatsoever.

3. Therefore our obedience unto God, should be tendered speedily. For is not the Lord so farre beforehand with us in his favours, that *in tū vū*, at this very instant, we are engaged obsequiously to submit unto his government? *Jashua* having particularized to *Israel* ancient providences, whereby God had expressed his care and kindnesse towards them and their fore-fathers, he calls for service without delay, *Josh. 24. 14. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him.* Doe not any of you dare to put off God one day longer with procrastinations. A father said, that *cras, cras, was corvina vox.* Delaies will breed guilt, and bring danger. Let us call to minde how much we were in Gods debt, how farre in arrears, before we began to pay one peny (as it were) in any humble, holy, hearty performance. Therefore let us now, now obedientially remember our Creatour, our Protectour, our Benefactour, our God blessed for ever, *To day, while it is called to day, do not harden your hearts.*

4. Therefore in all waies of holy obedience, we should *walk humbly with our God.* Well may this alone abase our hearts, that the excellencies of the Lord, and the worth of his service, should not be sufficient to work us unto dutifulnesse, without a daily addition of fresh favours from his Majesty. But when we compare our unanswerableness to Gods purposes, expectations, deservings, it is strange that there should be the least conceitednesse in us, in regard of any work at any time discharged. If ever man had occasion to glory in his labours, and adventures for Christ, the Apostle *Paul* (I thinke) might be the man. But he professeth, *Act. 20. 19: That he served the Lord in all humility of minde.* Now it is most apparent, that besides other means whereby he attained and maintained this sweet, humble frame of spirit, this was one, *viz.* That he had much in his eye, his rich receipts from Christ, which he was no way able to requite. And I am confident, that by a serious, wise paralleling that which God doth for us, with that which we doe for him, in regard of *quantity, quality, variety and constancy,* the swelling of our hearts will be much abated.

5. There-

5. Therefore all our services for God should be the warm breathings of flaming love. All the undertakings of St Paul for Christ, seemed to be sparks arising out of this fire. He speaking of labours, losses, hazards, gives in this as the reason of all, 2 Cor. 5. 14. *For the love of Christ constraineth.* And when David had endeared his God to his heart, by meditating upon his mercies, Psal. 116. 1. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my supplication, &c.* From thence did issue obedientiall resolutions, *I will call upon the Lord. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* Although God alloweth the use of other arguments to quicken obedience, yet this of love should have the preeminence.

6. Therefore we should serve the Lord in truth, because he hath done great things for us, 1 Sa. 13. 24. This truth is opposed to seemingnes and falshood. God doth not feed us with fair words. We do not only hear of his bounties, but we see, touch, taste, enjoy the comforts of his good providences. Let us answer our God with realities, *If any man only seem to be religious, his religion is vain,* Jam. 1. As for those who content themselves with shews of godlines, denying the power thereof, they are abhorred by the Lord. *Be not deceived, for God will not be mocked, According as every man sows, so shall he reap. If you sow the winde, you shall reap the east-winde.* Be you well assured, that Court complements, frothy flatteries, empty shews will not take with God. Those who pay in good coyn, will not be repaid with that which is counterfeit. Let us not therefore dream of requiting Gods reall favours with meer formalities, *Let us not only love in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

7. Therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity. This sincerity is opposed unto selfishnesse. Whereas the hypocrite centers proudly in himself, makes himself his last end, his God. *Did ye not eat for your selves? Did ye not drink for your selves? Did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me? saith the Lord.* The practice of God, intending and effecting our good, as truly, as his own glory, may well prevail with us, to minde his praise in that which we undertake. His gracious providences are for our comfort, his holy Commandments are for our good, therefore let not us sit down satisfied in serving our own turn by our services, but let us move forward,

1 Joh. 3. 18.

Joh. 24. 14.

Zech. 7. 5, 6.

ward, not resting till we come to this center, Gods honour. Whatsoever we doe, whether in our generall or particular callings, in commanding, obeying, in private or publike, *Let all be done unto the glory of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 31.

8. Therefore we should *observe Gods Statutes, and keep his laws continually.* This the Lord desires, Deut. 5. 29. *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would keep my Commandments alwaies.* And this his Majesty well deserves, *For he daily loadeth us with his benefits,* Psal. 68. 19. His unweariednesse in following us with favours, should move us to follow him unweariedly in the waies of well doing. If in the whole course of your lives, you can finde one day, or one hour, wherein God doth not, in one kinde or other, doe you good, then on that day, in that hour suspend the serving of his highnesse. We (such is the sinfulness of our sinning hearts) doe every moment of our lives, give the most high God most just occasion to resolve to favour us no more: but the Lord (so admirable is his goodnesse) doth every minute of time, afresh engage us unto his obedience. *Therefore be not weary of well-doing, but rather, be alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord.* God forbid, that it should be truly said of any of us, *That we began in the Spirit, and did end in the flesh.*

All these eight rules, necessary truths, and naturally deduced from my doctrine, do concern every one in this great Congregation without any exception. I cannot imagine, from what seeming pretence any should dare to plead exemption from these directions; and I pray God, that no one of you may depart this Assembly, without some obedientiall bents and resolutions upon your spirits. But all my Sermon, all my counsell doth most concern them, for whom the Lord hath done most, in waies most remarkable and glorious. No City in the world hath been more magnified by divine providences, then this wherein we are. No people on earth hath been more enriched with temporall and spirituall provisions together, then our selves. Our God grant that our improvements obedientiall, may prove in some good measure answerable.

Notwithstanding, by vertue of the equity of my doctrine, the
Lord

Lord expecteth to be best served, to be most advanced, by them whom he hath most enriched, whom he hath most advanced. And therefore give me leave to tell you, *Right Honourable, the Lord Major, and Right worshipfull, the Aldermen of this famous City, that God deserveth and expecteth more from you, then from your brethren. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more, Luk. 12. 48.* As you are bound to be exemplary in exact endeavours, *To observe Gods statutes, and to keep his laws :* So is it your duty (in a speciall manner) to take care that all others under your command be conformed to the Commandments of your God, *Magistratus est custos utriusq; tabule.*

Right Honourable, your Lordship hath for divers years been acquainted with my plain Ministry, and I cannot say that I have lost any place in your affections by my plainnesse, therefore I will take the boldnesse to direct my self in faithfulness unto you.

1. Do not you dare through indulgence to spare the punishing of them, who doe dare to cast Gods Commandments behinde their backs. Could you hold your hands, and connive at such, who should go about to sleight the works, which are raised and maintained for the safety of this City? You heard in the opening of my Text, That God would have his laws preserved from violence, as the means of our preservation. I once heard a plain dealing Preacher, compare a remisse Magistrate unto the *fige George on Horse-back,* who standeth all the year with his hand on the Sword, but never strikes. My Lord, *You have not received the Sword in vain, Rom. 13. 4.* Although I would not sharpen the edge of authority unto undue severity; yet would I whet mine own knife to launce and let out the impostumated matter in my friends flesh. I grant your Lordship must be cautious, as courageous, and therefore you have good reason to make *Sotomans prayer,* 1 King. 3. 9. *Give thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad.* But I beseech you remember withall, That *foolish pity spoils the City.* Let not common drunkards, profane cursers and swearers, brutish wantons, and such like wicked ones, escape that penalty.

penalty, which the Law hath appointed for them. *Phineas executed judgement, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,* Pſal. 106. 30, 31.

2. I call for your zeal againſt Popery, that abomination, which brings deſolation. Let your zeal move often inquisitions, whether in ſome corners of this City, there be not Idolatry in the uſe of the Maſſe, leſt through neglect of ſearch, that abomination be ſuffered. But I move that in a ſpeciall manner, ſearch may be made after Jeſuites, thoſe unſufferable incendiaries, who blow the coal of contention amongſt brethren, who have cauſed, and doe continue the unhappy breach betwixt our King and Parliament, our Sovereign and his Subjects. I have heard a Story of a man, who paſſing by a tree, which Nature was cleaving, did thruſt in his hand to increaſe the breach; whereupon providence ſuddenly cloſing the breach, did there hold the man by the hand, as an act of revenge. Though I dare not aſſert the truth of this Story, yet I make this morall. Doubtleſſe there are Jeſuiticall ſpirits, who haunt theſe coaſts, who walk in this City, and it is ſuſpected by many, that they have a ſpeciall hand in ſome of the pamphlets published, to increaſe the flames of unbrotherly diviſions: I heartily wiſh that they might be apprehended by ſome good hand to be made exemplary. It's reported that the *Pythagoreans* did ſet a note of infamy upon the number of two, becauſe it was the firſt, which dared to depart from Unity. *Solomon ſaith, He that ſoweth diſcord among brethren, is an abomination to the Lord,* Prov. 6. 16. 19. And this reacheth more then Jeſuites in this Kingdome, yea in this City: For how many make it their buſineſſe to make breaches, not only among private brethren, but alſo between the two Kingdoms of *England* and *Scotland*, notwithstanding the ſolemn brotherly Covenant. *Now I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are ſuch, ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* Ro. 16. 17, 18. I humbly move cautiousneſſe in regard of Malignants, that thoſe miſchief-workers, who now (as report ſpeaks) are moving homeward, may not inconsiderately, upon too eaſie terms be entertained and truſted. It is my daily prayer, that God would convert and

and pardon those who expresse the most malignity against the work of Reformation so happily begun amongst us : and my soul saith, God forbid, that any who are sincerely changed, should by our sounnesse, be sent back again into our enemies quarters. Notwithstanding I must tell you, *Abundans cautelanon nocet.* When Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to joyn himself to the Disciples, but they were all afraid of him, Act. 9. 26. Fall-hearted ones amongst our selves, may doe us much more wrong, then known adversaries at a distance. And is it not a just ground of complaint made by our friends, when foes who have forsaken City and Parliament, shall make their peace at such easie rates, that they suffer lesse in their outward estates upon their return, then approved friends have done, if their Assessements and voluntary contributions be considered? I undertake not to direct in this case, but I intreat God, to make the Parliament and City wise and circumspect in this particular.

4. I most earnestly importune your care, for the better and stricter observation of the Sabbath, and I heartily commend worthy *Nehemiah*, as your patern of imitation in this practice. The waies and courses whereby he witnessed his holy zeal in this kinde, lie open in the History, I shall not need to specifye them. I beseech your Lordship to see to the suppression of buying, selling and sporting upon the Lords day. I have often thought upon a speech of that famous servant of Christ, and Minister in this City, *learned, humble, holy, publike hearted D^r Staughson*, which I had from him in private conference in those times, when the Sabbath, and the observation thereof, was decried by the Prelates and profane sort of men. His speech was this, *Should any man give up a Castle of such concernment to this Kingdome, as the fourth Commandment is to the safety of Christian Religion, he would deserve to die many deaths.* As you love the Lord, and the life of Religion, regard the Sabbath, and let your heart and hand be against those doctrines and practices, which tend to the profanation of it.

5. I entirely Petition your utmost towards the compounding of our miserable divisions about Church affairs. There are not only Congregations of *Anabaptists, Antinomians and Brown-*

ists in this City connived at; but (as it is commonly and credibly reported) also companies of men, who deny the Deity of Christ, and divine authority of the Scriptures. I remember that when Gallio was Deputy of Achaia, there was insurrection made in Corinth against Paul, and there were wofull confusions in the City; but it is added, Act. 18. 17. *And Gallio cared for none of those things.* God forbid, that either your Lordship, or any other Magistrate in this City should be thus regardlesse of our present distractions. When there was a great breach made in the ground by an earth-quake at Rome, and notice was given, that the gods would not be pacified, except something of speciall worth was cast into the breach, *Marcus Curtius* did cast himself in, in love to his Countrey. And I believe that there are very many amongst our selves in this City, both Ministers and others, who could be content to sacrifice their lives in this service, to reconcile dissenting brethren. For alas, alas, Doe not divisions threaten dissolution? *A Kingdom divided cannot stand.* My soul desires that London may, in waies of truth and holinesse, be like *Jerusalem, A City compact together*; or (as others render the phrase) *A City that is joyned to it self together*; Plal. 122. 3.

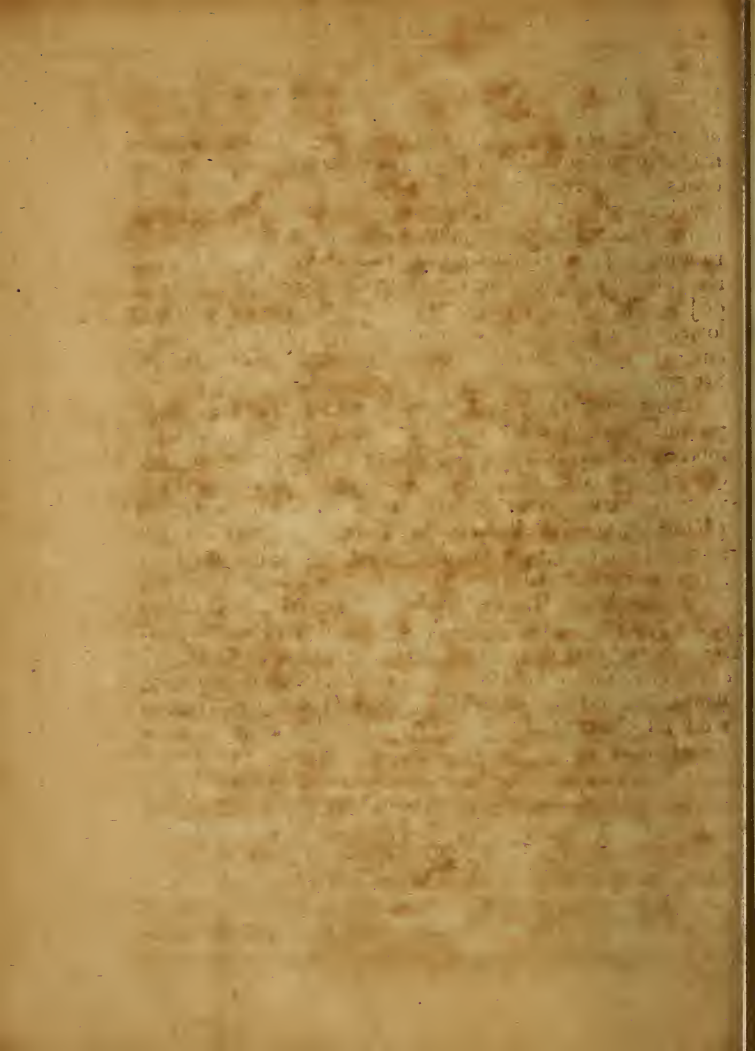
For the effecting whereof, I make it my last request, that with all your might (as God may be pleased to give opportunity) you would promote the speedy setting and exercise of Church-government. Were the Church blessed with the use of that Discipline, which is according to the minde of Christ, in this posture, it would be *terrible as an Army with banners*, Cant. 6. 10. By this means profanenesse would be crushed, superstition suppressed, errors checked, Malignancy discountenanced, the Sabbath better observed, holy Ordinances more purely administred, and our breaches well healed. Here are motives enough to move every right bred son of *Sion*, to set head, heart and hand unto this work. Conscientious, zealous care in this kinde, will contribute very much to your honour here, and your comfort hereafter. Good *Nehemiah* thus pleads for himself before the Lord, having been industrious in this service, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds.* (my kindenesse) *that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof,* Nehem. 13. 14.

Now

Now in this case, the counsell of Gods faithfull Ministers, is to be considered. The words of *Artaxerxes* are notable, Ezr. 7. 21. *Whatsoever Ezra the Priest, the Scribe of the Law of the God of heaven shall require of you, let it be done speedily.* Some (it may be) will catch at this sentence, and say, This discovers the drift of Presbyterian spirits; you desire to exercise dominion over your brethrens consciences, and therefore would have all things managed according to your minde? But I must take the boldnesse to answer, *That this is a notorious slander.* For we petition nothing, but that which in our consciences is according to the minde of Jesus Christ, and professe our selves willing with the least and lowest of Saints, to submit unto the Scepter of our Lord and Saviour, not requesting favour in any thing, repugnant unto the holy Scripture.

