A COMPLETE
COMMENTARY
UPON THE BOOK OF THE
REVELATION,
DELIVERED IN SEVERAL LECTURES,
By that Learned, Laborious, and Faithful Servant of JESUS CHRIST,
Mr. JAMES DURHAM,
LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN
GLASGOW,
With some practical Observations, and several Digressions, necessary for
vindicating, clearing, and confirming many
WEIGHTY AND IMPORTANT TRUTHS,
With a brief summary of the whole Revelation.
Rev. i. 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of
this prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein: for the
time is at hand.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

FALKIRK:
PRINTED BY ROBERT RENNY.
1799.
N.B. Page number irregularities were in the original, but text follows in order.

TO THE
JUDICIOUS AND CHRISTIAN
READER.

THE reverend (now triumphing and glorified) Author, was so famous, and deservedly in very high esteem in our church, both because of the sincere and extraordinary way of God’s calling him forth to the ministry of the gospel, having long left the university (wherein I was the same time a student) before he had finished his course of philosophy, and without any purpose to follow his books, at least in order to such an end; and having lived several years a private gentleman, with his wife and children, enjoying a good estate in the country; from which he did, no doubt, to the great satisfaction of many of his natural friends, and with not a little prejudice to his outward condition, retire, and (being called thereto) humbly offer himself to trials, far from his own home, in order to his being licentiate to preach the gospel; in the ministry whereof, he was immediately thereafter settled at Glasgow, where it hath not wanted a fee in the heart and consciences of his hearers. And also, because of his eminent piety, feed-faithfulness, gravity, prudence, moderation, and other great abilities, were of the venerable general assembly of this church had such persuasion, that they did in the year 1650, after mature deliberation, very unanimously pitch upon him, though then about eight and twenty years of age, as among the ablest, fittest, and most accomplished ministers therein, to attend the king’s family; in which station, though the times were most difficult, as abounding with temptations and snares, with jealousies, heart burnings, emulations and animosities, and flowing with high tides of many various and not a few contrary humours; he did so wisely and faithfully behave and acquit himself, that there was a conviction thereof left in the consciences of all who observed him, and so as he had peace through Jesus Christ as to that manifestation. The Author, I say, was in the like and other respects so famous, that he needs no testimony or epistles of numeration, especially from so obscure and worthless a person; yet being of his particular and very intimate acquaintance, daily conversant with him, and with all his ordinary hearers; being so good a provost, and with him in the ministry, (though a most unequal yoke-fellow to so strong a labourer,) I thought it my duty to give the same brief hint of both of them, who loved always to be hid, except when it was necessary for him to appear, and of this book, wherein their will find, that the spirit of Mr. Durham was not of an ordinary elevation; notwithstanding whereof, in preaching the gospel, he liked not to soar and hide himself from the hearers in a cloud of words: it was not in the wisdom of words, but in the demonstration of the spirit, and of power, that he taught; so in his writing, he used the same plainness of speech; yet how low he ever his style remembe to be, I nothing doubt, but that every intelligent reader, will find such certainty of truth to satisfy the mind, and such sweetness of matter to engage the affections, that he will count the Author an interpreter, one among a thousand. And therefore, if at any time thou mist, as possibly thou mayest, that comprizest and finesses of piratical, which in this plausible and wandering age is much in use, know then that he had so very sharp and pregnant an engine, and so exceeding rich and fruitful an invention, that they ordinarily did outstrip and go beyond his expression and pen, so that these could very hardly, and yet seldom hold foot with him. Beside, if his expression was
the reasons inducing the author (as he once paffingly vowed me upon his deathbed) to infect these questions, that are, by way of digression, more largely handled in this book. 1. The importance of some friends. 2. The perniciousness of some enemies. 3. The necessity of the soundness and unif Arena and菁 of the matter, wherein, though he hath here and there differed from some great men, yet hath he carried the discourse with so much meekness, and so few irritating or reflecting expressions, dealing only by the strength of simple reason, that he hath cast a copy, worthy to be followed by others in this rude age. 3. Some apprehension, that not every way of touching upon some questions, might be more pleasing and taking. 4. To prevent drowning, as it were, in following the series and tract of the story and commentary, according to the practice of several learned and worthy men in their writings upon the Scripture. 5. Because of the clearing of some places along the way, did call for several of them. 6. That if they might any way at all be useful, they should not altogether perish, there having been no other convenient way for the publishing of them: and indeed it had been a pity to have them thereby, and kept them from being of any usefulness. 7. For I have sometimes heard him in his sackcloth, profuse, that, however fleeces they were, as he had peace in his mind, that there was no new, uncontrived, or strange thing in them; so he could not deny, but that sometimes in them, and other parts of the book, he had found God Visibility, afflictions and carrying him through, beyond his own expectation.

Now, desiring that these labours of the Author, which were intermixed with so much prayer to God, and in all the while he was lecturing upon this Scripture, and after, there was a considerable part of a day every week extraordinarily set apart for prayer, as for other caufes, &c., so doubt, for seeking God's help in that work, desiring, I say, that these prayerful labours of his may be richly blest of God to thee, for making thee read the Revelation, which, it may be, hath been in thee; for most of the like books, with more understanding, edification and comfort than ever; and desiring, that the bright and Morning-star, who holdeth the stars in his right-hand, may illuminate and fix many stars of such magnitude, and keep them long highly shining in the firmament of thy thoughts, and comfort thee in the cloudy and dark times, I am, at least would be, thy servant,

for Christ's sake,

in the work of the gospel,

JOHN CARSTAIRS.

Page number irregularities throughout in original.
TO THE READER.

Reader,

Being desir'd to speak my knowledge of this subsequent work, I acknowledge that I was one who frequently encouraged the author to let it go abroad. But, however he had no time to polish it, and what is here, almost all was taken from his mouth, by the pen of an ordinary hearer, yet I am assured, the matter of it, as I heard it weekly delivered, is so precious, as cannot but be very welcome and acceptable to the world of believers. I am confident, that the gracious design which some worthy brethren, among us, have in hand, and have now far advanced, to the good satisfaction of all who have tasted of the first-fruits of their labours, of making the body of holy scriptures plain and useful to vulgar capacities, is not a little furthered by this piece; for, albeit with great length, as the nature of the book of necessity did require, there is brevity in design, of shortness doth admit; yet it maketh very plain and useful, that which, without all question, is the hardest of all scriptures. This I can say, that divers of the most obscure texts of this holy book, which I understood little at the beginning of his lecture, before he closed his exercise, were made to me so clear, that I judged his exposition might well be acquiesced into without much more debate.

That wit were more than ordinary weak, which durst promise from the pen of any man a clear and certain exposition of all the Revelation, before the day of performance of these very deep and mysterious prophecies. It was not for nought, that most judicious Calvin, and acute Beza, with many other profound divines, would never be moved to attempt any explanation of that book; yet, I hope, I may make bold to affirm, without hazard of any heavy censure, that there is here laid such a bridge over that very deep river, that whoever goeth over it, shall have cause to blest God for the Author's labour.

The epistle speaks to the man, I shall but add this one word, That from the day I was employed by the prelats in the presbytery to preach, and pray, and to implore, with others, hands upon him for the ministry at Glasgow, I did live to the very last with him, in great and uninterrupted love, and in an high estimation of his erudite endowments, which made him to me, precious among the most excellent divines that I have been acquainted with in the whole life. O if it were the good pleasure of the Master of the vineyard, to plant many such noble vines in this land! I hope many more of his labours shall follow this first, and that the more quickly as this doth receive the due and expected acceptance.

Thine in the Lord,

ROBERT BAILLIE.
wrought so effectually upon his spirit, that in the hearing of that sermon he first closed with Christ, and then went to the Lord's table and took the seal of God's covenant. He ordinarily called Mr. Melvil, father, when he spake of him.

He did afterwards make serious religion his business and daily exercise, both in secret and in his family, and in all companies and places where he came, and did cordially embrace the interest of Christ and his church as then established.

He gave himself much to reading, for which cause, and that he might be free of all disturbance of the family, &c, he caused build a study for himself, on the head of the stair of his house in the country, which yet remains standing, though all the rest of that great house be pulled down. In this little chamber he gave himself continually to prayer, reading and meditation, and was to close a student there, that he oft forgot to eat his bread; and was sometimes so intent on his studies, that servants who were fain to call him down, have often returned without answer. Yes, his lady was frequently obliged to call on him with tears to open and come down, before he would come; such sweet communion he had with the Lord in that place at sometimes.

He made great proficiency in his studies, and not only became an experimental Christian, but a learned man. One evidence of this he gave in a little dispute with one of the then ministers of Dundee. Being in that town, he did (in the house where he was occasionally) meet with the parson of the parish, as ministers were then called, who knew Mr. Durham; but after some discourse he fell upon the pope, using him properly with the parson, and did put him to silence, as the parson was not able to answer, but speakingly passed out of the room from Mr. Durham, and went to the provost, craving his assistance to apprehend Mr. Durham as a Jesuite, affurering the provost, that if ever there was a Jesuite in Rome he was one, and that if he were suffered to continue in the town and country, he might pervert many from the faith. Upon which the provost going along with the parson to the house where the supposed Jesuite was, and entering into the room, the provost immediately knew Mr. Durham, and saluted him as lord of Elter Powrie, craving him parson for their mistake; and turning to the parson, asked him, where the gentleman was, whom he called a Jesuite, Mr. Durham smiling, the parson was astonished, and begged both of them pardon, but was rebuked by the provost, saying, Fy fy, that any country parson should be able to put our parson to silence.

He was one of great integrity, authority and respect in the country where he lived, and among all his neighbour gentlemen; inasmuch that in all debates and differences that fell out betwixt any, Mr. Durham was always chosen by both parties as their great referee, arbitrator and judge, to whose sentence all parties submitted. He was the great tryer and peace-maker, yes, what Job said of himself, chap. xxix. 7, 21 was applicable to this great and holy man Mr. Durham, while a private gentleman in the country, Unto him men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at his counsel; after his words they spoke not again: he chose out their way, and fat chief, and dwelt as a king in the country, and as one that comforteth the mourners.

In the time of the civil wars, many gentlemen were in arms for the cause of religion, amongst whom Mr. Durham was chosen and called to be a captain; in which station and character he behaved himself like another Cornelius, being a most devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and prayed to God always with his company. Yes, he sometimes acted more like a minister than a captain, standing on the head of his company, and giving them many serious exhortations, advice, and counsels for their souls, and prayed before them so powerfully and effectually, that not only all his company, but strangers who passed by and heard, were greatly affected and surprised, looking on him not only as a good man, but a great man, in whom much of the Spirit of God was.

His call and coming forth to the holy ministry, was truly remarkable, which was this. The Scotch army being engaged with the English army in fight, he judged it to call his company and soldiers to prayer before the engagement. And as he was beginning to pray, it happened that the reverend Mr. David Dickson professor of divinity then at Glasgow, came riding by, the soldiers then addressing themselves to prayer and hearing the voice of one praying, drew near and lighted from his horse, and joined with them, who was not able taken with Mr. Durham's prayer, that, after prayer, Mr. Dickson called for the captain, and conversed with him a little, did solemnly charge him, that so soon as this piece of service that he was engaged in was over, he should devote himself to serve God in the holy ministry for to that he judged the Lord called him. But though as yet Mr. Durham had no clearness to hear from Mr. Dickson's desire, yet two remarkable providences falling out just upon the back of Mr. Dickson's solemn charge, served very much to clear his way to comply with Mr. Dickson's desire. The first was, in the engagement his horse was shot under him, yet he himself was mercifully preferred. The second was, in the heat of battle, a Scotch soldier was ready to strike him down with his sword, but apprehending him to be a minister by his grave carriage, black clothes and band, as then in fashion, with gentlemen, asked Mr. Durham, if he was a priest, to which Mr. Durham answered, Yes, and to his life was spared by the soldier. Upon after reflection, Mr. Durham conferring with himself, how wonderfully the Lord had spared him, and preserved his life, and that his saying he was a priest, had been the mean of his preservation, resolved therefore, as a testimony of his grateful and
thankful sense of the Lord's goodness and mercy to him henceforth to devote himself to the service of God in the holy ministry, if the Lord should see meet to call and qualify him for the same.

Accordingly, in pursuance of this his resolution, he very quickly after went to Glasgow, and studied divinity under Mr. Dickson, then professor there, and made such proficiency in his studies that, in a short time, being called thereto, he humbly offered himself to trials, anno 1646, and was licensed by the presbytery of Irvine to preach the gospel.

Next year, upon Mr. David Dickson's recommendation, the session of Glasgow appointed Mr. Robert Ramsay one of their ministers, to entreat Mr. Durham to come and preach in Glasgow. Accordingly he came and preached two Lord's days, and one week's day. The session being abundantly satisfied with Mr. Durham's doctrine, and the gifts bestowed upon him by the Lord, for serving him in the holy ministry, and did unanimously call him to the ministry of the Black-friars church then vacant.

In consequence of which, he was ordained minister there, in November 1647. The tenor of the call given him was as follows:

Right Reverend and Well-beloved Sir,

The report we heard of the grace of God in you, bred in us a long desire to hear you yourselves; and now having heard, we acknowledge that the same concerning you, which came to our ears, was well grounded, and that we are so abundantly satisfied with the gift bestowed upon you by the Lord, that we have revolved, and by this present (do call and invite you to come and undertake the ministerial charge of word and sacraments among us, in that our church, commonly called the Black-frizers: whereunto we unfeignedly profess, that we are moved by no carnal consideration but by the respect we have to the glory of God, and the edification of our own souls amicably; which great ends we are confident shall be procured by your following of this invitation as from God, who has put this motion so harmoniously without contradiction in all our hearts and mouths. And for your better encouragement herein, although we neither dare nor will promise great things of ourselves, yet, by the grace of God you shall have here a people to render to you all the duty and respect which a flock ought to a faithful pastor; and what encouragement we can afford shall not be wanting. And (that which we know you will regard most) our aim shall be, by the Lord's assistance to receive the word of God for reproof, as well as for consolation, in private and in public, readily at your mouth and church conference also, if our failing shall be found so to deserve. Let us therefore boldly to obey you, in the Lord, not to flinch this matter, which providence is of God, but make your address a little with all convenience, that in an ordinary way we may enjoy the benefit of your labours, for which we shall be

God, and are yours subscribing in name of the hall session by the moderator and clerk.

Being set forth, he did apply himself to the work of the ministry with great diligence; meditating on these things he had received in charge, he gave himself wholly to them, so that his profiting did quickly appear to all. But he considering, that no man that warreth, entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier, defined and obtained leave of his people to return to his own country for some little time, to settle his worldly estates and affairs there: Whilst he was there, he was not idle, but preached every Sabbath day. The first Sabbath he preached in Dundee, where he had a great audience, the most of the inhabitants of any note in the town; and all the gentlemen in town, and some men about it, being of Mr. Durham's old acquaintance, hearing of his being come to the country, and hearing that he was to preach, did out of their curiosity come to hear him; he preached from Rom. i. 16. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. And he showed them, that it was no disparagement for the greatest to be a preacher and a gospel-minister. The second Sabbath he was in this country, he preached in Felling, at the desire of the minister there, it is the next adjacent parish to the place where his interest lay in the country, where several of the neighbour gentlemen of his old acquaintance did come and hear; he preached from 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, &c. The third Sabbath he was in this country, he preached in Monifeith, at the desire of the minister there, the place where all his relations and intimate acquaintances had their dwellings; he preached from 2 Cor. v. 20. We then as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did before us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. In both which places, he acted indeed like an ambassador for Christ, he managed the gospel treaty of peace to very good purpose. The fourth Sabbath he designed to have preached in Murrool, his own parish church, where he was a considerable heritor. But whilst he was thus employed in preaching, and settling his worldly interest and affairs here in the country, he received an express from Glasgow, to return in all haste, his wife being dangerously sick. Upon which he made for his journey, and returned to Glasgow, leaving his affairs to the care of his friends. In a few days his dear wife, who was the desire and delight of his eyes, died.