This is that advice, which in faithfulness, and with humility I present unto your Lordships consideration; and I doe it with the more confidence, because in all particulars it speaks the language of our solemn Nationall League and Covenant, which should never be forgotten. And now to conclude all. I beseech you all (*both right Worshipfull Aldermen, and right worthy Citizens*) to consider seriously how far my counsell directed to the Lord Major concerneth you every one. O that God would give you all with one heart to say unto his Lordship (as it was once spoken to Ezra, to quicken a work of Reformation) *Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee, we also will be with thee. Be of good courage, and doe it,* Ezr. 10. 4 For my part, I shall use no more words, but those of David to Solomon (relating to Temple-work) 1 Chron. 22. 16. *Arise therefore and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.*

F I N I S.



THE
CHURCH
SINKING,
Saved by CHRIST.

Set out in
A SERMON PREACHED
Before the Right Honourable the
House of Lords, in the Abby-Church at
Westminster, on Wednesday, Febr. 26. 1644.
being the day of the Monthly publike Fast.

By *Simeon Ash* Minister in London, and a Member
of the Assembly of DIVINES.

*Deut. 32. 36. For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himselfe for his ser-
vants, when he seeth that their power is gone; and there is none shut up, or left.*
*Deut. 33. 29. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people! saved by
the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellencie: and thine
enemies shall be found tyars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high
places.*

LONDON,
Printed by G. M. for *Edward Brewster*, and are to be sold
at his Shop at the Signe of the Bible on Lud-
gate hill neer Fleet-bridge. 1645.



Die Fovis, 27. Febr. 1644.

IT is this day ordered by the Lords
in Parliament assembled, That this
House doth give thanks to M^r *Ash*
for his great pains taken in the Sermon
he preached yesterday in the Abby
Church *Westminster* before the Peeres
of this Realme, it being the day of the
publike Fast. And that he is hereby
desired to print and publish the same;
which shall not be printed or reprint-
ed by any, but such as shall be autho-
rized thereunto under his hand.

JO. BROWNE, *Cler. Parliament.*

I doe appoint *Edward Brewster* to print this
Sermon, and no man else,

Simon Ash.





TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
The House of PEERES
Assembled in Parliament.

Right Honourable,

IN Obedience to your Lordships Order, I humbly present unto publike Service, my Sermon, which attended your commands the last publike Fast. Herein your Lordships have Iesus Christ propounded, as a perfect patterne to perswade, incourage and direct your continued endeavours to save and uphold his oppressed Church. This work is not too low for those who are most High amongst men, seeing our Lord, who is the choicest of ten thousands, the only Potentate, God blessed for ever hath undertaken it. The sad divisions and distractions of three Kingdomes doe daily, hourly, petition your Lordships for help and healing: Your Honours are strongly obliged by Gods Commands

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and Providences, by your owne solemn Covenants and interests, to lay forth your selves faithfully and unweariably, for the honour of Christ, and the good of his Church. In this Service (most Noble Senatours) you have the hearts and prayers of Heavens Favourites for your comfort, and the attendance of the holy Angels for your defence. And in the sincere prosecution of this designe, God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are engaged for your assistance and good successe. Therefore, I know nothing that should (nay) that can dishearten them in this glorious atchievement, who keepe their mindes and hearts upon the Almighty, and the obligations of his rich grace, through Iesus Christ, which that your Lordships may doe, and in so doing, proceed and prosper, shall be the constant, fervent prayer of

Your Honours humble,

faithfull Servant

Simeon Ash.



A

SERMON PREACHED

to the Lords at their Monethly Fast, Febr. 27. 1644.

ISA I. 63. 5.

*Therefore mine owne arme brought Salvation unto
me, and my fury it upheld me.*



*I*esus Christs care of his neglected, distressed Church, is the subject matter of this Text, wherein these two particulars are considerable. First, the reasons wherefore he engageth himself to save Sion. Secondly, the meanes, whereby he worketh her safety.

First, the causes of this undertaking, suggested in these words, are two :

1. Because others are carelesse of the Church in danger, therefore the Lord Jesus will appeare her Saviour. The first word in my Text (*Therefore*) calls us backe unto the former part of the verse, from whence this argument is open and apparent. *I looked and there was none to help, therefore mine owne arme brought Salvation.* Amongst men, company doth encourage difficult undertakings. But with God, it's otherwise ; His Majestie had rather act alone, that no creature might share with him in glory.

2. Because Jesus Christ in regard of his fellowship with his
B Church,

Church, doth account himselfe a sufferer in her sufferings. This is twice expressed in the word (Me, me) This is the language of our Lord. Sions deliverance is *salvation to me*, The support of a sinking Church, is the *upholding of me*. Should the Church suffer shipwrack in the stormie Seas of this troublesome world, Iesus Christ, the owner, the Master thereof, would judge himselfe a great looser, therefore for his own sake, he will secure and save her. All the designs of God arise from himself, and they are referred to himself: He transacts all with himselfe and for himself: As he is the first efficient, so is he also the last end of all his administrations.

Secondly, the meanes, by which Christ doth accomplish his Churches preservation are double, as my Text doth discover.

1. *Mine own arme*. Mans Arme is that part of his body, whereby (in warlike atchievements, as other-ways) his strength is exercised. And here it is metaphorically ascribed to Christ as God, to signifie that strength and abilitie, by which he effecteth the deliverance of his endangered people. *He hath shewed strength with his Arme* (saith the blessed Virgin,) *he hath scattered the proud*. And when God manifesteth his omnipotencie in the rescuing of his oppressed ones, its thus expressed. *The Lord hath made bare his holy arme in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God*.

The mighty power of Christ procures the preservation of his Church and people. *His right hand and his holy Arme hath gotten him the victory*. *Neither did their own arme save them, but thy right hand, and thine arme*.

2. *My fury, it upheld me*.

Some translate it, *My heat*, and they interpret it concerning the fire of love which burnes in the bosome of Christ towards his endeared Spouse.

I finde the originall word rendred (*Bowels*.) Thus the Lord speaketh with his favourable references, towards his repenting Ephraim. *My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord*.

Others render the word, indignation, anger, or fury (as we finde it here in our translation) understanding it of the flaming displeasure of Christ, against the adversaries of his Church. And this

scns

Luke 1, 51.

Plahs 8. 1.
& 44. 3.

Æstus mensa.
3. 1. 1. 1.

Jer. 31. 20,
and 4. 19.
Indignatio
mea. Corn. 2
Lapide.
Ira mea. Calv.
Excaudescen-
tia. iun.

sense the words following (which seeme exegetical) hold forth. *I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunke in my fury.* Solomon makes use of the same word, to expresse the rage of the drunkard. *Strong drinke is raging.* The Lord repaireth Sions ruines, by ruining her enemies in his wrath and fury. And we may warrantably (with some others) take in both, the heat of love, and the heat of anger, which make up the flame of zeale. For in the deliverance of his Church, *Christ puts on zeale as a cloake,* *Isai. 59. 17.* As the flame which was kindled in the breast of King *Ahasuerus,* caused him to command the Queenes rescue, from that violence and wrong, which he apprehended, was by wicked *Haman* intended against her. Such a deliverance from tyrants and oppressours whether unchristian, or Antichristian, is undertaken in this Chapter. For by *Edom* (mentioned in the first verse) we must understand (by a Metonymy) the Idumeans, and by the Idumeans (Synecdochically) are meant all the adversaries of the Church.

It upheld me. The originall word, according to its various use in holy Scripture, is very considerable, and usefull in its Application to our present purpose. It signifies, 1. To uphold, as an infirme aged man is stayed, by leaning upon his staffe, *Isai. 36. 6.* 2. To support, as a great, weighty building is upheld by pillars, *Judg. 16. 29.* 3. To sustaine, as mans strength, and life are maintained by provisions, *Gen. 27. 37. Psal. 71. 6.* 4. To stay up, from fainting, by administering cordials, *Cant. 2. 5.*

Now, here I may not take occasion, to enlarge my self according unto these things, which I only hint, in the exposition of my Text. Though hence it is notable, *That sufficiencies for Sions support are in Jesus Christ, according to her various necessities.*

Thus have you (right Honourable and beloved) the division and the interpretation of my Text, both together. And by this time, I beleeve, you can easily guesse at the various pretious truths which might from hence be naturally collected. But because I must wrap up all in one Sermon, therefore I shall only resolve upon the handling of the generall Doctrine of the Text, in the prosecution whereof, I shall have occasion to touch upon the severals which are considerable in the words. Our Proposition or point of Doctrine is this,

Prov. 20. 1.

Zelus meus,
acuens & sti-
mulans paten-
tiam.Fulcivit me.
קִסְתָּנִי

קָמַ

Doctr.

That the safety of the militant Church lyes upon the hand of Christ.

If the Church be in danger, his Arme saves; and if ready to sinke through oppressions from men, or faintness: in her selfe, he supports. All Interpreters with one consent agree, that the words of my Text are the words of the Lord Christ, and therefore it would be vain work to labour any further to cleare the foundation upon which my Doctrine is built. Neither shall I need to travell farre to fetch in witnesses, to attest this truth. In this Prophecie, *Chap. 59. 16.* we have a passage which almost runnes paralell with my Text, (the person only being changed) *His Arme brought salvation unto him, and his righteousnesse it sustained him.* And if we cast our eyes, a little further into this Chapter, we shall see our Prophet once and againe asserting the same thing, *ver. 8. He Was their Saviour.* and *ver. 9. The Angel of his presence saved them.*

If the reason of this *Christs undertaking* be enquired after, I must preface my answer with the words of the Lord, upon the like occasion, *Ezek. 36. 22. Say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, I doe not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine own holy Names sake.* Beloved our proud hearts (which on such dayes as this should be kept humble, in a speciall manner) are apt to swell and to grow conceited, while we are hearing of the meanes which God provideth to prevent their dejectednesse: therefore let it not be judged unnecessary, if I tell you and tell you againe, That the cause of Sions safety lyes in God, and not in the bosomes, or abilities of the fairest member of the Church on earth. Alas, alas, we have no colour of cause to rejoyce in our selves, when we are told, that Jesus Christ engageth himself to be our Saviour. For the welfare of the Church ariseth causally, neither from any meritorious qualification inherent in our persons, nor from any deserving worthinesse adhering to our performances. It is pertinent for this purpose to observe, that when the Church had by faith pitched upon this conclusion, *Isai. 64.* in the end of the fifth verse, *We shall be saved,* it followes immediately in the next verse, *But We are all as an uncleane thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* The universality of the words is very considerable, both in reference to the Agents, *We all,* and

the Action, *All our righteousnesses.* The best of Gods people through the remainders of corruption, and the fairest excellencies, though abstracted from their duties, are not in any capacity to deserve any kindnesse or care from God: And it is of good use for us to minde our selves of this, when we have occasion to meditate upon the ever-waking, and ever-working providence of God for our good.

As our selves must be abased, so our Saviour must be exalted in our thoughts and hearts, when we make enquire after the reasons, wherefore he undertakes to secure his Israel: For though he find nothing in us, nothing in any of his servants, which can meritoriously commend them to his tuition, yet in himselfe, within himselfe, there is cause sufficient for this glorious engagement. Thus much our Text holds forth, as I have already hinted, and shall hereafter more fully manifest. The true ground of all the care which Christ takes, that his Church may not utterly sinke under her oppressions, is his faithfulnessse to fill, to fulfill all those neare, endearing relations, wherein he standeth in reference unto her. These relations, (which the holy Scripture renders as the reason of the point under hand) I shall suggest under a three-fold Notion. They are 1. Naturall. 2. Domesticall.

Reason.

3. Politicall.

First, *Christ is the head of his Church*, and therefore (saith the Apostle) *the Saviour of that body*, Ephes. 5. 23.

Nature hath placed *Understanding*, with *Sight*, *Hearing*, and other *Senses*, in the head, as Sentinels in a Watch-Tower, for the securing of it self, and the whole body. And the Apostle tels us, *Eph. 5. 29.* that, *No man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.*

1. Naturall.

The Lord Iesus in references oiconomicall, hath various relations to his people, and every one of them yeelds us some ratiocinall account, wherefore he thus regardeth them.

2. Domesticall, which is four-fold.

1. They are his household, and he their Master, *Eph. 2. 19.* Although he is the great Land-lord of the world, and all the earth, with all the inhabitants thereof are his possession, *Psal. 24. 1.* yet he accounts the Church only, as his family, *Eph. 3. 15.*

1. Magistrall.

1 Tim. 3. 15.

Noah according to divine Commission prepared an Ark, that therein his household with himself might be shipp'd and secured

Gen. 7. 1.
Heb. 1. 7.

from

from the world-drowning deluge. Lot likewise was called upon by the Lord, to save his Family from the devouring flames which consumed Sodom. And the Holy Ghost commandeth all sorts of people, to be peculiarly kind unto the household of faith, Gal. 6. 9. yea, this is left on record in holy Writ, that, he who provideth not for his own house is worse then an infidell. 1 Tim. 5. 8. We therefore may be confident, that our Lord and Master Iesus Christ doth in this regard see unto his Churches safety.

Gen. 19.

2. Conjugall.

2 Sam. 30. 3-8.

2. The Church is espoused unto Christ, as her husband, 2 Cor. 11. 4. and she is called the Lambs wife. Rev. 19. 7. and 21. 9. And our Gospell Prophet gives in this as the reason of her prosperitie, even in this world. Isai. 54. 5. For thy Maker is thine Husband. I remember what holy History doth report concerning Davids brave adventures, to deliver his wives taken captives by the Amalekites, and this he did, being incouraged by counsell divine.

Now never did man more expresse love to his Spouse, then Christ Iesus hath towards them who are spiritually troth-plighted to him. And this the Lord renders as a reason of his readinesse to doe good to ill-deserving Israel. Jer. 3. 14. For I am married to you, saith the Lord.

3. Paternall.

3. Christ in reference to the the Regenerate (who are borne againe by his Spirit, John 1. 12, 13.) is called, The everlasting father, Isai. 9. 6. And thus he is brought in by our Prophet, speaking of his peculiar people. Isa. 8. 18. Behold, I, and the children whom thou hast given me.

Now in this relation there is a commanding power, to cause care of Safety. How doth father Jacob bestirre himselfe in wayes both prudentiall and pious, to preserve his poore children, from the death-threatening rage of his bloudie brother Esau, as the 32. of Genesis doth fully evidence! Yea doe not Creatures of all kinds, though voyd of reason, yet by strong instincts, both act and adventure to secure their young, from harmes and dangers?

And therefore, we may well add this paternall relation of Christ to his people, as another reason, of his regard of them in troublesome times. This argument also, is groundd upon the holy Scriptures, for from hence, the most High God, sets his Sovereignty on worke, to redeeme his Israel from Captivity. Isa.

43.6. *I will say to the North, give up, and to the South, keepe not back, bring my Sons from farre, and my daughters from the end of the earth.* All creatures, all coasts and corners of the World, must according to divine appointment, cooperate for the comfort of Gods Children. And hence it is, that the Church suing out to the Lord for deliverance, pleadeth this relation unto his Majesty. *Isa. 63. 16. Doublelesse thou art our Father, thou ô Lord, art our Father.* The doubling of this argument, argues, that strong confidence and hope, is rayed from this fatherly relation, in the hearts of them, to beg and expect Salvation from him.

4. The Lord Iesus stands in a brotherly relation to his people, for they have all one Father, *Joh. 20. 17. Goe to my brethren, and say unto them, I goe unto my Father and your Father.* And, *A garden enclosed* (saith he) is *My Sister.* *Cant. 4. 12. He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* *Heb. 2. 11.*

4. Fraternally.

Now those who are but very little versed in the sacred Story doe understand what an effectuall influence this relation had upon *Joseph*, to prevaile with him to provide for his brethrens well-doing in Egypt, notwithstanding all their unworthy carriage him-ward formerly. And it is here notable, how the servants of *Benhadad* improved this title *Brother*, for their Masters advantage, *1 Ki. 20. 32, 33. They did hastily catch it, And they said, Thy brother Benhadad.*

But to bring this home unto our present purpose, our blessed Saviour, though he had been forsaken by his Disciples, and denied by *Peter*, yet knowing that they were full of sorrow upon his death, and very apprehensive of approaching perill upon his departure from them, it is worth the observing how carefull he was to give them notice of his Resurrection, and to promise them a meeting for their comfort and confirmation, because he still owned them as his brethren. *Matth. 28. 10. Goe tell my brethren* (saith Christ) *that they goe into Galilee, and there shall they see mee.*

The third sort of relation betwixt Christ and his Church follows (*viz.*) Politicall; from whence as from the former, his studie for her safetic is inferred. This we have faire and full from the Prophet *Isaiab*, *The Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he will save us,* *Isai. 33. 22.* It was a speech wel-becoming a King,

3. Politicall.

King, *Salus populi suprema lex esto*, making the subjects safetic the end of his authoritie. Thus I am sure it ever was, and ever will be with our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, in all Ordinances and Administrations whatsoever, he intends as truly his peoples welfare as his own honour.

Here I might tell you, that Christs Regall power is in Scripture expressed by comparing him to a *Shepherd*, and calling the Church his *flock*, and that from thence, his care thereof is concluded, *Ezek. 34. I will deliver my flocke*, ver. 10. and again, *I will save my flock*, ver. 22.

But I will enlarge my self no further in the reasons of my Doctrine, for I suppose that sufficient which hath been spoken, to ratifie the truth of it by the severall relations, wherein our Lord and Saviour is endeared and engaged unto his Church and people, through the riches of his free, superlative grace. Therefore from the prooffe of the point, I proceed to the improvement thereof, by way of use: And I finde the Doctrine in hand three wayes especially usefull, according to the inferences and applications of holy Scripture, whereby I desire to be guided in my ministerial service.

First, for the *Information of our Judgements*. Secondly, for the *Consolation of our hearts*. Thirdly, for the *Direction of our course*.

The inference by way of Information is double: first, Therefore all those are very unlike unto Iesus Christ, who have no regard at all of the welfare of his Church. Men of *Gallio* his temper, of whom it is said, that though the place where he was Governour, was filled with confusions, and though *Sosthenes* (a good man, and one deare to *Paul*, *I Cor. I. I.*) was beaten and abused openly, yet *Gallio* cared for none of these things. Many such *Gallio's* we have amongst our Gallants, yea, and amongst people of inferior conditions also, who regard not at all what becomes of the work of Church-Reformation begun amongst us, whether Gods Ordinances be purged, or pudled; his Embassadours encouraged or abused, his Gospell propagated or interrupted; all is one to them; if they may save their own skins, secure their own personal contentments, and sit warme in their own Nests, whether Sion sinke or swim, they are at a point, *they care for none of these matters.*

Psal. 80. 1.

The Use.

Information.

Act. 18. 7.

*Malum est non
fecisse bonum.
Chryl.*

And

And give me leave (Right Honourable) to tell you how the Holy Ghost hath marked with a black coale, the Nobles of Tekoa, who when Ieruselems breaches cryed aloud to them for Reparation, yet it's said, *Nehem. 3. 5.* *Their Nobles put not their necks to the Work of their Lord.* There seemes to be some difficulty in the place. I will not presse too strictly the phrase of putting *the Neck to work*; it signifies voluntary subjection to service. As *Matth. 11. 29.* *Take my yoke upon you.* And doubtlesse Nobles, men of chiefe rank and qualitie, should deny themselves so farre as to put heads, hands, shoulders, sides, and necks also unto the service of the Church. But that which is most obscure, lies in the word translated (*Lord.*) Some understand it of *Nehemiah*, who was chiefe Commander in the present service. Now though he was in regard of his former employment, a meane person in comparison of those Nobles (for he was the Kings Cup-bearer at the palace of Shushan, *Neh. 1. 11.*) yet these Nobles are checked, I might say, blotted with a note of reproach for not submitting to him in the service of Ierusalem. Yea, the word in the Originall being in the plurall Number, signifying *Lords*, some Expositors conceive that thereby are meant the subordinate Commanders, assigned by *Nehemiah* (who commanded in chiefe) to oversee the work, and from thence they inferre more then was noted before. For they thence observe, that these Nobles are rebuked and reproched for not submitting to the directions of men inferiour to *Nehemiah* in the service of the publike. But I rather judge that the word though in the plurall Number, (*Adoni*) doth only relate unto God, whom these Nobles should have stooped unto, as to their Lord. And if the Scripture be applyed in this sence, (which to me is the fairest, because I find the word thus limited, *Mal. 1. 6.*) yet hence it may be noted, that the most High God doth stigmatize Nobles with a brand of infamie, for refusing to appeare, and to act personally, laboriously in Church Reformation. How great is the dissimilitude in affection to the Church betwixt Iesus Christ, and this sort of men? For suppose he (who was brought up in the bosome of his Father, and there enjoyed full, and perfect delights, before the foundations of the world were laid) had resolved not to displace, dis-case himselfe for mans restauration, we with all mankind should have

אֲדֹנָי
לֵאלֹהֵינוּ

Prov. 8. 30.

continued under ruines and desolations unto all Eternitie.

I have three things to deliver unto these persons, who are possit with a Spirit of indifferencie, in reference unto Sion, resolving to sit still, and to see the game played on both sides, not caring much who win, or who loose; who prosper, and who suffer; whose hopes are accomplished, and whose disappointed in respect of Church concernments.

1. Without all question these Neuters are not incorporated spiritually into Iesus Christ. For if any man *abideth in him, he ought himselfe also so to walke, even as he walked.* And I appeale to mens Consciencences from that which hath been delivered, whether in any age of the Church, the Lord Christ ever stood by, as a Neuter, when the concernments thereof were in disputation and agitation amongst men.

So soon as *Paul* was savingly subdued by the Spirit of Christ, his change in this particular was manifest: *He who persecuted us in times past (say the Saints) now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed. Gal. 1. 22, 23.* And when the Lord had efficaciously touched, and taken hold on, the Prophet *Isaiab*, (though formerly backward to engage for God) no sooner can a question be asked, *Who shall goe for us?* but he presently offers himselfe, *Here am I, send me.* For certainly in this case, (as in others wherein Christ is concerned) the love of Christ constraineth Christians to appeare and adventure for him. And Christs people are a willing people (Volunteers, a people of willingnesses) in the day of his power. *Die exercituum*, in the day of his Armies, when he mustereth up his forces to secure Ierusalem.

Therefore all such who are not in these kindes animated and acted by the Spirit of Christ they are none of his.

2. This Neutralitie is by our Lord himselfe interpreted as downe-right contrariety. His words are plaine, he that runnes may read the meaning of them. *He that is not with me, is against me.* I shall not glosse upon this Scripture, nor give in any other application then the Note which the *Rhemists* have left us. *They that are indifferents to all Religions, commonly and truly called Neuters, joyning themselves to neither part, let them mark these words well, and they shall see that Christ accounted all them to be against him and his Church that are not plainly and flatly with him.*

3. The misery of these men is exceeding grievous, which I know not how more fully (with brevity) to expresse, then by applying and opening the curse against *Meroz*, for the like neglect. *Curse ye Meroz (said the Angel of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* Hence these particulars are seasonably enquirable: 1. What is threatned, *A curse, a bitter curse*, the curse of men warranted by the Lord, and to be executed by the Lord. *Though the curse causelesse shall not come*; yet when God and Christ, Angels and men curse, how unhappy shall be the condition of such accursed creatures? The barren fig-tree withers upon Christs curse; Mens persons, comforts, hopes, all waste being blasted by divine malediction. 2. For what cause this *Anathema*, this heavie curse is gone out from the Lord? The words tell you once and againe, because *they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord*. It is not said, they took up Armes, and joynd in combination against the Lord, in the Liberties and comforts of his Israel, but because they would not come in, and joyne themselves with the people of the Lord, nor shew themselves on Gods side, therefore this heavie curse is denounced against them. Bare omissions of good, when God gives abilitie and opportunitie doe expose unto the Axe of divine displeasure. *Every tree that brings not forth good fruit, is hewen downe and cast into the fire. Matth. 3. 10.* And at the day of judgement our Saviour will passe this black sentence upon them who have neglected offices of love to himself in his afflicted members. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devill and his Angels. And these shall goe into everlasting punishment.*

3. What was the case and condition of Israel when *Meroz* refused to associate for their assistance? Truly at this time many mighty enemies had got the upper-hand and greatly oppressed Israel. If you will look back unto *Judg. 4. 3.* You shall see, that *Jabin King of Canaan, had 900. chariots of iron, and he mightily oppressed Israel for twenty yeares.* Now although the inhabitants of *Meroz* might, in the opinion of morall cautious men, seeme in this regard to have sufficient reason to refuse siding with Israel, yet you heare, how heavie a curse is threatned against them for this their Neutralitie. Fig leaves will neither cover guilt, nor

Judg. 5. 23.
Maledicite ma-
ledicando.
Quicumq; Spi-
ritu Dei afflatus
sunt, necum
semper pronun-
ciabunt male-
dictos, &c. Jun.
Prov. 26. 2.

Matth. 15. 41.

46.

Dwelling near
the place of
battell (and
belike fearing
the successe)
they came not
out, &c. Sir
Wal. Raleigh.

defend from Gods wrath. Many allegations, which take with worldly wise men, will be of no account with God. I might here take occasion also, to tell these Lukewarme persons, moderate men, (as they would be accounted) men of a tepid temper, *neither hot nor cold*, who are neither zealous for Christ, nor yet furious against him. That our Lord threatens to *spew them out of his mouth*. But I will not proceed to discover their sad condition who are ejected with abomination as the vomit of the Lord our Saviour.

Revel. 2. 16.

2.
Instruction.

The second inference by way of information followes. Hence may be manifested both the malignancy and misery of all those, who professedly engage themselves against the peace and preservation of the Church of Christ. I beleeve (belovéd) that you look upon those to whom I spake in the former use, as in a dolefull condition, if you minded and credited what I delivered from the Lord: But this sort of men, who now come under consideration, are in a farre worse plight; For the former doe only hang betwixt Heaven and hell, betwixt God and Belial, Christ and Antichrist, in a way of indifferencie, but these people doe place themselves in a posture of contrarietie against the Lord Iesus, for they drive a designe diametrically, directly opposite unto the offices, relations, engagements and undertakings of his Highness. The head, the heart, and the hand of Christ are all at work, to support and save his oppressed, sinking Church: But these men (I had almost called them miscreants) gather, conjoyne, and exercise all their strengths to lay Christs Vineyard waste, to subvert not only the comforts and hopes of his subjects, but also the fundamentall lawes and government of his Kingdome. In the entrance upon this use, I spake of the malignancie of these persons, and truly I have reason to call them Malignants, if the devils powerfull working in the hearts and lives of men, may warrant that Denomination. The Devill is named *Abaddon*, and *Apollyon*, because a destroyer. And it is the devils endcavour, to devour the instruments, the meanes of Church Reformation. The *Dragon stood before the Woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child, as soon as it was born.*

Revel. 9. 11.

Revel. 11. 4.

Ioh. 13. 1.

This malignant spirit moved *Judas to betray Christ*. And the Holy Ghost saith, that *the Devill* (by inspiring and over-powring persecutours)

persecutours) cast the Christians, in the primitive times, into prison. And from this very ground, the Apostle John saith, that Cain was a Malignant. *Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.* Rev. 2. 10. This hatred of good men for goodnesse ariseth from hellish malignitie against God himselve. Like as the Libard, or Panther, which in regard its dislike of man will rend and teare his image. 1 Job 3. 12.

I shall not need to say more to evidence their Malignitie, but I will proceed to discover their misery. For which purpose, I pray you, consider the speech of Christ to Saul, being in a way of opposition against his Church. *Act. 9. 4, 5. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

In these words, we may note for our present purpose these particulars: 1. That Christ accounts himself persecuted in the persecution of his members. *Thou persecutest me*, when the foot on earth is troden on, the head in Heaven complaines, Why doe you hurt me? This sin therefore of opposition against the godly is of a more hainous nature then men imagine.

2. That the Lord takes exact notice of every individuall person who hath an hand in the wrongs offered to his people. The Messenger, the Purservant, who now was on his journey with letters missive from the High Priests, to bring Christians bound to Jerusalem, he is here called unto by name, *Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute?* Although the Eagle soare high, and seeme farre from her Nest, yet her piercing eye soon espies, if any approach be made to prejudice her young.

3. That this opposition is very perillous. *It is hard for thee so kick against the pricks.* The speech is Metaphoricall, taken from the brutish Creatures, which being pricked, doe by kicking, strike that which pricketh them deeper into their owne flesh. That passage of our Saviour, *Matth. 21. 44.* is somewhat answerable, *Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken.* By falling upon Christ, whether by opposition against his Government, or members, men breake themselves, as the proud waves breake upon the hard rock.

4. That although men through ignorance know not, or through incogitancy, consider not, their courses of contrariety against the

Contra stimulum calces. De eo qui frustra potentiori resistit.

Church of Christ, yet is their sin thus high, and their danger thus heavic, as you have heard. *Saul* here imagines not, that any wrong was offered to any one in heaven, and therefore thinking it strange when he heares of complaint from thence, he askes, *Who art thou Lord?* yea, elsewhere he professeth, that *he did it ignorantly*, and that through zeale he persecuted the Church; yea, that he verily beleev'd, himselfe bound to doe somewhat against the Name of Iesus Christ.

I heartily wish, that this may be well considered, because many who bitterly make opposition against the Church of Christ, at this day in this Kingdome, doe verily hope, that because they act according to their Consciences, therefore they are in no danger. It is true, *Paul* himselfe saith, *I was received to mercy, for I did it ignorantly in unbeliefe*; yet for all this, he *kick'd against the pricks*, and had undoubtedly perished everlastingly in this way of persecution, if Gods glorious Gracè had not converted him. Alas, alas, then what will become of all them, who wittingly and wilfully, maliciously and desperately engage themselves against the cause and Church of Christ? Truly, I tremble, when I seriously ponder that imprecation of the Psalmist against such persecutors? *Lord, be not mercifull to any wicked transgressours. Selah.*

Although this might seeme sufficient to startle and awaken these Malignants, who make it their businesse to breake in pieces the people of the most High: yet I will make bold to discover their dolefull condition further, from my Text and some neighbouring passages, which border upon it.

There are two things considerable concerning their misery.

1. It is inevitable.
2. It is irreparable: Gods arme cannot be resisted. And the breaches made by his indignation cannot be repaired. First, their destruction cannot be avoided. 1. Either by multitudes associated for their security. ver. 6. *I will tread down the peoples* (for so it is in the original) noting the pluralitie, the Numbers of Antichristian opposites. And for this end, *Zech. 12.3.* is very remarkable. *I will make Jerusalem a burthenstone for all people, all that burthen themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.* The Captaine of our Salvation will rout the greatest armies that

1 Tim. 1. 13.
Phil. 3. 6.
Act. 26. 8.

1 Tim. 1. 13.

Psal. 59. 5.

The ruine of
Sions implacable
enemies.
1. It is un-
avoidable.

that can possibly be raised against his Jerusalem. 2. Or by places fortified for their safetic. ver. 1. The Lord in taking vengeance had dyed his garments in Bozra. This Bozra was the Metropolis, the mother Citie of Idumea, *Isai. 34. 5.* And such places usually are most strengthened by forts and fortifications. But the breath of Gods displeasure will blow down and demolish all such means of defence, how promising soever they appeare.

3. Or by accumulated estates, accommodations, honours and authority. Thus much is Metaphorically, yea, Allegorically expressed in the Scripture last cited, *Isai. 34. 6, 7, 8.* *The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with farnesse, and with the blood of Lambs and Goats, with the fat of the Kidneyes of Rams, for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea, and the Unicornes shall come downe with them, and the Bullocks with the buls, and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with farnesse, for it is the day of the Lords vengeance, and the yeare of recompences for the controversie of Zion.* By Goats, Rams, Unicornes, Bullocks and Buls are understood men of highest place and power in the world. And when our Lord taketh vengeance upon the adversaries of Zion, he will make it to appeare, that he is no respecter of mens persons. *He will strike through Kings in the day of his Wrath: He shall wound the heads over many (or great) countries.* There is no respect of persons with God. Neither Crown nor Scepter can secure them, against whom the Almighty is incensed.