His Christian submission under this afflicting dispensation was remarkable. After some silence, he said to those about him, who came to visit him, and sympathize with him in his affliction and loss, now who could persuade me that this dispensation of God's providence were good for me, if the Lord had not said it was so? He was afterwards married to Margarets Mure, relict of Mr.
Zacharias Boyd, minister of the Barony of Glasgow.

In the 1620s, Mr. David Dickson, professor of divinity in the college of Glasgow, being called to a profession of the same nature in the university of Edinburgh, the commissioners of the general assembly authorized for visiting the university of Glasgow, most unanimously desired and called Mr. Durham to succeed Mr. Dickson as professor of divinity there; but in a little time thereafter, before he was admitted to that charge, the general assembly of this church being persuaded of his eminent piety, holiness, gravity, prudence, moderation, and other great abilities, they did that same year, after mature deliberation, very unanimously pitch upon him though then about eight and twenty years of age, as amongst the ablest and most accomplished ministers of this church, to attend the king's family as chaplain. In which station, though the times were most difficult, as abounding with temptation and snares, with jealousies, heart-burnings, emulation and animosities, and flowing with high tides of many various, and not a few contrary humours, he did so wisely and faithfully behave and acquit himself, that there was a conviction thereof left upon the consciences of all who observed him, and so as he had peace through Jesus Christ as to that ministration. During his attendance upon the king and court, such was his authority and gravity, and such a majesty and awe in his countenance, as did conciliate, yet, command reverence and respect from all in the court toward him: so much that it was observed, that whatever lightnings and profanities had been usual in former times by some in the court, and great contempt shown by them to some formerly in that character; yet during his presence in the court, and whenever he went about the duty of his place, they did all carry gravely, and forbear all lightnings and profanities; and there was none that durst allow themselves to do or speak anything offensive before him.

While he served the Lord in the holy ministry, and particularly in that part and character of king's chaplain, his great labour and ambition was, to be accepted of God, and have God's favour and not the favour of great men; therefore he studied more to profit and edify their souls, than please and tickle their fancies, as some court parasites do in their sermons. One instance whereof was this. Being called, at a certain time, to preach before the parliament, where many rulers were present, he preached from John iii. 10. Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? That which he mostily insisted on before this most august meeting, was, that it was a most accountable thing for rulers, nobles in Israel, (a land of light, where divine light and revelation was, and where a great plenty of the means of knowledge was) to be ignorant of, and unacquainted with their great and necessary things of regeneration, and being born again of the Spirit. And did most seriously press upon all, from the king to the beggar, to seek to know experimentally these things. An excellent pattern for all court ministers, and such as are called to preach at such public occasions. He continued with the king till he went to England.

Towards the latter end of January 1651, the common fesson of Glasgow, appointed Mr. Patrick Gillepsie to write a letter in their name to Mr. James Durham, concerning Mr. Robert Ramfay's being professor of divinity in place of the said Mr. James, in the university of Glasgow. And likewise Mr. Patrick Gillepsie, John Graham provost, James Hamilton, Thomas Brown, and William Lightbody bailies, William Dunlop dean of guild, Peter Johnstone deacon conceiver, and Mr. John Speir, town clerks were appointed to confer with the masters of the college thereat. In February next, Mr. Durham wrote a letter to the fession of Glasgow, testifying his entire affection to them, and hearing that the general assembly had left him a door for his entry there. Upon which a letter was sent from the common fession, subscribed by all the members of it, to Mr. James Durham, and James Hamilton, and Mr. John Speir, appointed to carry to the same, and present their desires to him, signified by the said letter, whereof the tenor followeth.

Right Reverend,

We received yours, therein you speak of the commissioners liberating you for some time from your attendance upon the king's family, and of your purpose to visit us here, which did not a little refresh us. The obstruction of the accomplishment of a former resolution for this, and the disappointments of our longed expectation therein, did much fatten our spirits; and if the Lord should dispose, that yet your coming hither should be impeded, it is like it would exceedingly add to all the affliction that lies upon us. We hope no discouragement from this place shall prevail so far, as to work the least alteration of your declared purpose and resolution. We cannot tell how much and how earnestly we long once more to see your face, and to hear a word from you, from whole mouth the Lord has often blessed the fame, for our great refreshment, edification and confirmation. We do therefore, with all earnestness, request and beseech you, that you would, in the interim of your retirement from attendance upon that charge, let the town and congregation once and yet dear to you, who dare not quit their interest in you, nor look upon that tie and relation betwixt you and them as dissolved and null, enjoy the comfort of your sometimes, very comfortable fellowship and ministry. We do not think of the deferring of our hope any longer in this. We have therefore, hearing that you were at Stirling, sent two of our number, James Hamilton, bailie, and Mr. John Speir, to present and follow forth this our most serious and earnest request. Not further, but longing, praying, and hoping to see you in this place, we rest, &c.
In consequence of this preffing letter, Mr Durham sometime after came to Glasgow; for he is mentioned present in the seclusion in the beginning of April next, at the same time Cromwell and his army were in Glasgow: and on the Lord's day Cromwell heard Mr Durham, who preached against the invasion to his face. Next day Cromwell sent for Mr Durham and told him, that he always thought Mr Durham had been a more wise and prudent man, than to meddle with matters of public concern in his sermons. To which Mr Durham answered, that it was not his practice to bring public matters into the pulpit; but that he judged it both wise and prudent in him to speak his mind upon that head, for that he had the opportunity of doing it in his own hearing. Cromwell dismissed him very civilly; but desired him to forbear inflicting upon that subject in public. And at the same time humble ministers, both in town and country, met with Cromwell and his officers, and represented, in the strongest manner, the injustice of his invasion.

It would seem, that some time after this, Mr Durham had withdrawn from Glasgow; and therefore, in August next, a letter is ordered to be sent him, that he would come and visit them, and preach here. And in September next, there being a vacancy in the Inner-kirk by the death of Mr Robert Ralphy, the common fession gave an unausomous call (with which the town council agreed) to Mr. Durham, to the ministry of the Inner-kirk whereof the tenor followeth.

Right Reverend.

We the ministers and ruling elders of the common fession of Glasgow, accordingly to the truth that lies upon us, casting our eyes about, where we could find a man that might serve in the ministry of the gospel, in that congregation now vacant amongst us, through the removal of our late minister, Mr Robert Ralphy, we were grieved (and we conceive, not without special providence, and the good-hand of our God upon us) towards thoughts of you; of whole ability, grace, integrity, and faithfulness, we have abundant experience, with whose ministry and fellowship, we, and the Lord's people in this place, have been often and much refreshed, edified, strengthened, and comforted, our own and the affections of this people being withal and exceedingly joined to you, which makes us all long much for you in the Lord, and seems to say, that your ministry may be more useful here, and more commended to the hearts of this people, than any where else, that you shall have an open door, and be here, as you have been formerly amongst this people, the first-fruits of your ministry, with the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There being also some more than ordinary, at least, standing tie and relation betwixt you and us, never as yet declared or accounted by you and us to be altogether dissolved, null and void. We do therefore, in our own name, and the name of that particular congregation, most seriously beseech, exhort, entreat, or beseech you in the Lord, that you would hearken to our earnest and cordial call and invitation of you, to labour in the work of the gospel amongst us in that congregation, and not refuse, shift or delay, to follow and embrace the same, as you would not add to the affliction that has come, and may come upon us. And we are hopeful, you shall find the people disposed and ready to receive and make welcome the word of the Lord from your mouth, and to subject themselves to any charge of Jesus Christ, drawn from you by a brother of your own. We do also, for ourselves, promise, that we shall, through the strength of his grace, endeavour to carry ourselves to you in all things, as it becomes brethren and fellow-labourers in the work of the Lord inscribed by our moderator and clerk, in our name.

The callion appointed Mr. John Carstairs, George Porterfield, and John Hamilton, to intimate and give the said call to Mr. Durham. Accordingly Mr. Durham was, sometime after this, received minister in the Inner-kirk: Mr. John Carstairs, his brother-in-law, was his colleague in that church.

In the whole of his ministry, he was a burning and a shining light; he shone in all Christian and ministerial gifts and graces, and particularly, he did exemplarily shine in humility and self-denial: one instance of many was this. Upon a certain day, when Mr. Andrew Gray and he were to preach, as they were walking together, Mr. Durham observing multitudes thronging into that church where Mr. Andrew Gray was to preach, and but there and there one dropping into that church where he himself was to preach said to Mr. Gray, brother, I perceive you are like to have a throng church this day. To which Mr. Gray answered, Truly brother, they are fools to leave you and come to me. To which Mr. Durham replied, not so, dear brother; for a minister can receive no such honour and success in his ministry, except it be given him from heaven. I rejoice that Christ is preached, and that his kingdom and interest is getting ground, and that his honour and esteem doth encrease, though my esteem in people's hearts should decay, and be diminished; for I am content to be any thing, so that Christ may be all in all.

He was a person of the utmost composure and gravity, and scarce limed at any thing. When Mr. William Guthrie and he were together at dinner in some gentleman's house, Mr Guthrie was exceeding merry, and made Mr. Durham smile, yea, laugh, with his pleasant, facetious conversation. It was the ordinary custom of the family to pray after dinner; and Mr. Guthrie was desirous to pray, which he did with the greatest measure of fervency and fervency, to the astonishment of all present. When he rose from prayer, Mr. Durham came to him, and emp...
braced him, and said, O William, you are a happy man; if I had been so merry as you have been, I could not have been serious, nor in any frame for prayer, for forty-eight hours.

As Mr. Durham was devout in all the parts of his ministerial work, he was more eminently so at communion occasions; then he endeavoured through grace to rule and work up himself to such a divinene of frame, as very much suited the spiritual state and majesty of that ordinance; greatly fearing lest himself, or any of the people to whom he administered, should fall under the grievous guilt of the body and blood of the Lord; then in a manner his face shone, as being in the mount of communion and fellowship with God. At some of these solemn and sweet occasions, he spoke some way as a man that had been in heaven, commending Jesus Christ, making a glorious display of the banner of free grace, holding forth the riches of it very clearly and convincingly, and bringing the offers thereof very low, wonderfully low; so that, in the hearing of some of his sermons at these occasions, particularly, that on Mat. xxvii. 4, some of his hearers were made to think that the rope or cord of the offer of salvation was let down and hung to low to inner, that those of the lowest station amongst them all, might have caught hold of it, who, through grace, had any mind to do so; and so home, so vehement and urgently pressed, on so sweet and so early terms to be embraced, that it was a wonder to some, how they could refuse or shift them.

Mr. Durham gave himself much to meditation, and usually sat very little to persons that came to propitiate their cales to him, but heard them patiently, and was sure to handle them in his sermon.

His healing disposition, and great moderation of spirit, remarkably appeared, when this church was greatly divided between the Revolutioners and Protectors. As he would never give his judgment upon either side; so he used to say, That division was by far worse than either of the sides. He was equally respected by both parties; so that, at a meeting of the synod in Glasgow, when those of the two different sides met separately, each of them made choice of Mr. Durham for their moderator; but he refused to join with either of them, until they would both unite together, which they accordingly did. At this meeting, Mr. Durham gave in the following overtures for peace.

Being still more and more convinced of the necessity of union among the ministers of this church, by the many evils that accompany these differences, do therefore think it expedient to endeavour some way of healing, at least preventing the growing of the flame. And though they neither intend hereby, judicially to condemn or reflect upon any acts or proceedings of any of them, either on one side or the other, proceeding this time, but do leave both sides without prejudice either by this agreement.

Yet, for the ends foreseen, they do voluntarily condescend mutually in the things controverted, in as far as it concerns their practice for the interim, as follows.

1. That they shall neither all public nor lengthening these debates, by preaching or spreading papers, either in favour of the one side or the other.

2. That they shall forbear the praetending, executing or professing of all acts concluded in the last assemblies at St. Andrews and Dundee, and also, the prefling or spreading appeals, declinators or protests against the fame; and that both these foreseen, together with a mention intended or followed thereupon, shall be, for the time, as to practice, and our rule-making of them in any thing, as though they had not been; this being always to understand, as inferring no actual condemning of either of them, as fals.

3. That none of these be to any whatsoever rank, minister or elder, or expectant, a ground or aggravation of challenge, or census, or of exception against their being admitted to office, they being otherwise found qualified.

4. That some be named as correspondents, who may carry these overtures to be conferred with, and recommended unto brethren of other synods, who are to be written unto, to lend some of their number to meet at a convenient time and place for that end.

5. Likewise, it is their purpose, if God shall give a free general assembly, to endeavour a full and judicial settling an oblivion of the forenamed differences, and all concomitances that have followed on them, and, in the mean time, to proceed in all affairs according to the uncontroverted rules and acts of our church.

So earnest was Mr. Durham for peace and agreement between ministers on both sides at this time, that he went to St. Andrews with Mr. Meffs. Samuel Rutherford, Robert Traill, Alexander Levington, and Patrick Gillespie, who had a conference there with Mr. Meffs. Robert Blair, David Ferret, and James Wood, about their different judgments at that time, and present with them at their restorations three days, where the substance of the forenamed overtures were inflected upon.

So weighty was the ministerial charge upon Mr. Durham's spirit, that he used to say, That if he were to live ten years longer than he had done, he would chuse to live nine years to study for preaching the tenth year. And it was thought his close study and thoughtfulnesses cast him into that decay whereas he died.

When on death-bed, he was under considerable darkness about his state, and said to Mr. John Carlyles, Brother, for all that I have preached and written, there is but one scripture I can remember or dare grip unto it; tell me, if I dare lay the weight of my salvation upon it, Whosoever cometh to me, I will in no ways
Mr. Carlyle's answer to him, You may depend upon it, thought he had a thousand salvations at hazard.

About a month before his death, the ministers of the town prevailed with the magistrates, who had a great veneration for Mr. Durham, to leave the nomination of his successor to himself; and accordingly they drew up a paper, wherein they obliged themselves to call the minister whom Mr. Durham should recommend. This bond was lodged in Mr. Durham's hand, who promised to give his advice therein. Some few days before his death, he called for the magistrates and ministers, and told them he had been considering of their proposal, and named three to them; Mr. Ralph Rogers, one of the three that he named succeeded him.

He died on the 25th of June, 1658, in the thirty-sixth year of his age. His death was the more to be lamented, for he died thus in the very flower and vigour of his grace, gifts and age. Mr. John Carlyle, his colleague, in the Inner-kirk, preached upon Isaiah Lxvi. 1. The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering, that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. Where he gave him a large character, and represented the great loss of such an eminent man. And not only the ministers in town, but in the country, greatly lamented Mr. Durham's death in their preachings and prayers next Sabbath, particularly Mr. David Veitch, minister of Govan, in the forenoon; and in the afternoon took farewell of his pastor, and died that very day Mr. Durham was buried; which is the more remarkable, because Mr. Durham often defrayed and recommended him for his successor, as he told Mr. Carlyle, some time before he intimated his nomination to the magistrates and ministers.

Thus died the eminently pious, learned and judicious Mr. James Durham, whose labours did always aim at the advancement of practical religion, and whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches of God both at home and abroad. He was a burning and a shining light, a star of the first magnitude; and of whom it may be soberly said, without derogating from any, he attained unto the first three, and had a name among the mighty. His memory though long ago called home from his master's vineyard, is still recent and favouring in the hearts of all that are truly good, and shall continue to whilst Christ hath a true church in these lands; which is the same as to say, He shall be held in everlasting remembrance.