Psal. 110. 5, 6.

Secondly, their ruine cannot be repaired. Thus much is suggested, ver. 3. *I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will staine all my raiment.* The Metaphor is taken from treading the wine-press, where the grapes, were full, and faire before pressing, but when the moysture is squeezed out, it cannot be restored, nor the beauty of the grapes repaired. Thus Christ will in vengeance breake (as it were) the veynes and bones of his enemies, and squeeze out blood and marrow. And if timely repentance prevent not this vengeance, they shall be remedilessly ruinated, never to be healed, never to be restored.

20 It is unrecoverable.

More.

More I will not say (neither need I) to set forth the wickedness and wretchedness of these mischief-plotters, and mischief-workers against the Church of Jesus Christ, which he undertakes to save. And I should think, that enough hath been said to convince, if not to convert these men, had not the Scripture told me, that Persecutors are unreasonable men, and if *Paul* had not confessed of himselfe, that in this way he *was exceedingly mad*. *Act. 26. 11.* Pride, passion, and malice doe more then infatuate persecutours.

I must leave these distempered (if not distracted) men, but while I am leaving them, truly my bowels are troubled for them, therefore before I leave them, I will breathe forth Christs prayer for them. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they doe.*

The second Use followes. Our Doctrine administers much matter of singular Consolation unto the servants of Jesus Christ:

And let it not I pray you, be offensive, as a service unseasonable, that I serve in cordials on our fasting, heart-humbling day, wherein we should feed upon sower herbs. For as my Text doth naturally, according to the purpose of the Holy Ghost, offer comfort, so the present sad condition of this Kingdom doth call for it, and the drooping spirits of many godly ones amongst us need it. Moreover, the minding of Christs care and kindnesse to wards his sinking Church and bleeding servants, may much promote the duties of the day, because thereby the heart is most kindly broken, for our severall unkindnesses and dis-regards of so kind and careful a Saviour. By meanes hereof also, we shall be quickned, with more fervency and confidence to supplicate his Majestie, for that salvation, which he hath promised, and which we expect.

But to passe from this digression, let us a little minde the strong consolation here intended. From this Doctrine of Zions salvation undertaken by Christ, his Church is called upon to rejoyce, *Rejoyce greatly, O daughter of Zion, Shout, O daughter Jerusalem, behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is just and having salvation.*

And upon this consideration, the godly have been wont to triumph and to glory. *Psal. 68. 19, 20.* *Blessed be God, even the God of our salvation, Selab. He that is our God, is the God of Salvation.* yea, this joy doth in a peculiar manner appertaine unto Gospel times. *In that day, it shall be said, Lo, this is our God,*

We

2 Theſ. 3. 2.
ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνόμου καὶ ἀπειθήνου
καὶ ἀπειθήνου
ab hominibus,
absurdo quodam ingenio
preditis.

Luke 23. 34.

Use 2.
Consort.

Zech. 9. 2.

Psal. 68. 9.

We have Waited for him, and he Will save us; this is the Lord, We have Waited for him, and We Will rejoyce in his Salvation. This honey (you see) drops out of the Comb, without pressing, this Consolation flowes from the Doctrine, without the least forcing.

Now this Fountaine of comfort sendeth forth its streames: 1. To the Church in general. 2. To the severall living members thereof in particular.

As for the Church universall, *Mount Sion standeth fast, and can never be removed.* And the Church being built upon this rock (Christ) *the gates of hell shall not prevaile against it.* The greatest strength of Cities, especially when besieged and endangered, is placed at the gates. And the gates were wont to be the places where the wise Elders and Judges met for civill Judicature. Now our Saviour, by the gates of hell understands, all the ability and subtilty of Satan, and he assures his Church, that neither power, nor policy, shall prevaile against it, seeing the foundation of its safety lies in him. And I shall not need to step out of my Text, to bring in pillars, to support our confidence, that our hopes may be unshaken in this regard. For this purpose, I shall now make use of the foure observations from the words of the Text, which were briefly pointed at in the division and interpretation of it. Here we have the whole Armour of God, weapons both defensive and offensive, that the Church may be preserved and her enemies destroyed.

I. That the lesse assistance comes to Zion from men, the more ready will our Lord be to engage himself for her deliverance. Mark well, I beseech you, my Text, with the words preceding. *There Was no help, there Was none to uphold, therefore:* He saith not, *though there Was no help, yet I saved.* Neither doth he speake thus, *There Was little help, and there Were few to uphold.* But the words run thus, *There was no help, and there Was none to uphold, therefore, I brought salvation.* Therefore when multitudes stand aloofe off, as idle Spectators not daring, or not willing to side with Zion in the day of her trouble, then, even then, may we hopefully look for help from Heaven. *I Will restore health to thee, and I Will heale thee of thy Wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an out-cast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.* Yea, when many either through faintnesse, or falsnesse, fall off (though these are

Psal. 125. 1.

Matth. 16. 18.

Paroeliam Dei describit. Brachium & indignatio Dei, hęc sunt duo arma Dei, quibus omnia vincit. Cornelius a lapide.

Jer. 30. 17.

fad prognosticks of our danger to sense and reason) yet even from hence will well-guided faith fetch and plead arguments to cherish hope in holy prayer. *Be not farre from me* (saith David to God) *for trouble is neere, and there is none to helpe. Many Bulls have compassed me, strong buls of Baschan have beset me round.* Here you see, that strong resistance, and no assistance from man is the argumentation of holy faith before the Lord.

2. That the Churches welfare depends upon the Almighty power of Christ. *Mine arme* (saith he) *brought salvation.* This is comfortable to Gods people, when endangered, by an overpowering enemie, as it appears in the experience of King *Asa*, seeing it is nothing *with him to help, whether with many, or with them who have no power.* Here concerning the Lords Arme, I might note these three things. 1. That its *irresistibly strong.* The Psalmist saith to God, *Psal. 8. 3. The heavens are the work of thy fingers.* Now if Creation-work, be but finger-work with the Almighty, imagine (if you can) what power is in his Arme. He that could bring beauty out of deformity, the goodly structure of the Heavens out of confusion, out of nothing, by the motions (as it were) of his fingers, can perfect Church Preservation and Reformation by his strong Arme. 2. That it is *incomparably long.* By the breadth of his hand, you may guesse at the length of his Arme. *Isai. 40. 12. He meted out Heaven with his span.* His Arme then is long enough, to reach from one end of the earth, unto another. *He brought Israel out of Egypt with a strong hand, and an out-stretched arme.* And the Psalmist speaks in this manner to the Lord, *Thy hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out all that hate thee.* His Majestie can easily, quickly reach his servants with deliverance, and his foes with vengeance, when they are at the greatest distance. 3. That it is *everlastingly unchangeable,* it cannot be weakned, or wearied, much lesse broken or corrupted. And this is mentioned by *Moses* the man of God, for Israels constant encouragement. *The eternall God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting armes.* Therefore the feares and hopes of Gods people should not ebbe and flow, abate and augment, according to the increase, and decrease of their own, or their adversaries strength. *For the Armes of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.*

3. That

Psal. 22. 11.
12.

2 Cro. 14. 13.

Deut. 36. 11, 12.

Psal. 21. 8.

Deut. 33. 27.

Job. 37. 17.

3. That self-love sets our Lord on work, to secure and save his endangered, neglected, deserted, sinking Church. This reason from himself Christ twice presseth in this short Text, *Me, me*. And indeed, if the matter be well considered, we shall finde that Iesus Christ hath reason, in self-respects to look unto his Church: for the riches of Christ are in the Church, the members thereof are *his Jewels*, his *peculiar treasure*. Yea, the Church is part of himself, *his body*. He should be an head without a body, if he did not maintaine the being of his Church. The Church is the fullnesse of him (meaning Christ) who filleth all in All (saith the Apostle.) And *S^t Paul* is not afraid, to call the Church, *Christ*, *1 Cor. 12. 12.* where having compared that Mysticall body of his with the body naturall, he thus concludes, *So is Christ*.

Mal. 3. 17.
Exod. 10. 5.

Eph. 1. 22, 23.

I might enlarge this ground of comfort further, by shewing how much Christ is concerned in his offices exercised, and in his Ordinances administred in the Church. If the Church of Christ should miscarry, then the greatest designs of the God-head would be disappointed, and then the glorious Promises of the Gospel would be nullified, &c.

Therefore, though we can plead nothing from our selves, to move Christs care of his opposed, oppressed Church, yet he can and will produce arguments from himself, to prevaile with himself, and with his Father also, to preserve his Church: yea, although we who are passengers and adventurers in this ship, doe by our sinnes make leakes to let in dangers to sink all, yet will Christ, (who is the Pilot, Master, and Owner also of all the goods therein) for his own sake, bestirre himself, and preserve all. It is here observable, that when *Daniel* on his fasting day had acknowledged, and aggravated sin, confessing that confusion of right did belong unto that people of God, yet in the conclusion of the prayer, his faith pleads strongly with God, for his own sake, and his Christs sake. Now therefore, *o* our God, *heare the prayer of thy servant and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy Sanctuary, that is desolate, for the Lords sake. O Lord, heare, hearken, and doe: deferre not for thine owne sake, o my God.*

Dan. 9. 17,
19.

4. That Christs indignation against his peoples opposers and persecuters shall work on, the Churches safety. *My fury, it up- held*

held me. Mark the verse fore-going the Text. *The day of my vengeance is in my heart, and the yeare of my redeemed ones is come.* When Christ taketh vengeance on his daring, provoking enemies, then he effecteth the deliverance of his endangered, persecuted people. Therefore by how much the more outrageously profane, the adversaries of the Church are, and the higher their wickednesses, and the more frequent their dishonours done to the Lord: by so much the more hope have we of deliverance. And in this regard, though we have indeed occasion of sorrow, to see and heare Gods Lawes violated, his Government despised, and mens immortall souls everlastingly endangered: yet we may spread the inhumane cruelties, filthinesses, outrages, with the strange blasphemies of Zions enemies, before the Lord, as arguments to presse their downfall and our deliverance. As *Psal. 74.*

O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy Name for ever? Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy Name. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause. remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies, the tumult of those that rise up against thee, increaseth continually.

Thus farre the comfort hath been carried on, in reference to the Church in generall, I now proceed to the Application of it unto the members thereof in particular. And here I might take occasion to discourse concerning the comforts from hence to be administred, unto National Churches, the members of the holy Catholike Church, and unto the Church in this our Kingdome particularly. But as time will not suffice me thus to expatiate, so because I find not sure footing in Scripture, to ground such discourses upon, therefore I had rather be silent, then too adventurous. That threatning of our Lord against the Church of Ephesus, *I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.* That threatning (I say) doth not only prove, that the Church, state of a place, a Kingdome may be removed, but it doth also intimate our danger. What the Lord intends in this kind *England-ward*, himself only, certainly understands. But thus much I may say with confidence, that so farre as we endeavour to set up, and to keep up, the Government of

Jesus.

Psal. 74. 10.
13.
22.
23.

Revel. 2. 5.

Jesus Christ in the Church amongst our selves, so much hope we may exercise in the expectation of a Church state to be here continued by Jesus Christ. If *Ephesus* repent and reforme, the Candlestick shall not be removed.

But leaving these things to your consideration and care (which I shall again quicken anon) let us a little enquire after the comforts, which from this Doctrine, appertaine unto the individuall, living members of the Church, the mysticall body of Jesus Christ. For our Lord so careth for the whole, that he is not, (indeed) he cannot be unmindfull of the lowest, the meanest part thereof, at any time. Now lest the childrens bread should be given to dogs, lest the cordials which belong to the members of Christ, should be lavished out amongst the limbs of Satan, I will very briefly by some pregnant Scriptures, signifie to you some qualifications of the persons who may, with divine warrant, challenge a share in the comforts, after wards to be propounded.

First, *Surely they are my people, children that will not lye: so he was their Saviour.* Two things are here notable. First, *They are my people.* A people self-resigning, and self-devoting to God, who account not themselves their own, to live unto themselves, but yeeld up their All to God, these may expect the Salvations of God. Secondly, *They are children that will not lye.* I could wish that all Lyars would seriously consider of this, whether that practise of theirs may not give them cause to question their federall reference to God. This I speake the rather, because this foule sin of lying (I report it with griefe of heart) is wofully common amongst many Professours. But I rather conceive that by *Children that will not lye*, here are understood such, who neither answer their own profession, nor Gods expectation in their conversation. They professe one thing, but practise another. Their lives prove the falshood of their fair Profession.

Isai. 63.8.

Secondly, *God will save the humble person.* Such who swell not with their parts, who acknowledge themselves lesse then the least of Gods mercies, who lye low in their dutie, and kisse the rod, when layed in the dust, these are they whom the Lord will save.

Job 22.29.

Thirdly, *He will beautifie the meek with Salvation.* Meeknesse, (in strictnesse) is that grace which moderates anger, and prevents

Psal. 149.4.

the desire of revenge. Those therefore, who are of calme, well-appeased Spirits, not passionately furious, when crossed, provoked, wronged, but having an eye upon God, in all affronts and injuries offered, doe referre their own righting, and the vindicative recompence unto his Majestie, such (I say) may look for mercifull, glorious deliverances from the Lord.

Fourthly, *The living God is the Saviour of all men, especially of them who beleeve.* Such, who feeling all creature props thrinking under them, yet finding strength and steddinesse in the Almighty, doe, from the encouragement of his Promise, rely upon him, in the dayes of danger, they doe engage his Majestie to be their Saviour.

Fifthly, *Surely his Salvation is nigh unto them who feare him.* Men whose hearts are awed with divine Majestie, and who, through estimation of his love and glory, draw back from sinne; because it tends to his displeasure and dishonour, these may expect Gods Salvation.

Thus from the Characters of the persons, to whom this comfort in peculiar appertaines, I proceed to particularize the comforts hence deducible, and you may take them from these foure heads.

1. *I will save you* (saith he) *from all your uncleanneses.* And again, *He shall save his people from their sinnes.* This is a great salvation, and a sure salvation. There is no doubt to be made of it, but Jesus Christ will save the souls of all his redeemed ones from all their sins, from the affrighting guilt of them in Justification, and the commanding power of them in Sanctification.

2. They shall be secured from all externall grievances and annoyances, so farre, as freedome there-from may be for their best advantage. For he will be *a Sun, and a Shield, and no good thing will be withhold from them who walk uprightly.* As the carefull Physitian would not (were it in his power) suffer his Patient to loose more blood then might tend to health.

3. They shall undoubtedly be delivered from the poison, the prejudice of every affliction which befalls them. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven, no evil shall touch thee.* This is not so strange as true, that though the godly be over the head and eares in the floods of various calamities, yet no evil doth once touch them.

1 Tim. 4. 10.

Psal. 85. 8.

Ezek. 36. 29.

Matth. 1. 21.

Psal. 84. 11.

Job 5. 19.

Deus suos non
negligit cum
negligit.

them. It is with all outward troubles which take hold on Gods people, as it was with the *Viper* which fastened on *Pauls* hand; though the *Barbarians* seeing the *venemous beast* hang on his hand, said, surely *Vengeance will not suffer this man to live*: yet its affirmed, *He shooke off the beast into the fire, and felt no harme*. It is most certain, that though men (or rather) beasts of prey, may plunder, impoverish, wound, and imprison the Saints of the most High God, yet they neither doe, nor shall receive Spirituall detriment thereby; yea, though they may be killed, yet they cannot be hurt.

Act. 28. 3, 4.
5.

4. Christ is the *Author of eternall Salvation unto all them that obey him*; whereas death, naturall death, is the utmost and the last danger, with which our bloud-thirsting enemies can reach us; this is our comfort (and how great this our comfort is, I know not) that then, and by meanes thereof, our perfect, our everlasting deliverance is received. So soon as we shall passe out of the grasping hands of death, our soules shall be eternally saved from all sin, and sorrow whatsoever, not only in the power and prejudice thereof, but in regard of the presence, and appearance of it also.