Though Mr. Durham be now dead, he yet speaketh in the singularly pious and favouring works of his, which are mostly reviled and published by his brother-in-law, Mr. John Carlyle. Mr. Durham being wholly taken up with the importance of his subject, did always dive into the heart of matter, and was less curious about ornamental circumstances, which yet were never deified in his discourse, whilst enlivened with that zealous fervor, pungen-
our censures not in love to the souls of people, much roughness and
untenderness in drawing them forth. The duty may be commend-
able, but the principle from which it flowed may be a ground of
quarrel. Therefore look upon this epistle, as if Christ were writ-
ing a letter to Scotland; and in his letter, say, for as much
purity and zeal as ye have, yet ye are fallen from your first love;
much of your love, warmness and tendereness is away; there is a
declining and defection from grace in the exercise of it, or from
that which seemed to be grace: this will be found to be our sin
before God. The state we are in, looks so like Ephesus, whether
we compare the outward state of our church with that before these
late confusions came in, some things among us being commendable,
like unto the things commendable here; or whether we look to
our outward dissembler, or whether we look to God's threaten-
ing, to remove our candlestick, which is the threatening applied
to this sin of declining in love, that should make us all take with
our guilt, and make use of the warning; and would to God we
could make right use of it. Certainly we are called to look on
this letter as directed to Scotland and to Glasgow; the sin is ours;
the duty is ours; and the threatening doth all belong to us, and if
there be any thing commendable, it is more in outward form than
reality. Believers are liable to this declining from their first love,
though not from their steadiness, and may have a deep hand in
drawing on the thorns here threatened; thereore let them so much
the more guard against it.

The last two verses of this book of the Revelation are very
briefly spoke to in the manuscript copy, which in print are more
fully intimated on; and therefore it is probable was written by himself;
and the rather that there is a current report, that the last leaf
upon this commentary happening to fall by; and being told there-
of upon his death-bed, he sat up in the bed, and wrote it over
again; which being compared with the former, when it did some-
time after call up, the two were found exactly to agree together.
The manuscript copy ends with three short remarks. 1. See here
how wary folk should be in making use of this book, and all scrip-
ture, and how thankful for this gift. 2. How necessary heinings
is to all that look for happiness; they are put together here, and
hereafter there will be no other entry within the city, the rest are
without, with dogs. 3. Be making right use of the scriptures ye
have, and welcome the offers made unto you therein; for, by
this gospel, ye shall be either united to Christ, or separated from
him, and perish.

We are told by Mr. Carlfair, that the pious Author, before
he fell asleep, devised one of them that stood by, to write for a
direct to his commentary, these following words, "And now, O
my soul, when all say, Come, and concur in a sweet harmony, fee-
ing thou hast heard, and dost hear the call of the gospel, say with
the bride, and with the Spirit, Even so, come Lord Jesus, come
quickly."
encouragements that are given to read and search into it; as ver. 3. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy:" which saying is also renewed again after the prophetic part is immediately closed, chap. xxii. 7. 14. which seem to be notable encouragements, not only to undertake, but also to lay it on as a duty, to read and seek to understand it. We resolve, through God's grace, to effay it, that it be not altogether useless to the servants of God to whom it is sent, as ver. 1. It is true, many things in it are obscure; and it is like, that the full clearing of them is not to be expected, till God in some singular way shall open them up; neither is that undertaken: yet, there are, 1. Many clear, edifying, and comfortable passages of God's mind in it; the Holy Ghost mixing in those to be fed upon, and to sweeten those passages that are more obscure; and to encourage the reader to search for the meaning of them. And, 2. Though we be not clear to apply such passages to this or that particular time, or party, or persons; yet, seeing the scope sets out, in general, the eminence of special enemies of the church; and it being clear who they are, we think they may be expounded: not only according to the analogy of faith and sound doctrine, but according to the scope of the place, though every thing hit not, yet nothing being contrary to it. 3. In those things that are most obscure, there may be found doctrines concerning the disposition of enemies, and God's giving victory over them, and preservation and outwitting the people. And, lastly, those things that are most obscure, being particulars, wherein there is no such hazard for us to be ignorant, as in fundamental truths; and yet being such as God hath allowed folks by wisdom to search out: therefore here is wisdom, prefixed to the hardest places in it, as chap. xiii. ver. ult. Upon these considerations, we intend, through the Lord's help, to hint at some things in the reading of this book to you, for your up-flaring to search further into it. The whole strain and form of it, is by way of an epistle; Jesus Christ, by John, writing his last will to his church.

The preface is in the words read, to ver. 9. The body of it, from that to ver. 6. chap. xxii. The conclusion is in the end of chap. xxii. where it is closed with the ordinary close of other epistles. We shall first speak to the preface, and then to the body, when we come to it. We need not stand upon the authority, nor title of it, that holds the pen-man; it being of such a divine stamp and majesty, doth carry authority in the bosom of it, that if any scripture hold forth the sovereignty, majesty, justice, mercy and truth of God, to the comfort of his people, and making the hearts of his enemies to quake, this scripture doth it. The author, that is, the pen-man, is John the divine, as he is holden out in the title. Whether this title be authentic or not, it is not much to be disputed. It is in some Greek copies, "The Revelation of the holy Apostle and Evangelist, John the Divine." And, we think it is clear to be John, the Apostle, honoured here to bear Christ's last message to his church. He got this name in the primitive times, as being most full of divine revelations, and prying into the mysteries of the gospel, and particularly of Christ's divinity. And, in the preface, there seems to be some things that bear this out: 1. That he is called John, without-designing what John, importing that he was the John, that was well known and famed for an infallible and extraordinary measure of the Spirit. 2. He is said to be that John, that was banished into the isle of Patmos: which from the ancient famous story, is clear to be John the apostle, he being banished thither under the perdition of Domitian the Emperor. 3. It is further clear, ver. 2. in his description, "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ," which relates to his writing of the gospel, as he styles himself in the close of it, chap. xxi. 24. "This is that disciple, which testified of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true." Neither doth it make any thing against this, that this book, being prophetical, doth differ somewhat in title from his other writings: for the title is not so unlike his; there being many words and phrases in his gospel, and in several chapters of this book so like one another; as, that Christ is called the Word and the Lamb, in the one and in the other, these phrases being peculiar to him.
The preface hath two parts. First, A general inscription of the book, ver. 1, 2, 3. Secondly, A particular inscription and direction to the seven churches in Asia, to which the seven epistles in the second and third chapters are written from ver. 4 to ver. 9. And there are several particulars in every one of these. To begin with the inscription. “The Revelation,” that is the making open and unfolding of some things obscure: and though they be still obscure to us, yet not in themselves, nor to us now, as they were before this. 2. It is “of Jesus Christ.” First, Because given out by Jesus Christ to John, as from the Administrator and great Prophet of his church: And, Secondly, Because much of this Revelation concerned the governing of his church. Thirdly, “Which God gave unto him;” which denotes the order of the persons in their subsisting and operations; the Father working from himself, by the Son; and the way of Christ’s working as Mediator, who doth the will of him that sent him; for as God, he understands all things essentially by himself, but as Mediator, he hath that given and communicated to him. Fourthly, The end of this work, is, “To shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass,” that this Revelation may not be kept up, but made forth-coming to his servants: by whom is understood, not all creatures, nor all in the visible church, nor only such special servants by office, as John was; but such as were and are his followers, subjects, and believers in him in the visible church. Fifthly, The subject of this Revelation, “Things which must shortly come to pass;” not things past; nor so much things present, (though in the second and third chapter, such things be spoken to) as mainly, things to come. And it is said, “that they must shortly come to pass;” because, though the full accomplishment of them was not to be till the end of the world, as will be clear from the prophecy; and therefore, these events cannot be confined within some few years; yet, the beginning of the fulfilling of them was instantly upon the back of this Revelation. Sixthly, “He sent and signified it by his Angel;” that is, Jesus Christ made the use of the ministration of his Angel, to signify this; both to set out his dignity and grandeur, and to conciliate the greater credit to it. Seventhly, The person it is revealed to, is, “His servant John;” his servant by special delegation and office, in a special employment, as a steward in his house.

1. Observe the great advantage and benefit, the privilege and prerogative, that Christ’s servants have beyond all others; Christ writes his letters to them; there is not a word written to kings and great men; but it is “to shew his servants things to come to pass;” to be his servants is to be God’s free-men; and they win far the most upon his secrets and mysteries Psalm xcv. 14. “The secret of the Lord is with them, that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”

2. Observe Christ’s way of administration: tho’ this Revelation be sent to his servants; yet not immediately: but first it is given to Christ; and he gives it to his Angel, and the Angel gives it to John, and he brings out to the churches. Jesus Christ must have his own place; and the first notice of any thing, concerning the good of the church, comes to him as Mediator; and he doth nothing but he first reveals it to his servants the prophets, Amos iii. They are his servants of state to bear his mind to his people.

Ver. 2. The second thing in the preface, is a description of John, “who bare record of the word of God;” which may relate to the gospel of John, which holds out Jesus Christ, who was, and is the substantial Word of God, as he begins his gospel. 2. “And of the testimony of Jesus Christ;” which may look to his epistles. “And all things that he saw;” this looks to the particular visions God gave him in this book. John’s “bearing record,” points out his faithfulness, according to the charge and commission given him; what is given him to deliver, he keeps not up, what he receives in charge, he discharges.

3. We have the commendation of this book, ver. 3. to stir up folks to make use of it, because he knew many would scar at it, and be ready to let it ly beside them as useless and unprofitable: whereas all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, &c.
2. Tim. iii. 16. Therefore this is added, "Blessed is he that readeth:" that is, this book is not a thing to be spokon of only, and not to be read and studied, for the seals of it are opened; and blessed are they that read it. It is a happy and a good thing, soberly and humbly to read, and seek to understand it: and because every one cannot read, he adds, "And blessed are they that hear the words of this prophecy;" it may relate not only to private, but to public reading and hearing of this book, when it is read and expounded: so that, by Christ's own ordinance, this book is to be brought forth to his people: and, because folks are ready to grow vain and secure, and to rest upon reading and hearing, he adds another word, "And keep those sayings that are written therein;" that is, it is not the reading, nor the hearing simply, that will bring the blessing: but the observing and making right use of it. Then adds a reason why he should have it read and heard, and the sayings of it observed and made use of; "Because the time is at hand," the fulfilling of the things in this book is at hand; the time hastened of calling folks to a reckoning, what use they have made of these sayings; the time of pouring out his wrath on his enemies, and of being very kind to his church and people is at hand.

1. Observe, It is a good thing to be studying the scripture, it is a mark of the blessed man. Psal. i. It makes the man of God wise to salvation: and it is good that those who want the use of reading themselves, make up that want by hearing others: and particularly, it is good to be reading, and hearing this book read: those that are fitted for reading, let them use it well; and those that do not have this benefit, let them take and improve other opportunities that may bring them to the knowledge of Christ's mind: and the more, that blessedness is given but to fix or seven forts in this book, and twice or thrice over, to those that study it, Rev. xxii. 7, 14.

2. Observe, That it is not enough to be given to reading and hearing of the word: neither would folks rest on it: but join practice with both Luke xi. 28. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." It is not the reader, or hearer, but the doer,
from his eternal Being, without all beginning or ending. And this description of the Father, relates to that of Exod. iii. 14, I AM THAT I AM, hath sent me unto you: and it is a name that God often taketh to himself, The first and the last, the beginning and the ending: and the title JEHOVAH taketh up these three; JE, the future time; HO, the time present; VAH, the time past. In a word, it is the paraphrase of the word JEHOVAH. And this title is attributed to the Father, not excluding the Son and Holy Ghost; but the Father being the fountain of the Godhead, when he is joined with the Son and Spirit, those things that are essential to God are ordinarily attributed to him. 2. From the seven Spirits: these are not creatures, or created spirits; for, first, created spirits are not objects of worship, from whom we may wish grace and peace. Secondly, neither are created spirits set in between the Father and the Son, as those seven Spirits are here. Thirdly, in chap. v. verse 6, those seven Spirits, are called the eyes and horns of the Lamb; eyes being his omniscience, whereby he sees ever everywhere; and horns, being his power, working by his Spirit, and making strong his own lusty thoughts, which are everywhere; and his power or omnipotence, which here also are invoked; they can be no other but the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is called the seven Spirits; not only, because it is frequent in this book of the Revelation to go on the number of seven; but also, and mainly, to shew the manifold and various operations of the Spirit, as 1 Cor. xii. 4, 6. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and diversities of operations, but the same God which worketh all in all.” 2. Because it hath relation to the seven churches he is to write to, their need requiring much; and he being an infinite and powerful Spirit, was able to let out abundance of grace and all consolation to every one without prejudice to another, as if each of them had the Spirit wholly: therefore he is so described in this wish. Secondly, Those seven Spirits are said to be before the throne; that is, present with God; yet made use of by God the Father and the Son, working by the Spirit, effectually communicating what may be for the comfort of his people: and, in these words, the Holy Spirit is holden out in a posture, apt to execute what is needful. The third person is in ver. 5, And from Jesus Christ; grace and peace is wished from him: he is set out in his three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. First, in his prophetical office, the faithful witnesses, because he reveals the will of God, and that faithfully; therefore, Isa. iv. 5, he is given as a witness, a leader, and commander to the people. Secondly, In his priestly office, The first begotten of the dead. To shew, 1. That he offered up himself to the death. 2. Because he was the first that rose from the dead in his own strength; and made others to rise; and he died not again: for, though Lazarus rose, he died again: and though Enoch and Elias did not die, yet that was by virtue of his power and resurrection, as also that any other did arise. Thirdly, In his kingly office, The prince of the kings of the earth; which title sets out Christ, not only to be God, equal with the Father, but as Mediator, king of his church. He is called, Prince of the kings of the earth; not as if kings, and all great men or others, were in the same manner subject to him in the relation that believers are, in which respect his kingly office extendeth no further, nor his priestly and prophetical office, but though he hath not such a near relation to them, nor to them; yet he is King over them, to restrain them that they prejudice not his kirk, and to judge them for any wrongs or prejudice they do to them, and to inflict temporal judgments on them here, and eternal hereafter, when he shall be their Judge, and the books shall be opened at the great day. The wish is from the three persons: and though the Holy Ghost be here named before the Son: it is not to confound the order that is among the persons of the Trinity, in their subsisting and operations; but for this reason, because John is to infest on Jesus Christ the second person, he keeps him last in naming, to make the progress in his writing the more clear.

Observe, There are three distinct persons of the blessed Trinity, the Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the same one God, in the name of these three is baptism administered; and from them, grace is wished and prayed for, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. For, 4. That there are
three, who are distinctly mentioned here, cannot be denied; that the first is the Father; and the third, Jesus Christ, really distinct from the Father, is clear; for the Son, and not the Father, was incarnate: and therefore the like must be said of the seven spirits, that they set forth the Holy Ghost personally, seeing it is he who in the like places useth to be joined in with the Father and the Son, as 2 Cor. xiii. 13. 1 John v. 7, 8, and therefore it is said in the seven epistles, to be what the Spirit faith. These seven spirits, therefore is that one Spirit, and he a person that speaketh to the churches.

2. That each of these three must be God, appears. 1. Because the last two are both joined as equal with the Father, of whom there can be no question. 2. Because the Son, Jesus Christ, afterward hath the same title attributed to him, which is here given to the Father. 3. Because the same one suit, is prayed for from all of them; and it being grace and peace, which only God can give, sumpteth divine essential attributes to be in those from whom they are wished; yea, they are named here, as joint fenders of this epistle, and authors of this word; therefore is it so often afterward said, Let him that hath ears, hear what the Spirit faith: and there can no authority, but what is divine, be sufficient here. Hence also, Thus saith the Lord, and, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, are frequently put for one another: each one therefore of these three must be God. 3. It may appear from this also, that all these are one God; thus this Revelation and salutation come from one God, chap. i. ver. 1. and xxii. 18, 19. and yet this Revelation and salutation come from the Father, Son, and Spirit; therefore they are that one God. Again, if the grace and peace proceed from one essence, which is common to all, then they are the same God essentially, though distinct persons; but grace and peace looks to the same Godhead and essence, though it be wished for from all; for the effect, grace and peace, is but one, it doth therefore suppose an unity in the fountain from which it comes, viz. these three persons of the glorious Godhead, who are named distinctly, not to shew a different effect from the Father, which is not from the Son; but to shew the concurrence of these blessed three in an united way, for bringing forth of these; so that

Revel. ii. 4.

what cometh from the Father, cometh also from the Son and Spirit. These essential attributes, and that most simple and infinite essence, being common to all the three persons, it rests therefore that they are three distinct persons, and yet of the same infinite Godhead.

Neither will that which the Socinians and others oppose to this place, have weight. Say they, Christ is spoken of here, as dead; therefore cannot be God. For, it is one thing to speak of him who was dead, another to say, that it speaks of him as such. He that died was God, but he died not as God; and therefore this can only prove, that Jesus Christ, as to his person, is man; but by it we can no more deny him to be the second person of the Godhead, than afterward when he is called the first, and the last, by that, we can deny him to be man. And that the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are equal with the Father, appeareth also in this, that they are both equally with him, the object of divine worship here, viz. of invocation and prayer, which could not otherwise be.

CONCERNING THE

Holy Trinity and Object of Worship.

THERE is much spoken of the glory of God in this book, and no where is the distinction of the persons of the glorious Godhead more frequently and clearly set forth. John was more full in this than any who wrote before him; because in his time, Ebion and some others had arisen, who did deny the Godhead of the Son and Holy Ghost; and therefore, with a particular respect to these, he did write the more fully of this, for which he got the title of Divine Singularly, as was marked on the title. It will not therefore be impertinent now, once for all, to touch that a little farther: and although here curiosity would be restrained, full satisfaction in the uptake of that mystery, being peculiarly referred to that time when we shall see him as he is, as our Lord's word, John, xiv. 20. Then ye shall know that I am in the Father, doth import: and therefore we would not presume...
Lect. 1.

to satisfy ourselves in the 

distinct, particular manner

how that is; but humbly be contented to have our

faith foldy grounded in the 

first, or being thereof;

which may be done by considering these three, viz.

1. The truth of the thing. 2. The expression used

in holding of it forth. And 3. The necessity of the

believing thereof.

1. We say, That there is but one God essentially, so

there are three distinct, co-equal, co-essential, and con-

substantial persons in that blessed Godhead, the Father,

Son, and Spirit; who yet in a most wonderful, ex-

cellent and infinitely perfect, though an unconceivable

manner, have an order of subsisting and working am-

ong themselves. It was a laying among the an-

tients, That to speak of God, even that which was

true, was dangerous; (etiam de Deo dicere verum,

eft periculosum) and indeed here it ought to be re-

membered. Yet, we may consider the former general

proposition in these assertions.

1. Assert. There is but one God essentially consider-

ed; and in this the scripture is clear: and so in this

book, chap. i. and xxii. Although there be a plurality

of persons mentioned; yet it is ever God spoken of as

One, in the singular number; and thus he is still op-

posed as the One living God, to the plurality of idols.

And indeed, there can be no plurality in this: for, if

that one God have in him all perfections, there can

be no perfection beside him; and so no God beside

this one true God. And, if we supposed any perfe-

ction to be beside him, then were he not God, becau-

se not infinite in perfection; and, if infinite, then that

which is infinite, in that respect, cannot be multiplied.

There is no question of this; seeing the most wise

Heathens have been necessitated to acknowledge it.

2. Assert. Although there be but one God, yet there

are three Persons, the Father, Son, and Spirit. There

is not one of these epistles to the seven churches, but

this may be gathered from it: 1. The Father is the

fender of them all, as from chap. i., may be gather-

ed. 2. The Son is he who immediately gives John

commission to write, as the titles he taketh to himself
do clear. 3. The Holy Ghost is in the close of all,

Rev. 1. 4, mentioned as a joint speaker, Let him bear what the

Spirit saith, &c. 4. More particularly, they are distinctly

mentioned in the epistle to Thyatira, chap. ii. 18.

These things saith the Son of God; that holds forth the

Father and Son; where a Son is, there is a Father; and

God here is personably taken as another from the Son.

And ver. 29, we have the Spirit as distinct from both.

They are put together, chap. iii. 1. These things saith

be that both the seven Spirits of God: be, that is, the Son

formerly mentioned; God, that is, the Father, distinctly

considered as another person; the seven Spirits, that is,

the Holy Ghost, in whose name John saluted the

churches formerly, and who is to be heard, as the close

d of every epistle theweth. 5. The like is, ver. 12, where

the Son speaketh in the first person, I and Me; the

Father is designated by the title GOD; the Spirit again,

as distinct from both, ver. 13. 6. The same may be

gathered from ver. 14, with 22, where the faithful Wit-

ness, God and the Spirit, are mentioned as three that are
distinct. 7. And lastly, chap. v. we have them

most fully distinguished, 1. There is the Father, on the

throne, with the book in his hand, ver. 1. 2. There

is the Lamb, the Son: and 3. The seven Spirits of God,

the Holy Ghost, ver. 6. all of them considered as dis-

tinct persons.

2. Assert. These three, Father, Son, and Spirit, are

really distinct one from another; and so are three per-

sons. All that is said, doth confirm this also: for,

1. They are really distinct, though not simply in respect

of their essence; yet, as they are personably considered,

the Father is not the Son; and he that sits upon the

throne, is not the Lamb. The Father did not become

man, nor the Spirit; but the Son, he died, was buried,

&c. which can be said of none but of a person; and

yet cannot be said of either of the other two. The Holy

Ghost is the Spirit of God, as the Son is the Son of

God: and if that suppose a real distinct personality,

this must do also; the Son says to both the Holy Ghost

or Spirit say to the churches. The Father is God, the

First, and Last; the Son hath the same title, chap. ii. 8.

even he who was dead, is the first, and the last; the

Spirit hath the same authority, and is to be heard, and

hath a divine omnipresence to be in all the earth, chap.
v. 6; which can be of none, but of him that is God. Now if the Father be God, and the Son God, and the Spirit God also; and if there be but one God, and yet these three be really distinct, then they must be distinct persons in respect of their personal properties, seeing they are persons, and distinct.

4. Assert. Although they be three distinct persons, as to their personal properties; yet are they all three one God, essentially considered; and all have the same infinite indivisible essence, though we cannot conceive how. This follows on the former; for if there be three persons, and each of them be God, and yet there be but one God, then each of these persons must be the same one God, co-equal, and co-essential; so the Father is another from the Son, and each of them from other; but he is not another, or another thing, but the same. Hence, the Son, is the Son of God, and the Spirit, the Spirit of God: they are upon one throne, chap. v. they concur by the same authority and sovereignty to write; and he that sends this epistle to the churches, is but one God, chap. i. 1, who therefore will avenge adding thereto, or diminishing therefrom, chap. xxi. yet, that one God, is the same three persons, chap. i. 4.

5. Assert. These three blessed persons, who are one most glorious Being, have yet an inconceivable order in their subjection and working; which, being to be admired rather than to be searched, we shall but say, 1. They have all the same one essence and being, as is said. 2. They all have it eternally, equally and perfectly; none is more or less God, but each hath all the same Godhead at perfection; and therefore must have it equally and eternally; for the Godhead is the same and the Son is the First and the Last, as the Father is; and the Father and Son, were never without the Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, and each of them is God. It doth confirm all these, that they have one throne, name, and authority attributed to them. Yet, 3. The Father subordinates himself, and doth beget the Son by an inconceivable and eternal generation: the Son doth not beget, but is begotten, and hath his subjection, as the second person, from the Father. So much the titles of Father and Son import here: the Spirit proceeds both from the Father (therefore he is the Spirit of the Father) and from the Son; therefore he is laid also to have the seven Spirits of God; and the Spirit doth neither begin, nor is begotten; but doth thus, in an inexpressible manner, proceed from both.

II. If any should wrangle for the expressions that are used by divines in this mystery; we confess that many of the schoolmen have exceeded and have taken too much liberty in this wonderful mystery; yet, it is the thing that we especially should be established in, and from scripture that is clear, that there is but one God, and yet Three, who being denominated in the concrete, must imply three different real relations, or subsistences, or persons; and this essence being infinite and communicable, there is no warrant to bound it to the rules and properties of created beings, who are but finite; and in that respect also incommunicable. And we conceive that the names here given (and elsewhere in scripture) will amount clearly to the equivalent of essence and persons, which are most obviously made use of in this matter: for what is that, I am Alpha and Omega, who was, is, and is to come, but that same Exod. iii. 14. I AM THAT I AM, which denoteth his being or essence, as that which is ever a being. And idols being differed from the true God by this, that they are by nature no gods, Gal. iv. 8. it implies on the contrary, that by nature he is God, and so God in respect of his essence: and therefore that God may be essentially considered, and in that respect of his essence. Again, these expressions, that the one is called the Father, and the other the Son, and yet both one God, do clearly hold forth that they are real relations in that Godhead, subordinating in a distinct manner; and so there must be persons, as Heb. i. the Son is called, the express image of the Father's person; which plainly says, that the Father, considered as distinguished from the Son, is a person, and subsists; and that the Son, as distinguished from the Father, and as so lively and expressly representing his person, must be a person also, having this from the Father: and what is said of the Father and Son, must also be true of the Holy Ghost, who is God equal with both, yet different from them.
both, as they differ from each other, though not in respect of that same incommunicable property: yet he who proceedeth, must differ from those from whom he proceeds, as he who is begotten, must differ from him that begat him.

For their operations, we may find here, that in some things they concur jointly, yet in some way differently. Some things again are attributed to one, which cannot be to another, as their personal properties: the Son is begotten, and not the Father, or the Spirit: therefore he is alienably the Son; the Father begets, and the Spirit proceeds. These are called their personal properties, and their works ad intra, or amongst, or in reference to themselves: of this kind is the incarnation of the Son, which can neither be said of the Father, nor of the Holy Ghost. Again, in things ad extra, or that relate to the creatures, simply, whether in making, or governing of the world, they jointly concur: the Father createth all, so doth the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the Son from the Father, by the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost, from the Father, and the Son; as those expressions of God sending his Son, the Son's sending the Spirit from the Father, &c. do declare, John xiv. 26. and xvi. 7. Gal. iv. 6.

III. This truth concerning the blessed and glorious Trinity, being so often insinuated on here, and coming so near to the nature of God himself, it cannot but be exceedingly necessary for Christians to be thorough in the faith thereof: yet it is questioned of late, whether it be to be accounted a fundamental point of faith or not? I say, this of late is questioned by Socinus, and the favourers of a boundless and intolerable toleration: for, of old, it was most sacrilegiously received as such, amongst the ancients, as the creeds that are called Apostolic, Nicene, and that of Athanarius, do manifest: but this engine, the devil, drives first, to make the most necessary truths indifferent, that then he may the more easily engage opposers to quarrel the very truth of them itself: but we conceive, whatever it was of old before Christ, yet now it is to be looked on not only as a truth, which is clear from the word, but also as a fundamental truth: which being shaken, would over-

turn Christianity, and the way of salvation that the Lord hath revealed in his gospel. This is not to be extended to a rigid degree of knowledge in this wonderful mystery, but to so much clearness in this truth from the word, as may be a ground of faith in the thing itself. And that this is necessary, as a fundamental, we think ariseth clearly from these three grounds: 1. That truth, without which the true God cannot be taken up, believed in, and worshipped, is a fundamental truth; but, this truth of the Trinity of persons, and unity of the Godhead, is such, that without it, that God, which is propofed in the word, and is the only true God, and the object of all worship, can neither be taken up, believed in, nor worshipped rightly: Ergo, &c. because the true God is one, and yet three persons; and as such, hath propofed himself to be known and worshipped. 2. That truth, without which the work of redemption would be overturned, is fundamental: but this is such; for, by taking away the mystery of the Trinity, they take away the Godhead and the personality of the Mediator, and so endanger his satisfaction. And, as on the former account, the true God is otherwise conceived than he is in himself: so, in this respect, the Mediator is made quite another thing. And, can any thing be fundamental, if this be not? 3. The way that God hath laid down in his worship, requireth this, seeing in baptism there is a particular and express mentioning of these Three, the Father, the Son, and Spirit, as the superior, to whom they that are Christian soldiers, should be lifted and enrolled: and so we may account of all after-worship; seeing God requires us to honour the Son, as we honour the Father: and seeing these three equally witness from heaven, 1 John v. the Father, Word, and Spirit: all which Three are One; can their testimony be received, as of Three, or can they be accounted as one God without this? And yet there can neither be one, in Faith, engaged unto in baptism, or one, whose testimony we may receive, but he who is God; and can any thing but it is necessary for a Christian, and, that, fundamentally, to know to whom they are devoted; whom they are to worship;
whose testimony it is that they receive; whose operations they feel; whom they are to make use of? and. 
And therefore it is necessary to know the Trinity of persons in that one Godhead.

It may be the exertion of some tender soul, that they know not how to apprehend this object rightly, when they come to worship; and that often they are diuashed, while their minds are unstable: concerning this, there is need here to distinguish betwixt what may satisfy us as to the object in itself, and what may be sufficient to us in directing of our worship to that object: if we take up God, as in himself, here is a depth that cannot be searched out to perfection: He is broader than the sea, who can know him? higher than the heavens, what can we do? Job. xi. 8. But yet we have footing in his word, how to come before this God with fear, reverence, holy admiration, &c. and such affections and qualifications as a true worshippers, that worships in spirit ought to have; and in this, the pure worshippers, who believe this truth of one infinite God, and three persons ought to be taken up, rather that they may be suitable in their worshipping, and have becoming effects upon their own hearts, than to be diuasing themselves by potting too curiously on the object worshipped; except in so far as may serve to transform the heart into a likeness to him. And, it is not aiming to comprehend the mysteriounness and manner of these incomprehensible mysteries, that doth work this; but the real, thorough and near impression of the general, which is clearly revealed in his word. We would therefore commend these three in worship. 1. That folk satisfy themselves in the general with the solid faith thereof, without professing to particular conceptions or notions concerning the persons of the blessed Godhead: This particularness is often that which both confuses the mind, and diuases the confidence, and cannot but do so in those who would be at the looking upon God immediately here, without making use of the expressions, titles, names, &c. whereby he hath manifested himself to us, and wherein we conceive, it is safest to rest, and to bound all our curi-

osity within those: for, they must be the most solid notions of God, which himself hath taught: thus, Exod. xxxiii. and xxxiv. The Lord did answer Moses his desire of seeing his glory, by shewing him his goodness in proclaiming of his attributes to him that are manifested in his word, whereby teaching men to conceive of God, according as he hath revealed himself in his word, in the plain and comprehensible attributes that describe his nature, wherein God's goodness is sufficiently holden forth to sinners, which ought to be a sufficient manifestation of God to them here, without diving immediately into his essence, which could no otherwise be manifested to Moses than by that proclamation. 2. We would beware of forming ideas, representations, or shapes of that one God and three persons in the heart, or in the head: these cannot be derogatory to him, being a likeness to him of our own uplifting in our own hearts, and cannot but diminish that authority, which the true God should have in our hearts. We would remember, therefore that he is truly spiritual, whom no eye hath seen, nor can see: and therefore, all such imaginations are to be abandoned and abhorred. 3. We would beware of dividing the object of worship, or separating the three blessed persons in our worshipping of them; even in our imagination: as if when one is named, we were not praying unto, and worshipping both the other; and as if the Son were another God than the Father or Spirit, &c. but fill this would be remembered, that whatever person be named, he is God, and that same one God with the other two; and therefore the object of worship, is ever the same one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, that are but one God. We worship the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; but we do not worship the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit, as if he, who is not named, were less worshipped than he who was named: and, seeing the Son and Holy Ghost, are the same God with the Father, (the former ground being laid) it is all one thing whatever person be named, though in scriptures sometimes respect is had to their order of subsisting and operating; and so the Father is only named; and
sometimes to be the ground upon, and by which we have access to God; and so, the Son only is named.