Heb. 5. 7.

The last sort of Uses follow, (*viz.*) Exhortation, which divideth it self into three branches, wherein I will study brevity.

Use 3.

First, let us hence be perswaded to joyne our selves unto the Church of Christ, because there the surest salvation is to be enjoyed. The Lord foretels this improvement of this Doctrine in the dayes of grace. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, *It shall come to passe that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the Nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will goe with you, for we have heard that God is with you*. Nature seeks its own safety, and humane prudence in meer morall men, will project for their own preservation. Hence it was that upon the glorious providence of the Lord, for the deliverance of his people from *Hamans* hellish conspiracie, it is said, *Many of the people of the Land became Jewes*. Oh that there might be some such fruit of this my poore Sermon, that some might be brought in, to joyne themselves unto Zion, upon the report of the peculiar salvation of God, there to be expected.

I.
Exhortation.

Zech. 8. 13.

Esth. 8. 17.

Right Honourable and beloved, I speake not (the Lord knowes) without sorrow of heart, of siding with this, or that party.

party, against the other, here in bleeding *England*: my soule rather makes its uncessant suites to the God of peace, to give us a speedy good peace, that our dread Sovereigne, and his divided subjects, in all the three Kingdomes, may be of one heart and way for Christ, and that we may side as one man against Antichrist: But if our teares and prayers cannot reconcile our unhappy differences, give me leave to advise you, to be on Gods side. Now the Psalmist tels us, that God and *Israel* make one side. *If it had not been the Lord, that was on our side, may Israel say.* But you will answer me, what is this to us? I reply, This is very much to us, for we may be Gods *Israel* by speciall Covenant and grace, although not by naturall descent and propagation. Observe you therefore, the words of the Apostle, *As many, as walke according to this rule, the whole Israel of God.* All such persons, who are carefull, to steere their course according to Sacred Canon, they are true *Israelites* in Gods estimation.

Wherefore I pray you, consider without partiality, which party in the Kingdom, studies Church-Reformation, and State-Reformation according to the Scriptures, and be you confident, that God is, and will be on that side, making bare his Arme for the salvation thereof, according to his promise. *And if God be on our side, who can be against us.* My beloved when the Lord shall convince your hearts of his truth, discovering to you the way of his government and worship. Take heede, o take heede how you with-draw your selves therefrom, under any pretence whatsoever.

And if hope of Salvation, will not hold you, yet let the feare of destruction, chayne you to Christ, who hath thus spoken. *Those mine enemies, who would not have me to rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.*

Secondly, let us be encouraged, to set upon Christ by our supplications to save *Zion*, to uphold his shattered, sinking Church amongst our selves. The resolution and practise of Gods people, grounded upon this truth; should be both our encouragement and patterne. *O thou the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the day of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou o Lord art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not.*

Psal. 124. 1.

Gal. 6. 16.

Rom. 8. 31.

Luk. 19. 17.

2.

Exhortation.

Ier. 14. 8, 9.

I beseech you, make conscience of this duty. I will not goe out of this Chapter for arguments to presse this practise.

1. The Lord is able, with ease to save us, though our distractions are many, and our dangers great. *I* (saith he) *speake in righteousness; mighty to save. vers. 1.* We know that when the Seas were rough, and the Ship (wherein Christ was with his Disciples) *was covered with waves*, upon his word all was still, *he rebuked the winds and waves, and they obeyed him.* And questionlesse he can, by his command suddainly quiet and calme, the proud waves in our troubled waters. Therefore we should pray. *Thou art, our King o God, Command deliverances for Jacob.*

Marc. 4. 39.

Psal. 44. 4.

2. He is willing to admit of a parley, a treaty with us. Thus much may be gathered from the three first verses of the Chapter, which containe a Dialogue, an interchangeable discourse betwixt Christ and his Church, wherein we shall find his Highnesse ready to returne answer after answer unto her demands.

For this purpose, that passage in this prophecy, is very considerable. *Come let us reason together. Adeste queso, & disputemus.* The original word, I find translated (*Dispute*) *Iob 23. 7.* and *Reprove, Gen. 21. 25.* So great is the condescension of Gods love to his people, that he doth not only allow them, but he invites them, to reason out their case with him, to urge their strongest arguments for audience, yea to tell him plainly, wherein they conceive themselves neglected, or too severely dealt with by him.

Is. 1. 18.

Vatablus.

פד

Increpemus.

Videamus, ve-

strane causa, sit

melior, an mea.

Arguite me.

Non detreclabo,

inire vobiscum,

discipationem judi-

ciariam.

Muscul.

Some doe thus glosse upon the phrase. *Come sue me at the law*, produce my bonds obligatory, plead my promises, shew all the evidences you can, to engage me. Truly (beloved) this liberty of speech, which the Lord allowes to poore penitents, when they approach his presence by prayer, should wonderfully encourage our hearts, in speaking for *Sion*. In this regard, let us give the Lord no rest, for we have manifold, open promises, to pleade in the behalfe of his people,

3. He is full of love, and tendernesse. The Church in the eighth verse saith, *I will mention the loving kindnesse of the Lord, and the great goodnesse towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesse.* Mercy is the gate of prayer,

and kindnesse in great ones, increaseth the number of their petitioners. I here remember the words of *Benhadads* servants, We have heard, that the Kings of Israel are mercifull Kings, let us goe out to the King of Israel; peradventure he will save thy life. The heare-say of mercy in a man, moved them to petition, though they had no more then a peradventure to prevaile. And shall not the sure, approved, abundant mercyes of God, incourage us much rather to speake for our King and his three Kingdomes, for the preservation both of Church and Common-wealth.

4. He doth Sympathize with his suffering servants. Marko the nineteenth verse, *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angell of his presence saved them.* Christs bosome was full of bowels, while he was upon earth: And though now he hath layd aside his naturall infirmities, yet assuredly, he hath not put of his sympathizing compassions. Therefore I will conclude this argument, with the words of the Apostle. *We have not an high Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtaine mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

If hereupon, you be resolved, to ply the throne of grace for Zions safety, I intreate you, to take with you these short directions.

1. Pleade the Churches relation to Christ, when you have almost nothing else to urge. As verse sixteene, *Doubtlesse thou art our Father, thou art our Father.* And ô Lord thou art our God, let not man prevaile. And *Jer. 14. 9. We are called by thy name, leave us not.* For the incouragement of our hearts and hopes herein, that Scripture is famous. *Concerning my Sons, command ye me, Isa. 45. 11.* Let us with wondering and thanksgiving lay hold on this glorious engagement, and in the improvement hereof, let us thus reason in our requests before him. *ô Lord if thou be willing to be commanded in the behalfe of thy children, why then, doe not teares and prayers, sighes and supplications prevaile with thee for them, who cry Abba Father.*

2. Reforme your hearts and wayes. *Israel* wearied, wasted with oppressions, cryed to God, and received a sad answer. *I will deliver you no more, yet when they put away their strange gods, the soule of the Lord was troubled for the miseries of Israel.*

1 King, 20. 31.

Heb. 4. 15. 16.

1 Chron. 14. 11.

Judg. 10. 13.
16.

I will apply to you (Beloved) and to my self also, the encouragement given 2 Chron. 30. 8. *If you turne again unto the Lord, your brethren and children shall find compassion.* If Jonah be cast over board, the seas will be quiet. And shall we rather hazard the losse of Church and state, of our selves and ours, with our dearest comforts, then part with our sins? *O God forbid, God forbid:* for how should we be ever able to answer such an horrible thing either to God, or man?

3. Lastly, persevere in prayer: *You that are the Lords Remembrancers give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.* It is recorded in the Parable, that the unjust steward was prevailed with, by constant importunity. And observe the improvement hercof to our purpose. And shall not God *avenge his Elect which cry day and night unto him, though he beare long with them. I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily.* Wherefore let us every one resolve, as *Isai. 62. 1. For Zions sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalems sake I will not rest, untill the righteousness thereof goe forth as brightnesse, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth.*

Thirdly and lastly, let us all be prevailed with, in imitation of Jesus Christ, to enleavour with our utmost, with our All, to save and uphold his Church. Me thinks I hear Christ speaking to us, as once *Gideon* did to the men under his command, *Look on me, and doe likewise.* My Beloved, Can we write after a fairer Copie? Can we find another pattern so perfect to guide our practise? Will it not be our glory, our crown, to be coadjutors, co-workers with Jesus Christ. For what will we engage, if not for the Church? wherein are all our pretious and pleasant things, the meanes of our sweetest, most solacing Communion, with our dearest Lord? For whom will we adventure any thing, every thing, if not for Jesus Christ? who is so worthy? who deserves, or can deserve, either by doing, or suffering, so well at our hands? What should be deare unto our hearts in comparison of the honour of our Lord and Saviour? Therefore let us joyne our hand to his *Arme*, let us adde our spark to his *flame*, in seeking to secure and save Zion.

But if this my expostulation prevaile not upon your hearts, I pray you weigh wisely the words immediately before the Text,

I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold. Hence two strong arguments may be urged, to enforce us (as it were) to engage for the Church of Christ. 1. The Lord takes an exact account, who come in, and who keep off, from Zions succour. He observes the Names, and the Number of them who are employed in his Church-work; He takes notice of the Nature of our work, the place, where it lies, and manner how we behave our selves at it. All this, and more then this might be manifested from the third Chapter of *Nehemiah*, if I had leasure to look into it: yea, he considers who are absent, and wherefore they absent themselves, when the Church of God needs their help; as it might be evidenced from *Judg. 5. 16, 17.* *For the divisions of Reuben, there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to heare the bleasings of the flocks? Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remaine in ships? After continued on the sea shore.*

2. Christ Jesus is as a man amazed, when he beholds multitudes making head against his Church, and yet few, or none, come in for her reliefe. *I wondered* (saith he) *that there were none to uphold.* And no marvell, that our Lord wonders, seeing neither his own authority, glory, deservings, nor the Churches beauties, excellencies, necessities, dangers, together with mens owne concernments involved in her welfare, can prevaile with them, to appeare for her deliverance. Idolaters will hazard liberty, livelyhood, limbs, and life it selfe, for their idols. Morall men, Heathens, acted by state Principles, and heated with love to their Countrey, have made bold, and brave adventures for the honour and safety of the Common-wealth. It is reported of *Marcus Curtius*, (that Noble Romane) that when by a terrible earthquake there was a great breach made in the ground tending to publike danger, he cast himself into it, hearing that something of speciall worth must be thrown in to pacifie their provoked gods. Its no wonder then, to heare that Christ is astonished at Christians backwardnesse to contribute their assistance to prevent the ruine of a trembling, tottering Church. In this respect therefore, I pray you, lend Zion an helping hand, that you, you also, may not be objects of astonishment to Jesus Christ.

If now, (my beloved) you be resolved to serve the necessities
of

Judg. 5. 14,
15, 18, 19, &c.

Obstupui (viz.)
ob tantam vim
hostium. Vatablus.

3

of a bleeding Church, I shall briefly from my Text, cast in some rules for your direction. 1. Lay forth your *chiefeſt ſtrength* in this glorious ſervice. Chriſt ſtretcheth forth *his Arme*, therefore doe not you thinke it enough to touch the work now and then, with one of your *fingers*. We ſhould *love the Lord with all our might*. Every one therefore ſhould enquire where his ſtrength lies, whether in parts, power, purſe, intereſts, and employ that for the Church of Chriſt.

2. *Draw not back*, though the ſtate of the Church ſhould be more deſperate. When the frame is falling, Chriſt *upholds*. And let us reſolve alſo, to help at a *dead liſt*.

3. Be not diſcouraged, nor wrought off, by paucity of helpers. For Chriſt doth engage alone. Obſerve *ver. 3. I have troden the wine-prette alone, and of the people, there was none with me*. Therefore let us make up the number, though there be but few beſides our ſelves.

Moſes ſaw ©.

4. Be zealous and vigorous in your endeavours this way. *My heat, my fury* (ſaith Chriſt) *is upheld*. So ſhould we, be *ſervent in Spirit*, ſerving the Lord.

5. Have pure and ſincere references to the honour of Jeſus Chriſt in all your adventures and endeavours. As he minded himſelf (*My arme ſaved me, and upheld me,*) ſo ſhould we alſo. Think often with your ſelves, that you hear the Lord ſpeaking thus to you. Did you at ſuch a time conſult for *me*, or engage for *me*? Doe you give for *me*, or lend for *me*? Doe you pray, and faſt for *me*?

6. Give not over the work, come not off the ground, till the Churches deliverance be completed. As Chriſt *brought Salvation*, he did not only begin, but did perfect, what he undertook. He went not to reſt, till all was *finiſhed*. Therefore *let us not be weary of well-doing*.

Finis coronat opus.

And now, Right Honourable, I humbly crave leave in the concluſion of my Sermon, to appropriate my Exhortation to you, ſeeing *according to your Commands, I attend your ſoules peculiarly in this dayes ſervice*. 1. God hath honored you with his own Titles, He hath ſaid, you are Gods; he hath called you Saviours, therefore fill your places, answer your titles, labour as Chriſts Vicegerents on earth, to ſave and uphold his Church. 2. God hath

trusted you with more Talents then other men, and all should be traded unto your Masters advantage: Your authoritie, abilities, wisdom, interests, opportunities, doe engage you the more to God: Your selves are not your own, you should glorifie God with your All. Those to whom the Lord hath given much, of them the more will be required. Be you well assured that Jesus Christ will call you to an exact account, how you have husbanded, that which he hath lent you. Remember the sentence of the *slothfull, unprofitable servant*, and be warned thereby: Call to minde the recompence promised to them who are faithfully laborious, and be encouraged to imitation. 3. That speech of *Mordecai* to *Esther* was smart and quick. *If thou hold thy peace at this time, there shall be enlargement and deliverance to the Jewes from some other place, but thou and thy fathers house shall be destroyed.* I commend the application and improvement thereof to your wisdom, wishing heartily, that your purpose, and practise may paralell hers. 4. This work will yeeld both comfort and honour. Worthy *Nehemiah* pleaded his care in this kind, before the Lord with confident expectation of recompence *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds, that I have done for the house of my God, and for the Officers thereof.* And God hath said to them, who instrumentally serve the publike, *Thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.* I will conclude my Motives with the words of the Psalmist, *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* O that every one of your hearts might breathe out his resolution, *Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.* But it may be, your Lordships will answer, What meane you thus to move us! Have we not done much, tending to Church Preservation and Reformation? Are we not still doing what we can, to compleat the work begun? Right Honourable, All this is acknowledged with humble thankfulness. *Qui monet ut facias, quod jam facis, ille monendo laudas.* We honour your Lordships, and we honour God in you, and for you, upon the remembrance of what you have done, and are still endeavouring: yet give me leave, I humbly pray you, to adde a few directions, to guide your further care, to save and uphold the Church of Christ amongst our selves.

*Deus bona dat,
ut boni simus.
Salvator*

Est. 4. 14.

Neh. 13. 14.

Isai. 58. 12.

Psal 122. 6.
9.

I. Proceed more and more to reforme your selves, that the Lord may delight more and more to use you as instruments of his Churches welfare. *If thou doe so and so (speaking of self-reformation) then shalt thou raise up the foundations of many generations.* And this honour (saith the Psalmist) *have all his Saints.* Psal. 149. 9. The Lord loves not to work with rusty tooles, by unreformed men, he rather useth those who are *chosen, holy, and faithfull.* Pride, prodigalitie, idlenesse, Epicurisme, sensualitie, oppressions, sleightnesse in Gods Worship, and much profanenesse are too commonly found amongst Nobles: What your faults are I know not, but I beseech you betwixt the all-knowing God and your own Consciencs, consider your wayes, and amend whatsoever you find amisse, as you desire to prosper in the weighty, glorious services, which you have under hand.