Now, by what is said, it doth also appear, that the Holy Ghost may be expressly prayed unto as the Father, and the Son; although it be not so usual in scripture, because of the reasons formerly hinted at: for, this will follow, he that is God, may be invoked, &c. And where petitions do especially respect the increase of grace, which is the work of the Spirit, we will find him expressly mentioned with the Father and Son, as here ver. 4. 5. grace be unto you, &c. And 2 Cor. xiii. 14. the communion of the Holy Ghost is subjoined, as distinct petition, to the love of the Father, and grace of the Son; and these first two petitions, being directed to the Father and the Son, this third must be to the Holy Ghost in like manner: and therefore to plead against the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, upon this ground, that he is not expressly prayed unto in scripture, is both in inconsequent, and false: and the apostle's taking the Holy Ghost to be his witness, Rom. ix. cannot be done without invoking of him: and the general commands of glorifying God, must infer so much, supposing the Spirit to be God. There is no weight therefore to be laid on that argument.

If it be objected against the necessity of believing this doctrine of the Trinity, or again the sinfulness of tolerating what opposeth the same, that the light of nature doth not discover it: and that the Godhead of the Holy Ghost hath sometimes not so much as been heard of by disciples, as in Acts xix. Therefore, &c. To the first, we answer, That now nature being corrupted, it can be no good rule to try what is truth concerning God by it; it can hardly be denied, if nature be considered as in Adam at the beginning; but to him there was clearness in this mystery; there being express mention of the blessed Trinity in his creation, as the word, Let us make man according to our image, doth import: which is not for nought mentioned then, more than formerly, especially, considering that excellent knowledge that Adam was fur-

ished with, which was a part of the image of that one God, who is Father, Son, and Spirit. But, not to infit on this, we say; 2dly. That, if by nature, as it is now corrupted, what is tolerable or intolerable in the matters of religion were to be tried, then were the whole doctrine of the gospel, and redemption through the Mediator, to be accounted no fundamental thing; and consequently, no error destroying it were to be restrained, because nature hath not discovered that: that therefore must be an unsafe rule to walk by. And indeed, if a master of a family and father, who yet, as much, is (to say so) a servant of nature, is not by that exempted from the obligation of bringing up his children and servants, in the knowledge of God according to the gospel; but is notwithstanding to exercise his authority, in the restraining of every thing contrary thereunto, according to his fiat. Can it be thought, that a magistrate, who must account for his authority over a people, as a master must do for his over a family, is less obliged thereunto? For Christians are to be Christians, in their stations, as in their personal carriage; and so to seek the promoting of the gospel, and the restraining of what may mar it according to their station. 3dly, That even this may be drawn from the moral law of God: wherein not only the true God is alone to be worshipped, as in the first command; but also accordingly as he hath prescribed and revealed in his word, which is the sum of the second command: Now, this being true, that the Lord hath thus revealed himself to be worshipped according to the gospel, it becomes no less necessary to worship God, in that manner, than to worship him, who is the true God; and so, if by the first command, and according to the light of nature, magistrates should restrain, and not suffer what is inconsistent with the worshipping of the one true and living God; so is he, by the second command, and that same light of nature, obliged to restrain all manner of doctrine and worship, that is inconsistent with what he hath revealed, according to the second.

To the last part of the objection, from that instance
Acts. xix. we say, 1. That, suppose there had been great ignorance then of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, while that mystery of the glorious Trinity was was more obscurely revealed, yet it will not follow, that it is equally excusable and sufferable now, when when it is so plainly discovered: yea, can it be said, that they had been excusable, if after Paul's teaching of them the true nature of baptism, and the Holy Ghost, they had continued not to believe the same, as they were before he did it; or, that we can be so now, having his lesson to them for our instruction? Yet, 2. It seemeth that the person of the Holy Ghost is not intended there, but the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which often get that name in the New Testament: for, the Holy Ghost, which is to be underlaid in that place, is such as was to be communicated to believers, and such as these afterward did receive, as from ver. 2. 6. is clear. Now there is great odds betwixt the necessity of the distinctness of knowledge of these gifts, and of the Holy Ghost himself who is not, nor cannot be communicated by the laying on of hands, except in respect of his gifts: this place therefore, doth not meet the conclusion formerly laid down, which was in reference of the faith of the Holy Ghost himself, and not to the knowledge of his gifts.

These generals being granted, there do arise, from this practice of John's, several questions concerning the object of divine worship: which, upon this occasion, it may be, were not unworthy to be more particularly considered, so far as the nature of the place calleth for, and doth become our scope. As, 1. We see in this prayer, John doth distinctly name all the three blessed Persons for their instruction and consolation, to whom he sends this message. 2. When he names the Son, he doth name him by such titles as agree to him only as Mediator; yea and in this song, ver. 6. doth respect that, particularly, which is only applicable to him as man, and as Mediator, to make them welcome it the more heartily, and thereby also the more to commend him to them, and engage them to aim, by remembering what he is, and what he hath done, that doth thus salute them. 3. He hath a peculiar thanksgiving unto the Son, considered under such designations, as express his wonderful love that appears in his sufferings, which cannot be applied to the Father or Spirit: which is indeed divine worship, being the same which is here given to the Father and Spirit. All which giveth occasion to enquire into these four. 1. Concerning the object of divine worship in general. 2. In what respect it is to be given to the Mediator. 3. In what form petitions may be directed to him; or, if in any peculiar form. 4. Why the Mediator Christ, is in such, and so warmly, under these considerations of his incarnation and sufferings, insinuated upon in the New Testament; and what may encourage and help in the improving of these grounds. These things being depths, are rather to be admired and believed in, in the general, so far as we see clear in this president than curiously to be pryed into; yet, that they go not altogether without answer; we shall lay down some generals in reference to all these, which will yield some practicable and comfortable conclusions To the first, we say,

1. God alone is the object of divine worship; and there is no object thereof but God: because there is none who has these infinite attributes and excellencies, which are requisite in the object of divine worship, but God, such as omniscience, omnipotence, infiniteness, supreme majesty, glory, &c. from which to speak of results adorableness, an essential attribute of the majesty of God, as immutability and eternity are, he being adorabe, because infinite, immense, omniscient, &c. and therefore it cannot be communicated to any other, more than these incommunicable properties can be; and yet none can be worshipped, who is not so to speak adorabable.

2. There is but one kind of divine worship, viz. that which is Supreme, and becoming this infinite majesty of God: and, in a word, that which is required in the first Table of the Law, as that which is competent to this glorious excellent God: and this follows on the former: for, if there be but one object, there can be but one manner of worship. Therefore in scripture, to worship God, is always opposed to
the worshipping of any other, and to the admitting of any worship, which is not competent to God, as Rev. xix. 9, 10, xxii. 9.

3. Although there be three persons of the glorious Godhead, and all are to be worshipped; yet, there are not three objects of worship, but one; not three kinds of worship; not three objects; because these three persons are the same one infinite God, who is the object of worship. For 1. Though the Three Persons, be really distinct from each other; yet, none of them is really distinct from the essence of the Godhead: Therefore, the Father, is the same object of worship with the Son, because that same God. And 2. Though the Father be infinite and the Son infinite; &c. yet, there are not two infinitenesses, but the same infiniteness and unmeasurableness, that which is the Father is the Sons also; because these are essentail properties, and so common to all the Persons: and therefore, though their personal Properties be distinct; yet their essentail attributes being common, they are not distinct Objects, but the same one Object; seeing, still, in worship: respect must be had to their essentail attributes; and so to the Godhead, which is common to all: and therefore consequently to them, as they are one Object, it being the Deity, which is One, that is the formal object of worship. And though sometimes these three Persons be named together as here; yet, that is not to propound them as distinct Objects, but to shew who this one Object God is, viz. the Father, Son, and Spirit, Three Persons of the same one invisible Godhead. Hence, the unity of the Godhead, is inculcated, for this end; The Lord thy God O Israel is one Lord.

From which it followeth, 1. That the mind of the worshipper is not to be distracted in seeking to comprehend, or order, in his thoughts three distinct Persons, as distinct Objects in worship; but, to conceive reverently of one infinite God, who is Three Persons. 2. That whatever person be named, he is not to think that the other is less worshipped; but in one act he worships that one God, and so the Father, Son and Spirit. 3. That by naming one person after he hath named another, suppose he name the Father at first; and afterward the Son, he doth not vary the object of worship, as if he were praying to another than formerly; but that still is the same one God. 4. Because our imagination is ready to foister such divided conceptions, we conceive it is safest not to alter the denomination of the persons in the same prayer, especially, where it is in the hearing of others, who possibly may have such thoughts, though we have none: and I suppose, this way is most ordinarily taken in Scripture.

For answering to the second, viz. how the Mediator is the object of divine worship: we shall first distinguish this title Object, then answer. By divines, there is in this case a threefold object is acknowledged all agreeing to the Mediator in some respect. 1. There is objectum materiale, or, quod, that is, the object or person to whom worship is given. 2. There is objectum formale, or, quo, that is, the account upon which it is given to that person, or object. 3. There is objectum considerationis, that is, the consideration that the worshipper hath of that object in worshipping of him: and as is a motive therto, or is, as the learned Augustines calls it, speciatio objecti, the specification of the object, whereby the heart of the worshipper, by taking up the object worshipped under such a consideration, is warmed with love and thankfulness, and strengthened in his confidence, to worship that object. Thus, the relation that God took on him to be the Redeemer of his people from Egypt, and from the land of the North, did give no new object of worship; yet, did they give some external denominations, or specifications of that object God to them: the consideration whereof, in their worshipping, did much qualify the object to them, so that with the more thankfulness and confidence, they might approach him: and thus we distinguish between the object worshipped, and the consideration which may be had of him in our worship. And this doth not make him adorable simply in himself, because he was so naturally; but, it is the ground upon which he is accessible to us, who are sinners and enemies: from which we may lay down a threefold distinction. 1. Betwixt the material and formal object of worship 2.
Betwixt the object of the act of worship, and our confidence of worshipping. 3. Betwixt that which is the ground of worship, supposing prayer, faith simply considered in itself, and that which is the ground of our access considered in ourselves, to pray unto, or believe in, that object.

To answer the Question, we say, 1. That the Mediator is the object of divine worship, is fixedly to be acknowledged; even the man Christ, is to be honoured with divine worship, prayed unto, &c. as in scripture is clear. Thus the Mediator is the material object of divine worship, or the objectum quod for, we worship and invoke him who is the Mediator; and there is no question of this.

2. Christ considered as Mediator, and in the virtue of his mediation, is the only ground, upon which we have right to expect to be accepted in any part of our worship; or to have prayers granted, which we put up to God under whatever designation or title: for so he is the Door and the Way, John x. 9. and xiv. 6. and in this respect though he be not as such, the formal object of divine worship; yet he is the foundation upon where it is now built; the way, by which it must be addressed to God; as he is the High Priest, Heb. vii. 25. This was typified by the Temple, Ark, and High Priest under the law; for, sinner have not access to God, but by him; and this strengthens faith to approach, that God is manifested in our nature, and that so we have, by his sufferings, entry through the veil, to the throne of grace, which formerly, without respect to this, was shut.

3. Our Lord Jesus who is God, in our worshipping him, may be considered as Mediator; and upon that ground, the heart may be emboldened to approach unto God: because he that is God, is also Man and Mediator. Thus, we praise and pray to him that died, and considering him as once dead, in our uptaking of him, yet so, as it is, because he is God: for, had it been possible that the Mediator could not have been God, there had not been ground for giving of this worship unto him: yet, this consideration warms the heart with love to him, and gives confidence and cheerfulness in praying to him, or praising him, as in this same place, and afterward, chap. 5. because seeing we have a Man to do with, who has so experimentally felt sinful infirmities, of purpose to be the ground of a sympathy with his members; and seeing he hath still humane affections, by having a glorified body still united in one person with his divine nature, which wants not humane feeling, though in an inconceivable manner; and seeing also, that is given in the word, as an encouragement for us, to step forward, to expect grace and help in the time of need, Heb. ii. 18. and iv. 15, 16. and that even from him: there is no question; but by the actual considering of this, a soul may, and ought to strengthen itself in approaching unto God.

4. Yet this divine worship is given unto him, as he is God, and because he is God; and so Christ-God is the objectum formale, or, quo of this divine worship, because it is the Godhead that is the alone formal object of divine worship, as is said; and Christ only, as God, hath those essential attributes of Omniscience, Supreme Majesty, Adorability, &c. which are requisite for the object of divine worship. And therefore in this place, although he be set out in what is peculiar to him as Mediator; yet, his being reckoned with the other two blessed Persons, both prove that notwithstanding thereof he is considered in his Person as God. It is then thus, as we say, Christ-God died, yet as Man; so the Man Christ is worshipped yet as God: for, though he be but one Person, yet the properties of the two Names are distinct. Hence, as the Fathers did prove Christ’s Godhead against the Arians, from this, That he was worshipped with divine worship; and account these Idolaters for worshipping him thus, whom they did not esteem to be God; so do the latter divines in reference to the Socinians.

5. Therefore this worship that is given to Christ the Mediator, is of the same kind that is given to God, viz. supreme divine worship; for, there are not two sorts of divine worship. And to give the Mediator, who is God, an inferior kind of worship, would 1. Wrong him who is God: for, by taking
of the Godhead, considered in himself, be not \textit{unum},
or, the same thing with the Mediator, \textit{fænus fæ-}
mixt, as Divines say) yet is he \textit{unus}, the same Person;
and the second Person of the Godhead, being \textit{unus},
viz. the same God with the other two glorious Persons
effentially considered, although he be not \textit{unus} with
Father and Spirit, considered personally: for, the
Godhead, effentially taken is the same thing with the
Father, Son, and Spirit, as hath been said. Then it
will follow, that even when the Mediator is worshipped,
there is but still the same one formal-object of
divine worship, viz. God; they being still the same
effential properties, which alone give ground for a
creature to worship all the Persons of the glorious
Trinity, considered in themselves; or, the Son, con-
fidered as Mediator, in the manner expressed. Again
it appears thus, the Son who is Mediator, is the same
object of worship, that the Son the second Person of
the Godhead is; for, now he being one Person,
cannot be conceived as two distinct objects of worship;
but the Son, as the second Person in the Godhead,
is the same object of worship with the Father and
Spirit, as hath been said. Therefore the Son, who is
Mediator, when worshipped with divine honour, is the
same formal object of divine worship also. And this
also doth confirm, that divine worship is given to him
as God; for, so only is he the same object with the
Father and Spirit.