2. *Execute judgement throughly, between a man and his neighbour.* Right Honourable, you have divers petitions presented to you, which lay open the injustice and injuriouse, whereby many have been, and are oppressed. Now it is your duty, to clear the innocent, to relieve the oppressed, to punish the delinquent, and by so doing, you shall prevent our dangers, and hasten our deliverance, *Phineas arose and executed judgement, and the plague was stayed.* And the Promise of God to this practise lies open. Jer. 5. 1. *Run through the streets of Jerusalem: if you can finde a man, if there be any that executeth judgement, and seeketh the truth, and I will spare it.* Psal. 106.

3. Doe what you can to countenance and advance the power of Godlinesse throughout the Kingdome, and for that end in a speciall manner consider, by what meanes the more conscientious, carefull keeping of the solemne Nationall Vow and Covenant may be promoted. May not I take the boldnesse to apply unto you (Right Honourable) the words, in the like case spoken to Ezra (and I am confident that there are thousands who herein assent with me) *Arise, for this matter belongs to you. We also will be with you: Be of good courage, and doe it.* And my soule desires, that the counsell given and the course taken in the prosecution of that businesse, (which is recorded in the 14, 15, 16. verses of that Chapter) might be duly considered, and in some answerable kind imitated. Although I dare not undertake to advise your Honours (for

(for I am conscious to mine own weaknesse:) yet I humbly move, whether it might not be worth the while, to call upon the Reverend Assembly, to consult of a course, to further Covenant keeping in the Kingdome. Blame me not, for being zealous in this particular, because the Lord himself saith, *Lev. 26. 25. I will bring a sword upon you, which shall avenge the quarrell of my Covenant.* I seriously profess, that there is no one sin which more shakes my heart and hopes in reference to bleeding *England*, then falsifying our Covenant with God.

4. Endeavour vigorously to compound our differences in Ecclesiasticall Concernments. Alas, alas, my heart akes, because of our breaches. *Let mine eyes run downe with teares night and day, and let them not cease, for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.* *Jer. 14. 17.* What Factions and Fractions, what Schismes and Separations, what rents and divisions are in this poore, distracted, distressed Church of *England*! How should either Kingdome or Church divided stand? God forbid, but tender respect should be had to tender Consciences. But (Right Honourable) I beseech you take heed, lest under that pretext, you think of tolerating all Religions amongst us. Such like liberty (I am afraid) would usher in Libertinisme, and hasten our desolation.

5. And lastly (as one meanes of the former) Expedite what you may, the establishment and exercise of that Church-Government, which is found most consonant to the Word of God. Discipline is as the hedge or wall about the Vineyard of the Church, to keep out destructive dangers. The Church reformed in matters of Doctrine, and holy Worship, and furnished with power to exercise censures, according to the Scriptures, is like an Army with Banners, both to terrifie the common adversaries, and to secure it self. The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount *Sion*, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud and smoake by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for, above all the glory shall be a covering, or (as our Translation renders it) upon all the glory shall be a defence.

Consider, I beseech you, what I have spoken from God, for his Church, and the Lord give you the fruitfull improvement of my counsell, through the riches of his Grace, in Jesus Christ. Amen.

F I N I S.

RELIGIOUS
COVENANTING
DIRECTED,
AND
Covenant-keeping perswaded :

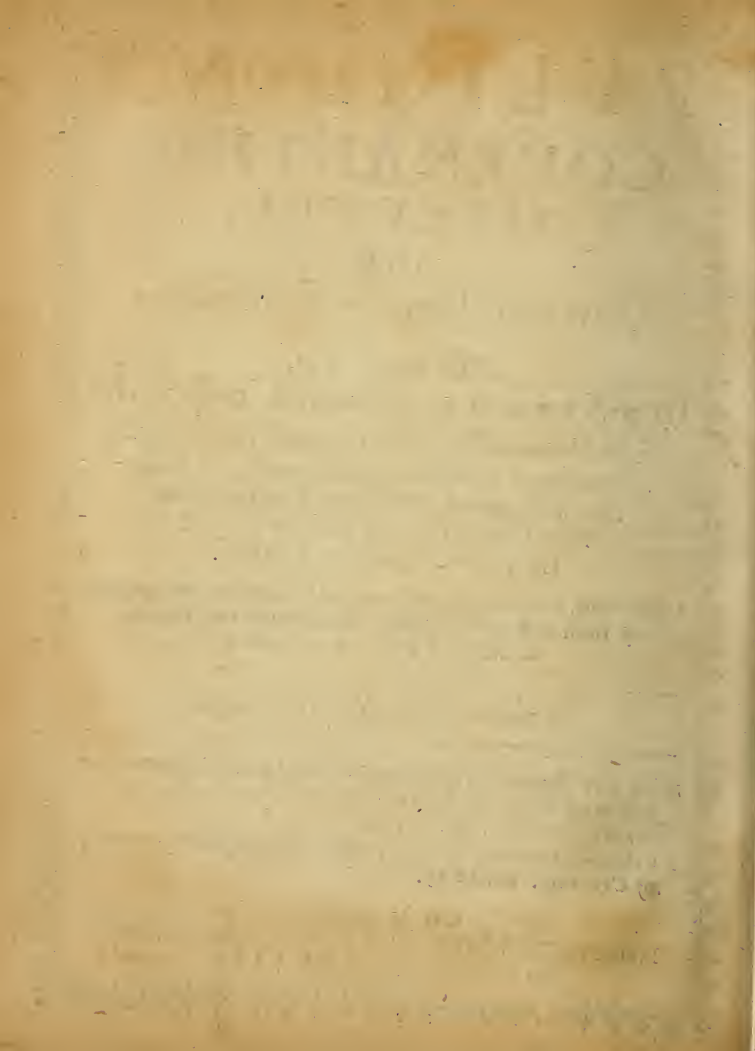
PRESENTED,
In a SERMON preached before the
Right Honourable *Thomas Adams* Lord Major,
and the Right Worshipfull the Sheriffs, and Alder-
men his brethren, and the rest of the Com-
mon-Council of the famous City of
LONDON, *January* 14. 1645.

Upon which day the solemne League and Covenant was renewed
by them and their Officers, with Prayer and Fasting,
at *Michael Basing-shaw, London.*

By *Simeon Ash* Minister of the Gospel.

*When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not
slack to pay it, for the Lord thy God will require it of thee, and it
would be sin in thee. Deut. 23. 21.
I will bring the sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrell of
my Covenant. Lev. 26. 25.*

L O N D O N,
Printed by *G. M.* for *Tho. Underhill* at the signe of the Bible
in Wood-street. M. D. C. XLVI.





TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THOMAS ADAMS Lord Major,
AND THE RIGHT WORSHIPFULL
The Sheriffs and Aldermen his Brethren, and to
the rest of the Honourable Court of Common-
Council of the City of LONDON.



His plain Sermon which attended your service of Covenant-renewing from the Pulpit, comes now from the Presse, in obedience to your command, to do you and the publike some further service. If upon the perusal of that which you heard preached, it may please the Lord to quicken your zeal in Covenant-keeping, I shall have occasion to blesse his Name with a joyfull heart.

The zeal of the Common-Councell of London, in renewing their solemn League and Covenant, rings thorow the severall Countiees of the Kingdom of England: and I am confident, that the sound thereof hath been heard in many other Kingdoms: And doubtlesse there are often enquiries, and earnest expectations to hear what London now doth in the pursuance of their Covenant heretofore taken, and now again solemnly renewed with holy fasting and prayer. A City set upon an hill cannot be hid; your practices have had, and will have strong influences into the severall parts of this Land, and into other Nations: You have formerly and lately done well and worthily in respect to your Covenant: I pray God, that your continued holy zeal may affect and fire many in other Countiees in faithfull Co-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

venant-keeping. God forbid, that you should ever deserve thus to be stigmatized, either by God or men; Their heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in their Covenant, *Psal.* 78.37.

I shall not need to tell you, that our solemn League and Covenant is despised, derided, aspersed and opposed by too many: for that which you may read in Pamphlets, and hear from some Pulpits and other places, doth make you both eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of this evil, which should be greatly bewailed. This contradiction, this opposition should increase your gracious heat for your God. Fire gives out the most scorching heat in the cold-st weather. It is time for thee, Lord, to worke (*saieth David*) for they have made void thy Law. Therefore I love thy Commandements above gold, yea above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way, *Psal.* 119. 126, 127, 128.

My soul desires, that according to the guidance of that Wisdom which is from above, you all may make the like gracious improvement of the checks and affronts which you meet with, in your Covenant-keeping. By how much the more, any others do plot and practise to hinder the glorious Worke of Church-reformation, by so much the more do you consult and act, to expedite and perfect it. By how much the more any others strive and study to maintain Popery, Prelacie, Schisme, Heresie; by so much the more, do you set your selves against such matters, as being destructive to the welfare both of Church and state. By how much the more others designe and endeavour to break the brotherly union between England and Scotland, by so much the more do you lay forth your selves to maintain it. And that your zeal in these kindes may appear to your selves and others to be pure and sincere, let it be your chief and constant care, to reforme your selves and all yours, in every thing, according to the will of God: That you all may in these particulars and in all things else, approve your selves faithfull both to God and man, in holy Covenant-keeping, shall be the prayer of him who is

Your servant, in, and

for Jesus Christ,

S I M : A S H.

Feb. 31th



RELIGIOUS COVENANTING DIRECTED.

PSAL. 76. II.

Vow and pay unto the Lord your God.



His Text perfwades a double duty. 1. To make vows. 2. To pay vows unto the Lord our God. From whence two truths, seasonable for the service of the day, fall naturally, and easily; without forcing, into our consideration.

That Gods people must make religious vows, as his hand of providence doth lead them forth thereunto. Doct. 1.

That such vows being made, must be payed unto the Lord our God. Doct. 2.

In the handling of the former of these propositions, I shall briefly give you, 1. The explication; 2. The application thereof.

The explication of the point I shall dispatch under these three heads. 1. The Act required, *vow*. 2. The Agents, or persons upon whom this duty is pressed; This the following words expresse, *All those that be round about him*. 3. The providences, whereby God calleth forth to this practice *of making vows*.

First, Holy vows are the solemn engagements of the soul unto the Lord, according to his will: *If a man vow a vow unto the*

B Lord,

Lord, or swear an oath, to binde his soul with a bond, Numb. 30.2. To vow, to swear, and to covenant, are in Scripture phrase equivalent, importing the same thing, *Jonathan made a Covenant with David, And Jonathan caused David to swear again*, 1 Sam. 20.16,17. Here I may not spend time, in discoursing concerning the severall sorts of vows, which might be spoken to, under these, or such like heads. 1. They are either made to God, or man. 2. Of things necessary, or arbitrary. 3. Explicite, or implicite, mentall, or vocall. 4. Assertory, or promissory. But let it be sufficient, that I now suggest thus much: That the Text is to be understood of such vows, as are promissory obligations unto the Lord. And from hence I shall perswade and direct the managing of such vows unto God, as are necessary and openly unfolded to every ordinary understanding, in the solemn League and Covenant this day to be renewed.

Secondly, the Actors in this duty are described to be such, as are round about the Lord. The Psalmist hath reference to *Numb. 2.2.* where *Israel* was commanded to pitch their Tents round about the Tabernacle, which was a signe of Gods speciall presence. And this phrase (as I conceive) describeth Gods people by a double character. 1. Their speciall attendance upon God, their readinesse to receive and obey his commands: As the four and twenty Elders, are said, *Rev. 4.4.* to be round about the Throne, as pres'd to praise the Lord. 2. Gods speciall presence in the midst of them, to hear prayers, and to performe promises, for their preservation and welfare in every kinde; *Who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God, in all things, that we call upon him for?* Deu. 4.7.

Thirdly, the call unto this employment I shall note under a five fold providence from the Lord.

1. Sinfull defections from God, that by means of religious vowing, his backsliding people might be recovered: *Our fathers have trespassed and done that which is evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their face from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burnt incense, nor offered burnt offerings, in the holy place unto the God of Israel. Now it is in my heart* (saith *Hekiah*

zekiab) to make a Covenant with the Lord God of Israel, 2 Chron. 29. 6, 7, 10. Thus likewise the people of God resolved in the dayes of Ezra: *We have trespassed against our God, &c. Now therefore, let us make a Covenant with our God,* Ezra 10. 2, 3.

2. Sad discoveries of divine displeasure, that by holy covenanting present judgements might be removed, and future evils prevented: *The Wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem; and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. For lo our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons, and our daughters, and our Wives are in captivity for this. Now it is in mine heart (saith Hezekiab) to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turne away from us,* 2 Chron. 29. 8, 9, 10.

3. Famous experiences of Gods goodnesse, that by the right use of religious vows his Majesty may be praised, and his providences improved. The exhortation in the Text was grounded upon some such occasion, as many verses in the Psalm declare: *The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands,* ver. 5. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead-sleep,* ver. 6. *When God arose in judgement to save all the meek of the earth,* ver. 8. Hence follows, *vow and pay, &c.* Interpreters judge, that this Psalm was penned, upon *Ashurs* overthrow, whereupon *many brought gifts unto the Lord unto Jerusalem,* 2 Chron. 32. 23. according to the advice given in the words immediately following the Text, *Bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*

4. Defective improvements (if any improvements at all) of Gods favourable administrations, that by foederal engagements his people might be bettered: *These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses, &c. Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes, even in the land of Egypt, &c. The great temptations, and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day,* Deut. 29. 1, 2, 3, 4. This is propounded as one ground of the Covenant renewed, whereof we read in the following verses.

5. Apparent danger of seduction and departure from God. In this regard Gods servants have afresh obliged themselves to his Majesty, for their own establishment and preservation: *Ye stand this day before the Lord, to enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, lest there should be amongst you any, whose heart turneth away from the Lord, Deut. 29. 10, 12, 18.*

Use 1.

The application of this point followeth; which serves in the first place to informe you of your call to *covenant-renewing*, the intended service of this day. For give me leave to appeal unto your consciences, *Right Honourable, right Worshipfull, and much respected Citizens*, whether all the five fore-mentioned particulars, do not fully reach you and take hold upon you, both in respect of Gods dealings with you, and your miscarriages towards him, since you at first took the solemne League and Covenant. And here I shall make bold to propound unto you some short interrogatories, under the five fore-mentioned heads, to which I wish your hearts may returne answers, as in the presence of the All-knowing God.

First, Are you not guilty of sinfull declinings in a great degree from your former engagements unto the Lord? Have you not lost your first love? Have not the matters of Gods house been much slighted and neglected? Hath not your care to preserve the truth of Religion from corruption been much abated? Have you not connived at the spreading of pernicious errours in this City? Hath not your zeal against schisme and sinfull separations from our Church Assemblies been very much cooled? Is not your love towards our Brethren of *Scotland* in a great measure lessened? Have not your vigorous endeavours to promote the setting of Christs government in our Congregations been wofully diminished? And have you not been lamentably wanting in labouring the thorow reformation of your selves and families? Which of you, hath striven to exceed, to excell others, in advancing the power of godlinesse in your conversation? Doubtlesse these and such like backslidings from former engagements, may well warrant your Covenant-renewing with your God.

Secondly, None of you can be ignorant of the manifold, manifest discoveries of Gods heavy displeasure against this poor trembling Kingdom. *Hath not the Lord delivered us up unto trouble*
and

and astonishment, by his severe administrations? How many thousands have fallen by the sword of cruell war? What wofull desolations are made in many Towns, yea Counties in this Kingdom, by the prevailing pitiless enemies? And should not we read Gods wrath against our selves, in the abundance of blood which hath been shed, and the unhappy spoils which have been made in *Scotland* and *Ireland*? Besides all this, I pray you consider whether these things do not proclaim and speak aloud Gods anger? Our long looked for reformation in matters of Religion, is still deferred: our hopes of the much-needed and much-desired Discipline of Jesus Christ, are still disappointed: the miserable rents and divisions in families, Congregations, Cities and Counties, by reason of different, yea contrary opinions and practices, in wayes of Religion, are wonderfully increased. And have we not in these regards reason to renew our Covenant, that the wrath of the Lord may be turned from us?