8. When the Son is worshipped, there is no less
respect to be had to his Mediation, than when the
Father is expressed; to that whoever be named, the Son
still, as Mediator, is to be made use of, and in that the
same manner: for, as there is but one God, so there is
but one Mediator betwixt God and Man, \textit{1 Tim. ii. 3},
without whom there is no access for a sinner to ap-
proach unto, or worship acceptably, this one God.
Thus, God is the formal object of worship; the Me-
diator, considered as such, is the ground upon which
with confidence we may approach to that God: there-
fore he is the Way, and Truth, and Life; there is no
go to God but by him, so that in our worship,
God and the Mediator are not to be separated; yet
are they not to be confounded: for we worship God,
in and by the Mediator: in which respect, the Mediator is called the Door, Altar, Way, &c. because it is by the virtue and efficacy of his Mediation that the sinful distance betwixt God and us is removed, and access made for us to worship him, as was typified by the Temple, and Tabernacle, in which the Mercy-seat was placed; and in looking to which, the people were to worship God.

From all which, it will follow, in reference to the third, 1. That our prayers may be directed to Jesus the Mediator expressly, as Acts vii. 59. 2. That he may be named by titles, agreeing only to him as Mediator, viz. Mediator, Jesus, thou who died, Advocate, &c. because these being given in concerto, delign the person. 3. That the heart may be in the instant stirred and affected with this, that he is Mediator, so as to specify him, or, to make him the object of our consideration as such, in that act, as hath been said. Thus a soul may pray to Jesus, who died, who made satisfaction, who interceeds, &c. and, upon that consideration, be affected with love, strengthened in hope and confidence in its prayer, which yet is put to him, because he is God. 4. We may ask from him what peculiarly belongs to the office of Mediation; as that he may guide his church, pour out the Spirit, gift Ministers, intercede &c. because the Person to whom these belong, is God. And that extrinsic relation, or denomination, of being Mediator, doth not mar us to pray to him, as his being God, hinders not but that he still executes that office by performing such acts: but both give ground, that confidently we may pray to him for these things; yet, in that, still his Godhead is the formal object of our prayer, though the things we pray for, belong to his Mediation: for we could not seek these from him, were he not God: and because he is God and Man, we are emboldened to seek them, and to expect them. See Psal. xiv. 3. 4. &c. for the matter sought, viz. ruling prosperously, &c. belongeth to his Mediation, as the scope clears; yet, the account upon which, is, That he was God most mighty. For (as they say) it is not Mediation, but Deity, that is the ratio formalis of divine worship; or, his Mediation, as it includes the Deity, by the wife grace of God these two being now inseparably joined together: for certainly, Christ the Mediator, was to be made use of with respect to his future satisfaction, before he actually became Man; and as it is since to be done, with respect to his incarnation and suffering; (for he was Mediator, and flood in that relation before he was Man) yet, it cannot be said, that he was then, as such, considered as the formal object of their worship, even when they did explicitly consider him with that respect to his Mediation, because he did not then actually exist in two natures: and therefore, behoved to be the formal object of worship, in respect of that nature, which alone did then exist. 5. As any of the Persons may be named in prayer; so, for strengthening of our faith, the Mediator be named and prayed unto under such titles and relations as agree only to him, and not to any other person; yet, then we would beware, 1. Of conceiving that we are praying to a different object, or that the Mediator is less glorious, just, holy, &c. unto whom we pray, than when God is expressly named. We would also beware of conceiving that by so doing, Christ is in any way more engaged to, or employed by any, than when any other person of the Godhead is named; or, when other expressions are used, though we ourselves may be more strengthened by such considerations. 2. When there is an alteration of the expression, we would beware of conceiving that we alter the object; but, would mind that it is the continued worshipping of the same object GOD, however he be designed: or, whatever be the expressions of different helps, which we seek to strengthen our faith by. 3. We conceive that in public, especially, that change should be warily used, lest it breed, or be apt to breed any such thoughts in others, the generality of people, being prone to imagine different objects of worship in such cases.

From what is said, we conceive that the different expressions among Divines in this matter, may be easily agreed; for example some call him, as Mediator, objectum materiae; as God, objectum formale: some say, as Mediator, he is objectum quod; and, as God, objectum quod: Some say, Persona, Jesus, qui est Deus, est invocandus,
quia Mediator, sed qua Deus: Some again say, Christus qua Mediator, est invocandus, sed qua Deus: For when some say, qua Mediator, he is not the object of worship, they understand the formal object: which is that, that is understood by others, when they say, qua Deus. Again, when others say, qua Mediator, he is to be worshipped, they understand it as he is the object of consideration: which is expressed by others, when they say, qua Mediator, Christus Deus est invocandus; or, as such, he is objectum materiale, of our worship.

It may then be asked, What may be thought of such a form of prayer, O Mediator, or, O Advocate, plead for me, which some may be apt to put up as being comfortable to them? We answer in these five Assertions.

Affer. 1. It cannot be simply condemned, if well understood with these and such like qualifications; that is, 1. If the Mediator prayed unto, or he who is to plead or intercede, be not conceived to be any different object of worship, from God, with whom he intercedes; otherwise there is no keeping of the unity of the object of divine worship; much less is he to be prayed unto as if he were inferior to God, as easier to be dealt with, or, as if he might be spoken unto, when yet we are not praying unto the Father, and worshipping him, in that same act: for Christ-God, reconciled us to himself, by his own satisfaction; so, is himself, prevailed with, to make the benefits purchased, forth-coming to us by the virtue of his intercession; and the person is the same, though the consideration of him in the same, is diverse. 2. If there be a right uptaking, of his intercession, that in the time while he, as God, is prayed unto, faith be exercised on the virtue of his intercession, for attaining what is prayed for; so, that expression is made use of; for strengthening of faith, without any new, or different act of faith, but such as is used with other expressions. 3. If the object prayed unto, be distinguished from the suit or matter prayed for: for so, it is as if we prayed unto him that is King of his Church, and hath received the government, to manage the same for his Churches behalf: because, through the thing sought, viz Christ’s intercession, be peculiar to the second person of the Godhead, and that as Mediator; yet, he from whom it is sought, is God; and so the object is the same. 4. It must be one in the matter, as in different expressions by naming the Father, we should pray, O Father, make me partaker of the benefits of Christ’s intercession: for, if it be thought that that expression cometh more nearly to the improving of Christ’s intercession, or, to the employing of him, than any other expression doth. Then it is not to be admitted: because it placeth the improving of his intercession, rather in words, than in faith.

Affer. 2. We grant that sometimes, de facto, it may be used with sincerity, and accepted by God, when there is much confusion in reference to these qualifications in the person: because it may have what is essential, viz., an adoring of God, and an exercise of faith in Christ, under the expression; so that their meeting is, to obtain what they seek from God, through the virtue of Christ’s intercession, though themselves be unworthy. Thus, no question, many prayers of the Saints, where faith hath been in the Mediator, have been accepted, although there hath been much indistinctness, as to the object, in many things: such were Cornelius his prayers, Acts x. And the Apostles, no question, prayed and were accepted; yet, had defect here, John xvii. 24.

Affer. 3. Again we answer, that such a form is not necessary simply to the use-making of his intercession, either as if that were limited to this expression, or, as if it were a way more proper, copious, weighty, or acceptable, in the use-making of Christ, than another: even though all these qualifications occur: for, no question, in the prayers that are registrated in the scripture, Christ’s intercession is made use of; yet no such form is recorded therein.

Affer. 4. We say further, That it may be abused, and, we are afraid, often is; and that it hath some aptness to foster mistakes concerning the object of worship, or our act in it, as, 1. That the Mediator is one object, and the Father is another, as if we might pray to the Mediator before we pray to God, and not be in that same act worshipping the Father; or as if the Mediator that intercedes, were an object
different from God, with whom he is to intercede. If it be laid, that he is another thing than God. Anfw. Formally considered, as is laid, he is another thing than the second person, of the Godhead; but he is not any other Person, or any other God: and fo not another object of worship. 2. It tendeth to proprome Christ as more easy to be dealt with than God; and God (viz the Father) as more rigid, and severe than the Mediator, whereas the divine attributes are the same in both: for, if Christ-God be considered without respect to his own Mediation, there is no access to him more than to the Father: and if respect be had thereto, there is equal access to the Father, there being the same covenant and promises. And it is certain, some will think they may pray to Christ, when they dare not pray to the Father. 3. It obscures the way of the ufe-making of Christ's intercession which is a moft sublime thing; and being the fame with praying in his name, and in faith, must be conceived to be done spiritually by faith, whereas thus Christ is repreffed as a Mediator amongft men; to whom first address is made, and then by him to the principal party; and fo it conftitutes two addreffes, which brings the unity of the object of worship. 4. It fome way defcends the glory of the Mediator, at leaft in appearance, as he, even the Father, were not supreme, but had another topicked with. It is true, it is fo, as he is Mediator: but ftil it would be advifed, that he is alfo God: and fo he may, and can convey what his Mediation procures. And expreffions in prayer, would befet that, and would not be as if he were not God as to his perfon, from his incarnation. 5. It feemeth, if not to repreff two objects of worship, yet two kinds of worship, viz. one to the Mediator, or to Christ, as Mediator: and another as to God. For, who will readily think, that he who is a uffant party, intreated to plead, is to be equally honoured, and that in the fame act with whom he pleads or at leaft, a twofold manner of the fame worship, viz. one in this manner, and another, when this form is ufed. 6. It is hard thus to conceive rightly of Christ's perfon: for when we pray to him, we must confider him as God, at leaft that must be im-

dplied: then, he is alfo to be interceded with by his own Mediation, as the Father is, which, I fuppofe, few intend. If they take the Father perfonally, and fo that Christ is to intercede with the Father as a uffant perfon, or a uffant party, and fo not with the Son and Spirit alfo, that will infinate that the Father is not the fame God with the Son, and infer a divided concepHon of the moft simple effence of the Godhead, which is the one object of worship.

Affert. 5. Therefore when all is considered, although we will not condemn it simply, yet we think it more fit to abtain from fuch formal expreffions; or, at leaft to be ferving therein, especially in public: because, 1. So it is difficult to preserve that unity in the one object of worship, which should be: for, it is not easy to redden things in practice, as distinctions may be given in doctrinal debates and conclufions: and should founs hazard on what may confufe themselves? I say, especially in public, or with others: because, if it be difficult to keep our imaginations flated in fuch expreffions, it will be more difficult to redden other mens imaginations, confidering what ignorance and vanity usually doth accompany many. 2. There is no fuch form in Scripture, even in the New Testament, when the Mediator is prayed unto; and it is fafet we should follow thefe that have gone before us. He is indeed prayed unto, conffed as Mediator, but still fo as the thing prayed for is expected from himself, as well as to be obtained by him.

To clofe then as we began; here fobrity is called for, and curiosity is to be fhunned: and in worship, the heart is rather to be occupied with godly fear, reverence and dread, than the head to be filled with imaginations.

Having these following things fixed in our hearts by faith, (which we conceive more fimply neccffary for worship, whatever the expreffion may be) viz. 1. An impression of the holiness, juftice, omnificency, and glory of God, &c. and fittable affections with the preffent work, viz. fuch as the worshipping of fuch a God doth call for. 2. A conviction that we are praying to that one glorious God, whatever
our expressions be; that is he that we are worshipping, that is our design to adore him, and that it is from him that we expect what we pray for, whatever the designation in the petition be, and whatever person be named. 3. An impression of our sinful disproportionableness to that work, and of the utter incapacity that we stand in of having access to God, or any ground of expecting anything from him, in respect of ourselves; if it be not obtained by virtue of Christ Jesus his satisfaction and intercession. 4. An exercising of faith on Christ the Mediator, for attaining of what is prayed for, from God, by virtue of the Mediation of the Mediator. All which are necessary, and where they are, we conceive, the soul is to silence all other questionings, and to hold here; and when doubtings arise, to put these two queries to a point within itself. 1. To whom art thou praying? Or, was thou praying? Or, from whom expects thou what thou was seeking? Was it not to, and from God? And, 2. For whose cause, and by virtue of what, dost thou expect it from God? What gives thee confidence to put that faith in him? It is not only through the Mediation of Christ Jesus alone? And where these two are fixedly answered by the confidence, when tentation would humble, because of indistinctness in prayer, there may be quietness notwithstanding; because these two are the essentials of worship, viz. 1. That God be approached to and adored. Next, That in and by the Mediator, address only be made unto him, and this may be where there is no such explicit expression of either; for where God is mentioned, the Mediator is implied as the ground upon which we approach unto him; and when the Mediator is expressed, it is understood, that in and by him is worshipped; and that no other God but he who is the Father, Son, and Spirit. And if in all these a confidence were pos'd, that, may be, had no such explicit thoughts, nor is it possible in worshipping actually, to entertain them distinctly, it would answer, that so it intended and meant, from one question to another, till it resolv'd to this, viz. that he were praying to the one God, through the virtue of the Mediator Jesus Christ, which is the scope, and thus much anxiety may be prevented.

As to the fourth question formerly mentioned, viz. What may be the reasons why Christ is so much insisted on in particular, in the Saints approaching to God, so as the heart is especially rejoiced at the mentioning of him? or, what may help to improve that ground of access which we have by him? Answ. To the first part: It is no marvel that this relation that Christ doth stand in, be much insisted on, in such a case; and, that thereby the heart be warmed, and made to exult.

First, Because, by that consideration, there is some laying of us in approaching to God: for, the Godhead considered in itself, is an infinite, inconceivable thing; and as there is no proportion betwixt him and us; so not betwixt him and our capacities of reaching him to considered, but by this union of the Godhead with our nature in the person of the Son; so he who was man, is also God, Having the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, Col. ii. 9. There is a condescension upon the Almighty's side, viewing him accessible to sinners, and as appointing this (to say so) for a trying place with them, viz. that He is in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, 2 Cor. v. 19. Whereupon the heart fixeth, there to meet God, and find him there; and is thereby emboldened and helped to try with the great and dreadful God. This was typified by the Lord's placing of the mercy-seat above the Ark, by the giving of his answers from thence, and appointing the people with respect thereto to make their addresses to him; whence we see, looking toward the Temple, in the typical version of this true Tabernacle, where God pitched and not man; and also held out there fixing in their worship, where God had by his ordinance try'd them, though it was but in type. And, seeing they made so much of it, what wonder is it that the Saints, since Christ's incarnation and suffering, make so great account of the substance and antitype itself?

Secondly, A second reason is, because in Christ Jesus
the glory and riches of the grace of God, in the work of redemption, doth most eminently and palpably appear; which is both sweeter to the Saints, to inherit, and also tendeth to the advancement of the glory of God dwelling in him, and to furnishing him for them. And therefore, these commendations that are given expressly to Christ the Mediator, and whereby faith is strengthened in him, do also extort forth and commend exceedingly the majesty of God, and his grace condescending thus to men; and in the same act, do serve to strengthen faith in him: for, honouring of God, and the Mediator; and also the speaking to the praise of God, and the commendation of the Mediator cannot be separated; and what strengthens faith in the one, doth it also in the other.

Thirdly, A third is, because there is most sensible footing and (to speak so) gripping to be gotten by looking to the Mediator, and mentioning of him: for he being God and also man, there is more access to conceive what the affections and bowels that he as man hath, and for this end hath taken up to glory with him, that sinners thereby might have confidence in approaching to, and by, an experienced High Priest, Heb. ii. 18. and iv. 16. than can be had to consider God abstracly in himself: of whose divine attributes, there can be no such apprehension. And this is not to give a new object of our faith, as if thereby it were sure, for nothing can be added to the fulness of God, but is to make that object to say so more discernable, conceivable, suitable and accessible unto us; and to give us a new ground to strengthen our faith, and a new way of having our necessities made sensible (to say so) to him, that is, when not only by his Omnificience, he knows them fully, as God, but also being acquainted thereby with the same; in respect of his humane affections, he is, in an inconceivable manner, by sympathy affected therewith: which though it add not to the height or degree of his love and pity; yet, doth it bring it to such a channel (to say so) that hearts are more able to conceive thereof, and are more delighted and comforted therein. And therefore it is no marvel, that the same be most frequently mentioned.