Thirdly, God hath often *remembered us in our low estate*, because his mercy endureth for ever. Who can recount Gods many marvellous works for our safety and comfort? Have not our deliverances been wonderfull, and many of our victories little lesse then miraculous? How often hath the subtil enemy been infatuated, the strong enemy weakned, and great Armies broken by a little strength? I shall not need here to minde you of the many wonders which Gods Almighty hand hath wrought for us, both in the Northerne and Westerne parts. And as for this City, how admirably and unexpectedly hath it been preserved and provided for, in every kinde by the Lord? How many oppressions are we freed from, by Parliamentary authority, through the goodnesse of our God? Therefore besides other presents of praise which God deserves at our hands, we have just occasion to present our selves unto his Highnesse by Covenant-renewing.

Fourthly, Notwithstanding our various and glorious experiences of Gods patience and goodnesse; Have we not too much cause thus to complain, that to this day we want hearts to husband Gods remarkable providences, to his honour and our own advantage? Who loves God more, or who serves h^m better, because of the great things he hath done for us? Is our faith in Gods promises stronger? Is our fear of Gods displeasure greater? Are we

more zealous for the Lord of Hosts, or more couragious for his truth, against error? Dare we say that we do our utmost for the speeding of Church-reformation, that we may not be over-run and undone by Sects, Schismes and confusions? Therefore certainly, we have a call to renew our Covenant, to quicken our improvement of Gods gracious providences, both to his praise, others profit, and our own further comfort in Christ.

Fiftly and lastly, That we may not fall from our stedfastnesse, we have need to binde our selves yet further unto our God by solemne Covenant. Men are wont (as I have heard) to hoop their vessels with iron bonds, in which they carry their stronger liquors beyond seas, that by the tossings in the ship and the liquors working, the vessels may not be broken into pieces, and the liquor lost. And have not we more need to add the bond of a solemne Covenant to the bond of Gods sacred commands, that we may not be broken from one another, nor divided from God in his truths and holy worships, in these broken, erroneons, stormy, tempestuous times?

Gal. 5:

For 1. *Emulation, variance, strife, seditions, heresies*, are reckoned up, by the Apostle, amongst the works of the flesh, unto which our corrupt natures do strongly dispose us.

2. There are more then a good many of subtle, busie factours in this City, to promote errors, schismes and factions of severall sorts, to draw disciples after them, and to spread their infection amongst people of all rankes and qualities.

3. It is apparent, by too many instances, that divers persons both wise and godly, have been deceived and drawn aside from the wayes of truth, into the by-paths of error and schisme, and into practices of bitternesse (I will not say of how many kindes) against their brethren. Therefore in this respect, as in those before mentioned, you have just cause to say one to another; *Com^e, let us joyn our selves unto the Lord in a Covenant, never to be forgotten.*

Use 2.

Having thus far endeavoured to clear up your call unto Covenant-renewing, I now proceed by way of exhortation, to perswade your regular and reverentiall cautiousnesse in this weighty businesse. Consider the glorious Majesty of God, unto whom vows are to be made; He ought to be feared, as our translation renders

renders the words following the Text : or, *He is fear*, as the Originall hath it. In which phrase we have *Nomen affectus, pro objecto*. God is a dreadful and terrible Majesty. And this doubtlesse is added, to awe mens hearts, in the undertaking of such like services. The advice of *Solomon* upon this ground is more open, *Eccles. 5. 2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in Heaven, and thou upon earth.* In which counsell, the wise man hath speciall reference unto vowing, as the following words declare.

Now for your guidance in this great service, I will give you briefly some plain and necessary rules.

1. You must Covenant *knowingly*. It is thus openly expressed, of them who covenanted in the dayes of *Nehemiah*, *Every one having knowledge, and having understanding, they clave to their brethren, they entred into an oath to walke in Gods Law, Neh. 10. 29.* Ignorance doth nothing well : the light of knowledge must guide our whole course. And in this businesse of a sacred vow, it is necessary that men know, both the nature of the duty, and the matter of the federall engagement. No man should be moved by an implicite faith, but every one should be fully perswaded in his own minde. For as in other cases, so in this, *whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.*

2. *Repentance* for former offences must precede, and prepare for Covenant-renewing. Thus it was with those, who sealed and subscribed the solemne Covenant in the time of *Nehemiah*, for they assembled themselves to keep a religious Fast (as we do this day) before they entered into the Covenant, *Neh. 9. 1.* In which exercise deep sorrow for sin was expressed, their particular evils were aggravated and largely confessed, themselves were judged, and God was justified in his severe administrations : All these expressions of repentance, are manifest in that 9th Chapter of *Nehemiah*, which then was the introduction to the Covenant. And doubtlesse if we do not penitently bewail our former violations of Gods commands and our own vows, we cannot with acceptation to God, or with comfort in our own hearts renew our Covenant with him this day.

3. Your *hearts* must go along with your vows. It is said, *2 Chron. 15. 15. That all Judah did swear with all their hearts :*

And

And God will not take up with lesse at our hands this day. It is no better then hypocrisie, to lift up hands before God, when *the heart is far from him*. We must in our judgements approve and resolve upon the payment of our vows, and all our affections, both concupiscible and irascible, must be upon the wing, according to the various particularities expressed in the Covenant. The soul should with love, joy and longings, worke towards the speedy settling of Church-governement according to the word of God, and towards the maintaining of brotherly union between the two Kingdoms of *England* and *Scotland*, together with the more full reformation of our selves and families. And O how should your souls now rise, in holy dislike, in the hatred of, and in indignation against *Popery*, and all *profanenesse*, against *Heresies*, *Schisme*, *detestable Neutrality*, and whatsoever else it is, which is against God and the welfare of these Kingdoms I

4. Our Covenanting must be accompanied with *humility*. I. From the sense of our own weaknesses to keep touch with God, in comming up fully to the Covenant; we should lean to his promise, and take hold on his strength: Say, as the Church, *Through God we shall do valiantly*, *Psal. 60. 11*. And as the blessed Apostle did; *Phil. 4. 13*. *I can do all things through Jesus Christ strengthening me.*

2. And being apprehensive of our own unworthinesse, to receive any ability from the Lord, seeing by our sins, we have enfeebled our own spirits, therefore we should humbly petition for divine assistance. Herein imitate *David*, who having thus in resolution and promise expressed himself before God, *I will keep thy Statutes*, he immediatly adds, *O forsake me not utterly*, *Psal. 119. 8*. The more of the spirit of *self-deniall* and *prayer* is in your hearts, when you take the Covenant, the more hope there will be of your keeping it afterwards.

5. Come to the Covenant *conscientiously*. Be not acted only by the appointments, expectations or practices of men in this particular: Let not this be the alone motive upon your spirits; Covenant-renewing is ordered by the *Court of Common-Council*: But rather reason thus; The manifold providences of God before specified, do call unto this service, and therefore we will undertake it. If you respect not God in the worke, you shall lose both acceptance and recompence.

6. *Covenant fiducially*: If your spirits act sincerely, according to the fore-named directions, then be you confident that the consequence of this dayes service will be comfortable. Although your weakneses are many and great, yet if your hearts be herein found upright with God, you may hopefully perswade your selves that the Lord will so far regard his own ordinance, and have respect unto the mediation of Christ (*the Messenger, the Mediator of the new-Covenant*) that your worke shall be crowned with good successe. You heard before, that *Enemy-conquering providences* made way unto the exhortation in the Text, *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God*. And I conceive that the verse following is considerable, being the language of faith; *He shall cut off the spirit of Princes, he is terrible to the Kings of the earth*: The most potent adversaries of the Church shall be brought down, by holy Covenant-making and Covenant-keeping with God.

Now this lets me into the consideration of my next Doctrine;
That vows made, must be paid unto the Lord our God.

Doctr.¹

Although a vow must not be made a bond of iniquity, and therefore unlawfull vows rather call for repentance then performance, (as *Dauids* rash revengefull resolution against churlish *Nabal*.)

Yet such Covenants as we make according to Gods will, we must make good, in conscience to his commandment: *Pay that which thou hast vowed* (saith *Solomon*.) *Better it is that thou shouldst not vow, then that thou shouldst vow and not pay it. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, Eccles. 5. 4, 5.* The Scribes and Pharisees were but sleighty superficiall Expolitours of Gods Law, yet they were wont thus to *publish Gods command*: *Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt performe unto the Lord thine oaths, Mat. 5. 33.*

In the prosecution of this plain, profitable, seasonable and necessary point, I shall faithfully endeavour three things. 1. *To perswade this duty by arguments.* 2. *To guide this practice by rules.* 3. *To promote your obedience herein, by some short directions.*

The motives whereby we may be induced to make good our honest and holy vows, shall be cast under severall heads, that my progresse in them, may be the more easie and edifying.

Motives.²

1. From the nature of a vow in generall, and from sundry
C circumstances

circumstances considerable in our Covenant particularly.

In generall; 1. All vows are sacred obligations upon our consciences: *If any (saith Moses) vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath, to binde his soul with a bond, Numb.30.2, &c.* In this respect the holy Psalmist resolved upon this duty, *Psa..56. 12. Thy vows are upon me, O Lord, I will render praises:* And doubtlesse every gracious heart will be sensible of this great spirituall engagement. 2. By means of vows we become Gods debtors: Hence it is, that the Text calls for *payment, Vow and pay.* I here remember the speech of the Prophet unto the poor widow, *2 King.4.7. Go sell thine oyl, and pay the debt.* And the Holy Ghost gives in this, as a note of a wicked man, *Psal.37.21. He borroweth, and payeth not again.* You Merchants, who have great dealings in the world, would you not be ashamed to appear upon the *Exchange*, if you were not carefull to pay your debts unto men? Therefore, *vow and pay unto the Lord your God.*

More particularly, there are sundry weighty circumstances considerable, in regard of our *solemn League and Covenant*, which may worke our hearts unto serious resolutions to keep it.

1. The materials of our Covenant are *lawfull and justifiable*; we vow to endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresie, schisme, profanenesse, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godlinesse. And have we not good reason thus to do? For have not these things much endangered the welfare both of this Church and Commonwealth already? and will not the indulging of such matters, prove destructive both to our publike hopes and comforts? We vow sincerely, really, constantly, through the grace of God, to endeavour the reformation of Religion, in Doctrine, worship, Discipline and Government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best Reformed Churches. I shall not need to specify our engagements, to defend the Kings person and authority in the preservation of the true Religion, to preserve the priviledges of Parliament, as also to continue a firme peace and union between the Kingdoms of England and Scotland. These and other things expressed in the Covenant, are by you Covenanters accounted just and equal. I remember Davids resolution, *Psal.119.106. I have sworn and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgements.*

judgements. And if we judge the materials of our Covenant righteous, we should in that regard lay the greater charge upon our consciences to keep it.

2. Our vows are *deliberate*. The nature of this ordinance hath been unfolded, the severall Articles in the Covenant have been considered of, and therefore the rather to be observed. Rash vows binde conscience, if the keeping of them prove only in inexpedencies prejudiciall to our selves, and contradict not any of Gods ever-binding laws. Therefore *Solomon* calling for the payment of vows, tells people, that they must not thinke to put off that obligation, by saying, *It was an errour, Eccl. 5.* an inconsiderate oversight. And we all know, that when *Israel* was bound to the *Gibeonites* by an oath, through a mistake, being over-reached by a cheat, *All the Princes said to all t'ie Congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel, now therefore we may not touch them, Josh. 9. 19.* How then shall we be excused, if our premeditated vows be not performed?

3. We have vowed before many *Witnesses*. Men who stand much upon their credit and reputation in the world, will be taken with this argument. When King *Herod* was caught in a snare, by his heady vow, and being troubled, because the dancing Damsell demanded the head of *John* the Baptist, it is said, *Neverthelesse for the oath sake, and them which sate with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her, Mat. 14. 9.* Consider how many have seen you lift up your hands unto the most High possessour of Heaven and earth, in holy Covenanting: Remember how many thousands know that the vows of God are upon you, and be you hereby prevailed wih to keep touch with him.

4. Hereto I might add the consideration, both of the *multitude of all ranks, qualities, callings in this Kingdom, in Scotland, Parliament-men, Souldiers, Citizens, Divines, &c.* who are herein mutually engaged with us. I might also minde you of the often reiterations and renewings of your vows and Covenants: Doubtlesse these things will not be sleighted by them who are ingenuous; but I may not insist upon them, having divers other heads of arguments to speak unto.

The second sort of arguments to perswade Covenant-keeping, shall be taken from our God, the only true and blessed God, unto

whom our vows oblige us. And under this head these particulars are considerable: 1. His Majesty takes exact notice of all such engagements, together with all the circumstances of time, place, companies, occasions, &c. which belong thereto: *O God thou hast heard my vows, saith David, P sal 61.5.*

2. His Highnesse well remembers these obligations: The Lord rounds *Jacob* in the ear with this *Memento*, *I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointest the pillar, and where thou vowest a vow unto me, Gen. 31.13.*

3. He calls for payment, he will not be taken off from demanding his debt in this kinde: *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it, for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, Deut. 23.21.*

4. He is the most High possessour and commander of Heaven and earth. The Psalmist layes strength upon this consideration, *P sal. 50.14. Pay thy vows unto the most High.* And this thought was prevailing upon the hearts of *Jephthah* and his daughter, in a case very difficult in a courte very croffe to the stream and strength of naturall affection: you all know his vow, therefore I shall not need to name it, but marke I pray you the expressions, both of the father and of his childe, *Judg. 11 35, 36. I have opened my mouth (saith Jephthah) unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back. And she said to him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto Jehovah, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth.*

5. He is a most faithfull Covenant-keeping God: *He is God, the faithfull God, which keepeth Covenant and mercy, Deut. 7.9.* Although meer mercy move his Majesty to make Covenant, yet will he make it good: How much more should we keep our holy Covenants, which both duty and necessity call us to renew.

6. Although our well-doing, doth not, cannot reach the Lord with advantage, yet his Highnesse will account himself honoured by our faithfullnesse in Covenant: Hence it is, that these two duties are conjoynded in the Scripture; *Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High, P sal. 50.14. And P sal. 65.*

1. *Praise waiteth for thee O God in Sion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed.* Consider I pray you, Do we not owe God praite? Do we not pray, *Hallowed be thy Name? Will it not be*

our Honours to set the Crown on his head? Therefore let us all resolve to performe *our vows unto the Lord our God.*

The third head of arguments follows to be considered, and it is drawn from the various precious benefits to be received, by conscientious Covenant-keeping with the Lord our God. *Motive 3.* 1. Care in this kinde will evidence our effectuall conversion to God. The Prophet *Isaiah* foretelling the calling of the Gentiles, speaketh thus, *The Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation, yea they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and performe it,* *Ila. 19. 21.*

2. Good Covenant-keepers lye very near unto the Lords warme heart, he loves them dearly: *If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye shall be a peculier treasure unto me above all people,* *Exod. 12. 5.* Covenant-keepers are Gods jewels, and all other persons are accounted as the lumber of the world, in comparison of them. Men will adventure much to ingratiate themselves with great ones; and shall not we pay our vows, that we may enjoy the favour, the estimation of God, whose loving kindnes is better then life?

3. Hence issueth hope to prevaile with the Lord by our prayers: The Psalmist having said, *P sal. 65. 1. Unto thee O God shall the vow be performed;* he adds immediatly, *O thou that hearest prayers.* And so soon as this counsell was given, *P sal 50. 14. Pay thy vows unto the most High,* in the next verse, this follows by way of connexion, *And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.* As you desire the audience of your prayers, make you conscience to pay your vows.

4. The sanctification of all our concernments, is a rich privilege appertaining unto honest Covenant-keepers: *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto them who keep his Covenant,* *P sal. 25. 10.* Gods sweet mercy, in the performance of his promises, runs throug the veins of all his providences for the good of them, who in reference to Covenant, keep touch with him: And who knows fully the worth of this one prerogative; therefore as you desire a share herein, make conscience to *pay your vows unto the Lord your God.*

5. What need I descend unto any more particulars, seeing all the precious.

precious promises of the Covenant of Gospel-grace, are assured upon them, who are faithfull in Covenant with God. The Psalmist having moved this question, *Psal.24.3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place?* part of his answer is this; *He that hath not sworn deceitfully, he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation:* Therefore be prevailed with, through holy self-love and desires of blessedness, to pay your vows unto the Lord your God.