Fourthly, He is as frequently said the ground upon which we have access: for if made a gulf between God and man; man could not step over the same to God, but God stepped over, and hath come to man's side by being manifested in our nature, in the person of the Son, that so he might give men access again to him. Hence Christ is, in going to God, the door, and way; and as it were, the bridge by which they pass, and that safely unto their former communion with God: and therefore Christ being God, so that they cannot have him but they must have God; and, being also the way, by which access is given them to God, it is no marvel that the mentioning of him be sweet.

Fifthly, The great effects of the love of God have kytched, and have been brought about in the person of the Son, the mediator: and though there be no greater love, as to its extent, degree, or freeness in the Son, than in the Father and Spirit, as is said, nor can be; yet that maketh the mediator more obviously lovely to the sinner, although indeed, in the same things, the love of the other two persons doth appear also. And seeing this maketh the object of our love more sensible to us; and helpeth us to understand God's love the better, which is otherwise inconceivable. Therefore, God by proposing this as the pattern and evidence of his love, as the object of ours, doth even allow sinners to feed their love, and strengthen their faith in this object, and on the immediate and explicit thoughts thereof, which yet is the delighting and feeding on the love of God so manifested, which cannot be so well read and understood, as by direct looking upon it, as it is manifested in the mediator, who being God, became man, suffered, died, and is now, though glorified, yet a true man, touched in a humane manner with our infirmities, as a mother, or as a friend are touched with the difficulties of a child, or one entirely beloved, though still in a manner becoming his finenes, glorified, and most perfect state. This is a main attractive, to make souls look to God, by this open door; and also by expressing this, which is nearest to their own comfort, and con-
ception to express their faith in God, or their love to him.

For encouraging and clearing of us in the improving of these grounds, these things would be remembered.

1. That our blessed Lord is true man, having these affections and properties that are natural and not sinful, truly, and really; and that therefore, there is greater nearness conceivable in our approaching him, than to God simply considered in himself.

That, as he is man, having such properties, so he is affected, suitably thereunto, that is, he hath a humane affection to, and sympathy with those he loveth, and hath the experimental rememberance of his by-past sufferings, which also hath its own affecting influence on his soul, for awakening of such pity as is consonant with his inconceivable glorified state.

3. That he who is man, and thus affected, is also God; and so by his omniscience, acquainted with every need and trial of his people; and with every petition of theirs, whereby his former affections, are stirred, to say so and his sympathy awakened to make his divine attributes forth-coming for their good.

4. It would be considered, that the scripture allows these considerations of Christ to believers, for helping them up to communion with him, and so with God in him; and strengthening them to approach to him with confidence on that ground.

5. As there is an exercising of faith in God, and whereby a keeping of a communion with him; so there is a proportionable sympathizing, heart-warming, and bowel-moving affection allowed us, even towards the man Christ, as one hath to a dear friend, or most loving husband. That so, in a word, we may love him, who is man; as he, who is man, loves us. And, this kind of communion, is peculiar to the believer, with the second person of the Godhead, as man, by humane affections to love him: and thus we are not only one spirit with him as with the persons of the Godhead, 1 Cor. vi. 17. but we are one body with him; of his flesh and of his bone, Eph. v. 30.

in respect of this union and communion, that is betwixt a believer and the man Jesus Christ.

Hence, 6. As we have most access to conceive of Christ's love to us, who is man; so we are in the greater capacity to vent our love on him, and to have our bowels kindled upon the consideration of his being man, and performing what we did in our nature for us; so the object is most suited, to be beloved by us, in his condescending to be as a brother to us. And this doth confirm what is said, and is a reason also why believers vent their love to God by flowing in its expressions directly concerning Christ. Because, he is both the more sensible object of our faith and love; and also because there is more possibility to conceive and mention what he in our nature hath done, than to consider God, and his operations, in himself abstractly.

7. Hearts would always remember that he is God, and so that they love, and keep communion with him that is God: that keeps the former the more wonderfully lovely; as this should make souls keep up the affection and dignity that is due to such a person, so condescending. And so by the man Christ, both to love, and believe in God.

And in sum, having the excellencies of God dwelling in the man Christ, whose affections they are more able to conceive of, whose sufferings have made his love palpable, in whom God hath condescended to deal with us; and on whom our affections and faith also may have the more sensible footing by the consideration of his humane affections. There is no wonder that this way of adoring, praising, and loving of God, be so much inflamed upon: and yet, even when the heart is upon this consideration delighting and feeding itself upon the Mediator, till his Godhead is implied, and God in him delighted in; without which, all other consolations would be defective. And so it is God in the Mediator, who is the object of this delight. Now unto this one God, be praise in the Church, by Jesus Christ, for now and ever.
Lecture II.

Chapter I.

Ver. 4. John to the seven Churches in Asia, Grace be unto you, and Peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before his Throne.
5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth; unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.
6. And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God the Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

We heard of the person from whom: follows now these to whom the Epistle is sent, viz. the seven Churches in Asia; and they are particularly named, ver. 11, and are several times spoken of in the two Chapters following. Therefore, at the entry, we shall speak of the doubt or two concerning this inscription to them.

Question. 1. Why is this Revelation, in form of an Epistle sent to particular Churches, rather than the whole Church? 2. And why is it sent particularly, to the seven Churches in Asia? 3. Why are they, the seven Churches, and not one Church?

To the first of these: though it be sent to particular Churches; yet, this excludes none from the use of it to the end of the world: for though many particular epistles, as the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, &c. be directed to particular churches; yet, the benefit of the word contained in them extendeth to all believers in all ages, as well as to them to whom they were directed. So, these particular epistles directed to the seven Churches in Asia, in the 2. and 3. Chapters, are useful and behaviorful to all the churches of Christ in the like cases, as if they had been particularly directed to them. Therefore is that word cast to, in the close of each of those epistles, Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. As to the general subject matter of this book. It concerns not these particular churches, more than others, as we told at the entry. For, ver. 1. It is directed to his Servants, to be made use of to the end of the world, and it is sent to these particular churches to be transmitted by them to other churches; and in this sense, the church is called the pillar and ground of truth, 1 Tim. iii. 15, as holding forth and transmitting the truth to others.

To the second, why is it dedicated to the seven Churches in Asia? Answ. 1. Either because these churches were next to Patmos, where John was banished: for those who are skilled in Geography know, that this little isle lies off Asia, the less. Or, 2. Because it’s like John had particular inspection of these churches in Asia committed to him: which though it be not particularly set down in scripture: yet, it is clear from scripture, that there was a division of inspection among the Apostles without limiting any of them. Peter was sent to the circumcision; Paul to the Gentiles: James abode at Jerusalem. And in the ecclesiastic story, it is asserted, that after Paul had planted Ephesus, John stayed there, who lived last of the Apostles. And so these churches being (as would seem) under his special oversight, while he is absent from them by banishment, he commands his epistle to them. 3. Jesus Christ sends it to them, partly, because of some special faults that were among them, their need so requiring; and because of special trials they were to endure, and the need they had of consolation under these trials: partly, because they were the most famous churches then; for Jerusalem was now destroyed, this being written in the days of Domitian the emperor.

To the third, Why writes he to them as particular churches, to the seven Churches in Asia, and not to the Church in Asia? Answ. For clearing of this, the scripture speaks of the church in a threefold sense,

1. As comprehending the whole number of visible
professors scattered through the world; so the gospel-church is spoken of from the days of Christ to coming again, as 1 Cor. xii. 28. God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, &c. where, by church, is not to be understood this or that particular church, nor the church in Corinth: for the church he is speaking of, is such a church, as God hath set the Apostles in, and all the officers; and that was in no particular church, but is the universal church, spoken of in the verse before, made up of both Jews and Gentiles: and so the word is often used elsewhere, as it is said, Paul made havoc of the church, and that he perfecuted the church. It was not this or that particular church, but all that called on the name of Jesus Christ, to whatsoever particular church they belong. So 1 Cor. x. 32. the church is contradistinguished from Jews and Gentiles. Give none offence to the Jews, nor Gentiles, nor to the church of God, that is, to the church visible, professing faith in Christ. And this church, Rev. xii. is set out under the similitude of a woman in travel, in readiness to be delivered, and afterward doth flee: which is not this or that particular church, but the mother church comprehending the whole visible number of professors. 2. It is taken, as comprehending a number of believers, meeting together in one place ordinarily for the worship of God, the smallest associated part of this body of the universal visible church, as 1 Cor. xiv. 34. a company of professing believers met, or meeting together for preaching, or prayer; and in this sense, the scripture speaks not so often of the church. 3. It's taken neither for the whole body of visible professors, nor yet such a part of that body, that is, a company met or meeting together; but for a number, associated and combined under one government, meeting in their church-guides and officers, though under this combination and government there be many congregations and meetings; so the church at Corinth, Ephesus, and Jerusalem, is to be understood not for the universal catholic church, nor for a particular congregation; but for a number of particular congregations under one government, such as there was in Corinth and Ephes-

... And yet, when he directs his epistle to one church, as under one government, particular congregations are included; as in Jerusalem, there were many churches and many watchmen, and they could not meet together in one place, for the exercise of God's worship; yet it was not unuitable to say, the church at Jerusalem, (as the church at Glasgow) as under one government, though it were not suitable to speak of them as of one congregation met together: for, there was many more congregations of people in one of those cities as 1 Cor. xiv. 34., compared with 1 Cor. i. 3. there were churches under one church. Therefore, it behaved to be a mutual combination, that made up one body. In answer to the question therefore, while he speaks to them as churches in Asia, it is because he looks on them as so many distinct incorporations, parts of the whole; or because their cases and conditions were distinct; and one message could not agree to all, the case of Ephesus is one; the case of Smyrna, another, &c. And several cases and conditions required several letters.

But if any say, it is improper to speak of a church in the New Testament, except of a particular congregation because it's said here to the seven churches in Asia, and elsewhere the church in Judea, &c.

We answer: 1. That inference will not hold; but rather the contrary: for here it is said, the church of Ephesus; and in Ephesus were many particular congregations. Therefore it is meant of a church associated and combined under one government: neither ever are churches in one place mentioned, of whatsoever number they be, but as one. 2. Though seven churches of Asia be spoken of here; yet, Rev. xii. the church is spoken of, under the similitude of one woman: and these churches, must be parts of that one, the seed of that woman, and children of that mother. See more, Chap. xi. at the end.

Observe. That our Lord Jesus Christ taketh notice of the particular estate of his churches: not only how it goeth with the church in general; but how it goeth with this or that particular church; how it goeth with Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c. which shews
a reason why he distinguished them in the inscription.

The second part of the inscription is a thanksgiving, from the midst of the 5. ver. to the 7. ver. when he hath wished grace and peace from Jesus Christ, whom he calls the first begotten from the dead; because by virtue of him, all do alive; and because that he was the first that rose and went to heaven (though Enoch and Elias be personally in heaven, they tasted not of death; and so cannot be called the first begotten from the dead; others died again, as Lazarus.) And when he hath called him the Prince of the Kings of the earth, as set down now at his Father's right hand, as the Father's Lord-deputy, to point out his Mediatorly and given kingdom; and his reigning for the good of the elect, and to rule others for their sake: though not to subdue and make them willing subjects; yet, to bruise them with his Mace and Iron Sceptre. When I say, he is speaking thus of Jesus Christ, his heart beginneth to warm; and he breaketh out in a word of thanksgiving; wherein is, 1. A description of the person, to whom the thanksgiving is made. 2. The thanksgiving itself. The description is excellent, and of exceeding great consolation to the church, as holding out Christ's bowels, and the privileges and benefits that believers have in and through him. 1. In the fountain they come from him that loved us. What a one is Christ? He is he who loved us. This is the bottom grace, from whence all other graces and benefits do flow, Prov. viii. everlasting love, and the first and chief title in all our praise. If believers would know who Christ is? It is he who loved us: a most comfortable title. 2. In the particular benefits that flow from his love, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Every word hath an emphasis in it: he had not an empty and complementing love; but such a love as moved him to leave the height of glory and come down and take on our nature; and in that nature to die, and shed his blood for us; and by that blood, to wash us from the filthiness and guilt of sin, in taking away the evil of sin and wrath. And, that he is said to wash us from sin in his own blood. It supposes, 1. That

fin is filthiness. 2. That this filthiness is not easily washed away. 3. That there is great efficacy and real virtue in the blood of Christ, to wash the soul and cleanse it from sin, as if it had never sinned; as there is efficacy and virtue in a fountain of water, to wash a filthy thing. And this was typified in those ceremonial and legal washing under the law. 4. That wherewith Christ washeth believers, is, his own blood: not the blood of bulls and goats: but the blood of the first begotten from the dead, the blood of the true and faithful witnesses, the blood of the Prince of the Kings of the earth; yea, the blood of him which is, which was, and which is to come, the blood of him who was and is God. Therefore, Acts xx. 28. It is said, Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. It holds out; not only the efficacy and satisfaction of the blood of Christ; but also the end of his death: that it was not a mean testimony and witness bearing, nor only to leave an example to others, (as profane men, derogating from our blessed Lord's death affirm,) but, to wash his own from their sins in his blood, to take away the guilt of fin in justification, and to make the power of his death come in and stay fin, and to sanctify, as it is, 1 Cor. vi. Such were some of you, but now you are washed, that is, justified and sanctified. There is not name that Christ hath, but it hath some privilege and benefit in it to believers; it holds out love on his side, and consolation on ours; and every benefit that comes to us, is a name and commendation to him, and may be used by us.

Verse 6. In the description, he sets out how Christ, not only takes away what is ill, from us; but how he abounds in conferring privileges on us. He not only takes away sin; but he Hath made us Kings and Priests to God his Father: First, Kings, 1. In delivering us from the slavery of sin, that most part of the world lives in; and making us masters over sin and sinful lusts, masters over the devil and the world, and the flesh in some measure. And this is a princely thing. So the church is set out, Rev. xii. as having the Moon, that is to say, the triumphant world under her feet. 2. Kings in respect of a spiritual reigning i
our spirits with God, by an heavenly conversation; having our conversations in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. 

Col. iii. 1. in an holy and heavenly-pride, and in a sort of kingly majesty, dilating the ups and downs in the world. 3. Kings, also, in title and right being set as kings on the throne with him, to execute the judgment written, Psal. cxlix. 9. This honour hath all his saints, in a spiritual way, and some way to judge the world in their practice, and they shall be kings in poecificion when that, which is here, shall have the full accomplishment: and all the saints, as so many crowned kings, shall follow him in the clouds. Secondly, priests, to offer their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, Rom. xii. 1. to offer prayer and praises, the calves of their lips; and this is no small privilege to have access to God as priests. The Jews held these two, as great dignities, the kingly and priestly offices; and believers are called by Christ to both, so that they may come with boldness to the throne of grace, and enter within the holiest, through the veil, by that new and living way, being freed from the spirit of bondage and fear, which in a great part accompanied the Jews ceremonial worship. 1. How many excellent conations are here to believers, and grounds of direction to them? What grounds of consolation compared to these, to be washed in that blood of the lamb; to be made Kings and Priests to God; and Christ’s Father, that is, no idol, but to him, to whom Christ is, a priest? Here is life and immortality brought to light by the gospel, privileges and benefits of an exceeding passing worth and excellency.