6. And yet once more give me leave to presse this argument *ab utili*, upon the hearts of you who are affectionate parents; I know your bowels earn towards your children, and you desire their good, as your own comfort; now be you well assured, that you can take no course, which will be more probable to entaile Gods blessing upon your posterity, then this of conscientious Covenant-keeping with God. How admirable and desirable is that promise in *Psal.103.17,18. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto childrens children, to such as keep his covenant?*

These benefits of Covenant-keeping I leave in your bosomes, desiring that through the blessing of God, they may do you good.

Motive 4.

I might here mention a further motive, to perswade the payment of vows, from the sad consequences of falseness and unfaithfulness in this kinde. 1. The Psalmist gives in this as a character of a wicked man, *Psal.55.20. He hath broken (or profaned) his Covenant.* 2. All the sins of men are greatly aggravated by this circumstance, that they are not only transgressions of Gods Law, but violations of their own vows. Thus Solomon brands the adulterous woman, *Prov.2.17. She forgetteth the Covenant of her God.* 3. Breach of Covenant brings Gods burning displeasure upon people: This thought did awe *Israel*, in reference to their rash League made with the *Gibeonites*, *Josh.9.20. We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them.*

4. Gods anger in this kinde kindled, may bring a consumption upon our hopes and comforts. That Item which the *Wise man* gives in this case should be seriously minded, *Eccl 5 5,6. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, then that thou shouldest vow and not*

pay;

pay; Wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the worke of thine hands? Never were greater works under hand for Church and Common-wealth, in our dayes, or the dayes of our fore-fathers, then are in agitation amongst us at this day; therefore let us take heed, lest our unfaithfullnesse in our Covenant provoke the Lord to dash all our endeavours into pieces, with the disappointment of all our golden hopes. Gods curse is annexed unto his Covenant, to enforce the keeping of it. It is said, *Neh. 10. 29. They entered into a curse, and into an oath to walke in the Law of God.* And the sword of cruell war is drawn by the hand of Divine justice, to avenge the quarrel of the Covenant, *Lev. 26. 25.* This sword of Civil war is eating mans flesh, and drinking mans blood in this Kingdom at this day; and how can we expect that the Almighty should command it to returne into its scabbard, and to be quiet, if we continue carelesse in keeping Covenant? I professe (beloved) that I have often trembled to thinke upon that discovery of Gods severity, in punishing *Israel with three yeers famine in Davids time, because Saul had broken the rash vow, which the Elders of Israel had made long before with the Gibeonites.* For thus I reason, If the violation of an unadvised oath with subtil sinfull men, by the posterity of them who made it, did bring a sore nationall judgement; what then may we expect from the hand of God, for contradicting both by words and deeds, both by opinions and practises, the solemn sacred League and Covenant which our selves have upon deliberation, both made and renewed with man and God? These are weighty considerations, and worthy your often and serious thoughts, unto which many more might be added; but I forbear the enlarging of this subject, because you have so fully been acquainted with this matter, by my Reverend brother, who hath largely to satisfaction set forth the exceeding great danger of truce-breaking, from *2 Tim. 3. 1. Covenant-breaking makes the times perillous: unfaithfullnesse in Covenant is a Land-destroying, a Kingdom-devouring sin.*

2 Sam. 3. 1.

M. Calamy.

Now (my beloved) to summe up all my arguments: If there be in your hearts, 1. Either respect unto the sacred obligation of a solemn vow, 2. Or unto the most High possessour of Heaven and earth. 3. If you either prize the promises of his grace, and desire to be partakers thereof through Christ; 4. Or dread the discoveries

veries of the wrath of the Almighty, and would preserve your selves and your posterity, your selves and the Kingdom from breaking blows of vengeance, *pay your vows unto the Lord your God.*

These arguments I hope will not be slighted by you: God forbid, that matters of so great, so publike concernment, should be disregarded by them, who profess so much zeal and respect to God and to his cause, unto the prosperity of this famous City, and the wellfare both of Church and Common-wealth, as you *Worthy Citizens* have done, and persevere to do: Therefore I proceed in this service, to set down some Scripture-rules to guide you in the faithfull payment of your vows unto the Lord your God.

Rule 1.

Pay your good vows *universally*: *Pay thy vows*, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 50. 14.* All thy vows, none excepted; whatsoever you have vowed according to his word, you must make good according to his command: Thus much is open in the text, *vow and pay unto the Lord your God.* Take good King *Josiah* for a president for your paterne in this particular, of whom it is thus said, upon his covenanting with God, *2 Chron. 34. 33.* *And Josiah took away all the abominations, out of all the countries which pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to swear, even to serve the Lord their God.* You see that he spares nothing, no where within the reach of his authority, which might be displeasing unto his God, or destructive to his people. I pray you peruse the particulars to be opposed by vertue of your Covenant, *Poperie, Prelacy, Profanenesse, Schisme, Heresie*; and do not dare to indulge any abomination, which you have vowed to oppose: Take heed that no sinfull biasse of near relations, or any self-advantages, take you off from your faithfullnesse in this kinde. The Holy Ghost makes this a character of an heir of Heaven, *Psal. 15. 4.* *He swears and keeps it, though to his own hinderance*: Therefore let not fear of losing a customer, a friend, an office, a good bargain, or any other outward advantage, hinder you in keeping your Covenant. I will not further enlarge this head, which I leave to your thoughts, but will conclude the rule, with reading the practice of King *Asa* in the pursuance of his Covenant, *2 Chron. 15. 16.* *And also concerning Maachab the mother of Asa the King, he removed her from being Queen, because she had made an Idol in a grove; And Asa cut down her Idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook*

brook Kidron. There are Idols of mens heads; and of mens hands, there are *Idol-opinions* and *Idol-practices* to be opposed by vertue of our Covenant, and you must beware lest through respect of persons, you prove partiall and unfaithfull.

When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it, Deut. 23.21. And, thou shalt not defer to pay it, Eccles. 5.4. I might here speak much to perswade the speedy payment of our vows; hereby your comfort will be increased, and the publike worke of reformation quickned and expedited, your acts will be exemplary and of common influence both thorow the City and the whole Kingdom. How many thousands enquire, what is done in *London* against Popery, Profanenesse, Schisme and Heresie, in the pursuance of their solemne League and Covenant? The seasonableness of an action betters it, doubles it: *Bis dat qui cito dat*: and I may truly say in the case under hand, *Bis facit qui cito facit*: ply the work of reformation now it is upon the wheels, and you may do much worke in a little time: *principium est dimidium totius*; gain-say growing evils, tread upon the Cockatrice in the shell, oppose those opinions and practices in the bud, in the birth, which if suffered to grow, to live longer, will threaten the peace both of Church and state; by delays your own guilt will be multiplied and greatened, your hopes of reformation will be enfeebled, and the whole Kingdom endangered: Busineses of necessity call for quick dispatch? and is there any worke of greater concernment, then the worke of your God, in endeavouring your own reformation, and the reformation of his Church according to his word, which is the matter of your Covenant? I remember the words of *Moses* to *Aaron*, *Go quickly to the Congregation, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun, Num. 16.46.* And it is said that *Aaron did run*. Blame me not, but bear with me, I beseech you, if I appear warme, in perswading your speed in acting according to your Covenant, for I speak for the safety of a sinking Kingdom. Are we not all on a flame? which way can you cast your eyes, but you shall see the sparkes of unbrotherly contentions, rising as out of a furnace? Alas, alas, we shall burne into ashes, and from confusions fall into a ruinous heape, if through Gods blessing upon Covenant-keeping-endeavours, our misery be not prevented.

Rule 2.

Rule 3.

Pay your vows *boldly*, with so much openesse, that the witness of your bonds may be witnesses likewise of your faithfullnesse in discharging them: The resolution of *David* is herein imitable, which he expresth once and again in the same Psalm, *I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the presence of all his people, yea in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem, P sal. 116. 14, 18, 19.* Is it any shame for a man to be honest, and to pay his debts? Wherefore then should men be loth to appear in the pursuance of their Covenants? Act so publikely, so couragiously for a full reformation according to the word of God, and against Malignancy, Sedition, Herefie, together with all other things destructive to the welfare of the three Kingdoms, that both City and Countrey may understand your undaunted resolutions to keep Covenant with your God: And if in this way of zeal and faithfullnesse, you should meet with checks and affronts, make ye that answer unto your opposers, which brave-spirited *David* made unto mocking *Michal*, *If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile, 2 Sam. 6.*

Rule 4.

Keep Covenant with the Lord *conscientiously*: Have respect unto God in paying as in making vows: My text holds forth this openly, as many other parallel Scriptures, which I have formerly made use of. Whatsoever we do, which is materially comprehended in our Covenant, we should do it, *because of the oath of God, Eccles. 8. 2.* Do not only intend man-pleasing, or selfe-seeking in the pursuance of your Covenant; be not popular and vain-glorious, but sincere and single-hearted in this service. As in other acts of obedience, so in this of Covenant-keeping, have an eye unto your heavenly father *who sees in secret, and he will reward you openly.* God forbid, God forbid that any one of you should act against your brethren with an envious or malicious spirit, under pretence of making good your Covenant. O take heed unto your selves, that you disgrace not this holy ordinance, nor open the mouths of them, who maligne our Covenant, and would upon such like observations, reproachfully asperse both you and it. I will conclude this rule, with the caution given by worthy *Nehemiah*: *Ought ye not to walke in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of our enemies? Neh. 5. 9.*

Rule 5.

Be vigorous in the payment of your vows: The command of God

God given unto *Moses* for the guiding of this businesse, is here very considerable, *Lev. 22. 21.* *Whosoever offereth a sacrifice to accomplish his vow, it shall be perfect to be accepted, there shall be no blemish in it.* When you pay your debts to God, bring your best coyn; put not off your light gold to God; imploy and improve your very best for your God; give him the flower of your wisdom, strength, authority and interests; sit down and consider where your chiefest ability lyes, and resolve with that to pay your vows. Say thus unto your own souls seriously in secret; I will beat mine own brains by study, I will stir up my best friends by importunity, and I will industriously take all courses within the compasse of my generall and particular calling, that my selfe and my family, that this Church and Common-wealth may be reformed, and that unity betwixt *England* and *Scotland*, may be preserved according to the *solemne League and Covenant*. To quicken your care in this kinde, remember those smart words, *Mal. 1. 14.* *Cursed be the deceiver, who hath a male in his flock, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my Name is dreadfull among the heathen.* Look to it therefore, I beseech you, thinke not to put God off, with supine, superficiall sleightnesse in Covenant-keeping: If you have male-consultations, male-affectiions, male-endeavours, male-adventures for other things, God will not accept your female, your cold, faint, feeble actings for him, in the payment of your vows: Therefore if you have any talent better then ordinary, trade that for your God, in the pursuance of your Covenant.

Keep Covenant with the Lord constantly: *I will sing praises to thy Name for ever* (saith *David*,) *that I may daily performe my vows,* *Psal 61. 8.* you must not be like those Tenants, who bring in their rents readily, and misse not a day for the first year, but grow carelesse afterward, in making paiement according to their compacts and agreements. The same heat which is in your hearts to day (*this day of your Covenant-renewing*,) for reformation according to Gods word, and against the hindrances and hinderers thereof, must be kept burning in your bosomes so long as you shall live. It is to be bewailed with tears of blood, that the tract of time takes off the fervency of mens spirits for God

in the worke of vowed-reformation. How have we lost our first love? How is our zeal for good, and against evil of late abated? The time was, when our Covenant was much in our thoughts, much in our mouthes, when we moved others, and provoked our selves to make conscience to keep it: but now (*I am ashamed to speake it,*) our Covenant is forgotten, our Covenant is laid aside; yea (O that I had not occasion to add) many repent their taking of the Covenant, and some are not afraid to plead against it: I heartily wish, that the true causes of this great change were well enquired after. My beloved, Is Church-reformation according to Scripture grown lesse desireable? Are pure ordinances lesse lovely in our eyes? Is there now lesse danger of our undoing by *malignancy, popery, divisions and heresie*, then heretofore? Remember, *I pray you, from whence you are fallen, and do your first works*, in reference to your Covenant, the obligation whereof continues upon your consciences. Our God *keeps Covenant to a thousand generations*, Deut. 7. 9. Let his example in this particular perswade your constancy. *Be not weary of well doing*; be not discouraged by disappointments; be not beaten off by difficulties, delays, oppositions; but proceed according to your callings and conditions, to promote that blessed reformation which is under hand: *In due time you shall reap, if you faint not; Finis coronat opus*; Be you faithfull in your Covenant unto death, and you shall receive the crown of life.

I have done with my Rules; now give me leave to give in some few helps that you may act accordingly, and I will conclude all.

That you may be able to keep touch with God in point of Covenant, take these very short directions.

Directions.

1. Worke well into your hearts the knowledge of all the fore-mentioned particulars produced to perswade Covenant-keeping: *A wise man (saith Solomon) is strong, yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength (or strengtheneth might,) Prov. 24. 5.* Scripture-truths clearly understood, convey according to Gods Ordinance, spirituall abilities into the souls of men to act accordingly; As the warme beams of the summer sun administer vivacity to the creatures, both vegetative and sensitive: Therefore I humbly advise you, to put your selves often under the power of those truths, which

which may convince you of the necessity and equity of paying your vows unto the Lord your God; and I doubt not, but by means of serious meditation, you shall finde more activity herein to do your duty: *While I was musing* (saith David) *the fire burned, P sal. 39. 3.* The bellows of meditation will produce the flame of zeal, out of the small heat of holy desires to keep Covenant with God.

2. Act conscientiously, according to that measure of strength which you have received. We all know by experience, that exercise increaseth bodily strength, and questionlesse Christians finde the truth hereof in their souls. *Solomon assures us, Prov. 10. 29. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright:* The further we walke on in the wayes of faithfullnesse with God, and for God, the more able we shall be to make good our fœderall engagements unto his Majesty. Do you not all remember that famous story of the well-minded widow, lamenting her inability to pay her debts, whose little stock of oyl was multiplied by pouring forth, *2 King.*

4. I beseech you make a spirituall improvement of this experiment; give out those gifts, graces, which you have received in the payment of your vows, and be you confident of increase: In this sense *habenti dabitur*; trade your two talents, or your five for your Masters use, and they shall be doubled, *arise and be doing, and the Lord will be with you.* Many of you know to your comfort, that a small stock traded, is grown up to a great estate; I pray you make practicall application.

3. Minde your selves, and minde one another often of your solemne Covenant: This was Gods own direction in this case, *2 King. 17. 39, The Covenant which I have made with you, ye shall not forget.* Among men, many promises are not performed, because they are not remembered: And so it is likewise in many of our obligations unto God, forgetfullnesse is sometimes one cause of some unfaithfullnesse. The Psalmists connexion, *P sal. 103. 18.* is considerable; *Those that keep his Covenant, and those who remember his Commandements to do them.* There is an Order of Parliament, requiring Ministers to reade the solemne League and Covenant in the Congregation, upon our Monethly Fast dayes; And I humbly move, that there may be an Order of the Common-Council of this famous City, that the Covenant which you this

day renew, may once at least in every quarter of the year be read amongst you; by means hereof, you would be quickned to appear both jointly and severally, in courses to promote both private and publike reformation according to your Covenant.

4. Seek strength from Heaven, by faith and prayer: The holy Apostle, holding up to Jesus Christ by humble confidence, could say, *I can do all through Christ strengthening me*, Phil. 4.13. And the Psalmist makes this report of the successe of his prayer; *In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul*, Psal. 138.3. Your selves best know, wherein Covenant-keeping sticks most with your selves, you are acquainted with your own *remoraes*, your own difficulties in this service. Consider that your helpe lies in the Lord your God, therefore fetch it thence by fervent believing prayers; plead the promises of Gods Covenant with you through Christ, that you through him may be able to deal faithfully, to do worthily; and be you confident that the Lord will never be wanting unto the soul which seeks him in truth, *He hath not said to the house of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.*

F I N I S.