1. Comparing this Verse with Verse 1. Here kings and priests; and there his Servants. Observe, that there is no such reality and dignity in the world, as to be our Lord Jesus his servant; it is truly to be a king, to reign; and a priest, to be consecrated to God. It conflicts not in looseness and carnal liberty; but in new obedience: and the more obedient, circumcised, and strict in holiness, the greater liberty, majesty, and kingly fastenels. All our Lord’s servants are kings, so great a king is he, and so happy are they.

2. These privileges lay an obligation on believers, to carry themselves as such. 1. If Christ’s blood be given as a fountain to wash at, then make use of it for pardon of sin, mortification and sanctification. 2. Let us carry ourselves kingly. It is a beastly thing to be a servant of sin; but it is a kingly thing and stately, to be minding the throne; we are called to the faith and hope of; to have our hearts and conversation suitable to that holy and heavenly place; to have royal spirits, dilating, and trampling on the things of a present world, as unworthy of our hearts and affections.

3. Comparing this with the former, when he speaks of Christ, his affections warm; and when he speaks of the benefits, which come by him, it leads him to the love they came from; and by that, again, he is lead to praise him, and he cannot get Jesus Christ set high enough. Observe, believers’ hearts should warm, and be often warming themselves with thoughts of Christ, and venting their warmness of affection to him in praise. It is a sweet thing; when believers cannot part with Christ; but whenever he comes in their mind or mouth, till it give him a word of praise, and come to their purpose, again, as John doth here: and it is often thus with Paul, as 1 Tim. i. 17. Eph. iii. 20.

LECTURE III.

CHAP. I.

Verse 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; even so, Amen.

8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, faith the Lord, which is, and which was, and is to come, the Almighty.

9. I John, who also am your brother, and companion
judgment, and is coming Chap. xxii, 20. Surely it come quickly. This coming, in the present time, implyeth two things. 1. The slowness of his coming; he misses no time, he comes quickly. 2. That even the short time he delays, is making ready, as it were for his coming; he is leading witnesses, and fitting pretexts, and discovering the truth and falsehood of every thing; and every thing that may further his coming, is going forward: he is not idle in reference to his last coming to judgment, but is hastening all. Secondly, His coming to judgment, is set out in the majesty and staturiness of it, under an expression ordinary in the Prophets (as much of this book is) He cometh with clouds. So Psa. xlvii, 2. Clouds and darkness are round about him: and Matt. xxiv, 30. He shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. So Psa. xviii, 10, 11. To set out the staturiness of the Judge that cometh thus backed with celestial majesty. Thirdly, His coming is set out by the palpableness and visibleness of it. Every eye shall see him. Though most part of Atheists think not of his coming now; yet when he shall come, there shall not be a reasonable creature, that ever had life on earth, whether believer or unbeliever, but they shall with their eyes see him on that day. Fourthly, Among them that shall see him, there are added, they also who pierced him. Under which is comprehended his greatest enemies; and it takes in both those, who had their hands hot in his blood, and killed him bodily; and those who crucified, and do crucify him spiritually, as it is said, Chap. xi, 8. He was crucified in spiritual Sodom, they shall all, in that day be called before his bar, and be forced to look on him. A fifth circumstance in his coming, All kindsreds of the earth shall wail because of him; in the original, all the tribes of the earth. It is a word borrowed from the Jews their manner of reckoning, who counted their kingdoms by tribes. The meaning is, all the kingdoms of the earth, and those that laugh at him now, and think little of his coming, when it is spoken of, shall wail because of him, that is, because of their slaying him; and now seeing him to be their judge, whom they slighted and contemned; and
though there be not a kindly mourning, like that in
Zech. xiii. 10. They shall look upon him whom they
have pierced, and shall mourn, yet, this being to be
the day of judgment, and spoken of the enemies that
think nothing of him now, we take it to be an anxious
howling of enemies; when they shall see Christ come
in the clouds to the great judgment, and all his An-
gels and Saints about him, as, Mat. xxiv. Then shall all
the tribes of the earth mourn. Sixthly, There is a sixth
circumstance added, even to amen, which is John's
saying, to his seal, to his coming: and it is doubled
as it is ordinary both in the Greek and Hebrew. He
witheth he may come, and believeth he will come,
that it may be as he hath said, even as he cloathed
his Revelation Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus. And
so it looketh to his flately way of coming, and the
effects it shall have in the world, it being for his glory,
to vindicate himself from the rubs that his profane
enemies put upon him in the world, he says Amen, to
that, even so Amen.

Observe, 1. Our Lord Jesus, that was crucified,
and thought little of, shall be as high as ever he was
low in the open view of all his enemies. The time
is coming, and now is advancing fast forward, when
he shall take unto him his kingdom, and be visible
to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be the judge
of quick and dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth.
This is one of the articles of our creed; and we would
make use of this scripture to confirm it: there is a
time coming, and it is not far off, when he shall set
his throne in the clouds, and all eyes shall see him.
Think ye this true, that there is a time coming,
when we that are here, and all others, shall see Christ
in his humane nature, and also much of his Godhead
as he shall be pleased to let out, and we capable of?
Think on it, and let it not go with a word; but con-
sider how ye will meet him and stand before him;
and when ye meet with difficulties, or creature-com-
forts that would turn you aside, remember on this
day: and where will they all be, when ye shall be
arrested to stand before him? Ecclef. xi. 9.

Obf. 2. Christ's coming to judgment, is a special
part of his flathelines, and a main part of the univer-

verse: his kingly office as Mediator, when he shall
come and sit as Judge, and give sentence, on godly
and wicked, and send away the one, and welcome
the other. This will be one of his flathelines, days,
when he shall vindicate himself from profane men;
and bear himself out to his people in his exceeding
glory. Believers, believe there is such a day, and
let it quiet your hearts in the mean time of all these
confusions.

Obf. 3. Our Lord Jesus his coming to judgment,
will be a doitelul coming to the midst part of the
world. They also who pierced him, and all kindreds
of the earth shall weep because of him; they shall cry
to the hill, fall on us, and to the mountains, cover
us; and would be glad to get into the cliffs of the
rocks, and to the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of
the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, Isa. ii.
Men would think the greatest hill, or mount a
light burden on that day, to get themselves hid from
the piercing view of a flighted and provoked Mediator.
Oh, but that will be bitter and fore biding.
Think upon it. There is a time coming, when many
of you that hear this same word, if grace prevent not
shall see and find the truth of it. It is a terrible, but ex-
perience will make it true: many of you now learn
to hear tell of Christ's coming to judgment; but when
that day cometh, it shall be bitter in another kind; to
you, when this bitter yea and no, wailing, and how-
ling, shall be among the carnal world that flighted
him, and ye shall find yourselves among them and
shall share with them, and every cry and yell about
you, shall be a new wond. Therefore humble your-
selves, and seek for mercy, and reconciliation in
time: for, either must ye get now or never.

Obf. 4. A hearty contenenting and laying Amen to
Christ's coming to judgment, to have our thoughts
of it, and to be longing for it, and wishing that it
may come, it is a good token of a believer and friend
of Christ, to whom this day will be a comfort. But
if many of us had our own mind, we would never
wish to die, nor that there should be a day of judg-
ment.

Verse 8. Christ cometh in himself to tell what he
is, and to confirm what John said of him, I am Alpha and Omega, which are two letters in the Greek Alphabet: Alpha the first, and Omega the last: and the meaning in the text words, The beginning and the ending. The beginning, he who gives all things a being and beginning, and have no beginning myself. The ending, he who puts an end to all things, and in whom all things end, and hath no end myself: for all things terminate in him as their end, Rom. xi. 26.

To him are all things, which is, which was, and which is to come, the same description which was given to God the Father, ver. 4. setting out the immutability and unchangeableness of his being, that he is from eternity to eternity the same, and as we shew, the title JEHOAH taketh in them three words. Then more plainly, the Almighty. Every word here is a proper attribute of God; he is infinite in power, sovereign in dominion, and not bounded as creatures are; and this is clear to be spoken of Christ, not only from the scope, (John being to set out Christ from whom he had this Revelation) but from the text following, where he gives him the same title over again; or rather, Christ, speaking of himself, taketh and repeateth the same titles.

Obf. 1. Our Lord Jesus Christ, is God equal with the Father, and Holy Ghost. He who is the first and last, the beginning and the ending, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty, must be God. These titles can agree to no other: there is no created being capable of any of these titles; but he is in full. Therefore, &c.

Obf. 2. The stately and majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ: what an excellent and stately person is he? There is no property attributed to God, but it is agreeable to Christ. The use of it, is, to bring hearts to high thoughts of Christ: and it is not for nought, but for this end that the scripture inflicts so much in giving him such stately titles, even to wear fouls out of their atheistical thoughts of him, and to prefer and esteem him above all.

3. Looking upon these words as spoken by Christ himself: after John hath described him, he cometh and, takes it of John's hand, and describes himself. Observe, that our Lord Jesus own mouth, can best tell what he is: hearing, reading, speaking, writing will not do it. If the description do not come out of Christ's own mouth, it will do little to hearers.

Obf. 9. Follows the body of this book, or epistle. We will not now enter on a particular division of it. That which is ver. 19. of this same chapter, shall serve for the time, Writ the things which thou hast seen, and the things which shall be hereafter. The whole may be taken up in these two, 1. John is representing the cafe of things, as they were for the present. And, 2. As they were to be hereafter.

The first of these, viz. His representing the cafe of things as they then were, is that which is set down in the first three chapters: wherein is set out the cafe that the seven churches of Asia were in, which he discovers to themselves, and to the world, and shews how many foul faults they had under a fair name and profession: and this takes up John's first vision.

That which is from the 9. ver. to the end of this chapter, we take up in these three. 1. There is the vision itself, what John saw, and what he heard, from ver. 10. to ver. 17. mixed through other. 2. In the 9. and 10. verses, some circumstances are set down concerning John, and the manner of his receiving the vision, to make way for the faith of the vision, and the whole story that follows. 3. From the 17. ver. to the end, some circumstances, that make way for John his writing and publishing what he saw, and heard, are recorded.

The first circumstance that makes way for the faith of the vision and story, is, the person by whom Christ wrote, 1 John, of whom we have heard before in the entry. And he sets out himself here further, under several expressions or titles. 1. Who also am your brother; a son of the same house, a joint heir with you in the same kingdom; a comforting title to them, and humbling title to him. Thof this he wrote to, being brethren, he reckons himself a brother with them: for the most eminent believers, John, Paul,
Abraham, David, &c. come in to brethren with the meanest believers; all being children of one Father, of one house, heirs of one inheritance; and Abraham, his being a brother, and John his being a brother, prejudeth not the least of them to whom he witteth. And as all have one Father, so all are begotten by the same word, have one Spirit here, and glory for ever hereafter. 2. The next title he describes himself by, is, ‘company in tribulation,’ that is, a fellow sufferer with you, a sharer of the sufferings of Christ as well as you; I who am a great Apostle, am not exempted from sufferings more than ye are, who are in Smyrna, Philadelphia, &c. I have mine own share of the cross, as ye have; yea, he takes it to himself as a title of honour, as a great prerogative and dignity, as Paul, Eph. iii. 1. I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. So it is, I John, who, as I am suffering with you, so I am confined for preaching to you in Patmos: pointing out this, that as all believers are brethren, so all have one lot in suffering here-away; and none are exempted from the cross: were it the disciple whom Jesus loved and leaned on his bosom at the supper, the night he was betrayed: yet, he must be a companion in tribulation, and come in to heaven at the same door with the rest. Folks would not think this strange, that afflictions light on them whom Christ loves best. the servant is not greater than the lord. It should comfort sufferers, and make them look on it, as their prerogative to be sufferers for Christ, 3. There is a further aggravation, or explication of the former, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Left it be thought any thing derogatory to be a sufferer, he says, he is a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ with them. And these two words, kingdom and patience, are put together, not only to shew that he is a king and priest with other believers; but to shew this much, that Christ’s kingdom is often more in the exercise of patience than in dominion; and that the subjects of Christ’s kingdom here, are more put to exercise patience than to reign. His meaning is, I am a sharer with you in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, that needeth no worldly grandeur, but hath need of patience. And it faith, that he counts it his prerogative to be singled out, and put to patient suffering, for giving testimony to Christ as king of his church. Afflictions for Christ, and sharing in his kingdom, may stand well together for the time and in reference to the upshot, if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.

A second circumstance, which is also a further description of himself, is from the place and cause. 1. From the place of his suffering, ‘I was in the isle which is called Patmos.’ This Patmos, is an isle in the Egean Sea, near the coast of Asia the less, not far from the seven churches in Asia to whom he wrote: a place which is called barren by them who write of it, not much inhabited then, nor now, because of the barrenness of it. Therefore it is a greater evidence of the cruelty of John’s persecutors that banished him thither. 2. The cause, is, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, that is, for his preaching the word of God, and for his owning and maintaining Christ’s gospel: for his bearing testimony that Jesus Christ was the king, priest, and prophet of his church, and the eternal substantial word of the eternal Father; for Christ’s cause, who is the word of God; or, for bearing testimony to him. The way how he came to this island, is not fet down; but history tells (Euseb. lib. 3. cap. 14. ex Irenæus &c. Clem. Alex.) it was on the fourteenth year of Domitian the Emperor, when he raised the second persecution against the church of Christ, about the 97 year of our Lord, that he, after he had tortured John, banished him to this isle: near about the same time of John’s age. This then is the place that John was banished to; and yet, in the same place, he hath sweet fellowship with God; is countenanced of him, and honoured to be the carrier of this Revelation to the church.

See here how far graceless and profane persecutors (such as this beast Domitian was) may prevail against the servants of Jesus Christ, when he doth banish John to Patmos, besides other horrible perfections.
which he raised against the church. Christ, by this, would have us know his kingdom is not of this world.

2. Solitariness for Christ, is not the worst condition. Christ can make up that another way: and if there be a necessity of withdrawing men from their duty, or of ministers from their public ministry, he can make it tend as much to their private benefit, and to the public good of his church, if not more: neither doth John loose anything by his banishment and confinement; for, he finds more intimate and sweet communion and fellowship with Christ, and gets more of his mind; nor doth the church lose any thing by it; for the gets this revelation of God's mind. If we believed this, we would never go out of God's way to make up his work; for, if he please to lay us by, he knows how to make up that, both to ourselves and God's people. The christian church is as much beholden to Paul's imprisonment in epistles, as to his liberty in preaching.

3. Honest suffering for Christ, hath often with it the freest and clearest manifestations of Christ. Folks that will continue faithful, and abide by their duty through sufferings, they shall not only not be loafers but gainers, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "If ye be reproach-ed for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of God, and glory rests on you." I would have none carnal and vain in this, but humbly confident and constant, as they would thrive in their spiritual condition, and maintain their peace.

Lecture IV.

Verse 10. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as if a trumpet.

Before John came particularly to the vision he was he inflected in some particular circumstances, that make way to the more full faith and credit of the vision and story that follows: and though they be only circumstances in themselves; yet they are profitable and conducing to the main end he hath before him. We hear of the first and second circumstance how, and where John was, when he got this vision.

Felloweth in the 10. ver. the third and fourth circumstances, that is, the day when he got this vision, and the frame he was in; I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. The words in the original, are, I was in the spirit on that Lord's day, pointing out a dayingularly, and a day that in a particular and especial manner is called his day, beside any other day, that dominick day, or day which is the Lord's.

That we may have access to the use, we shall speak a little to these two. 1. What particular day this is, seeing there is no mention made what day it is, more than this, that is called the Lord's day. 2. What it is to be in the Spirit on this day.

For clearing of the first of these two, ye would consider; that there is but one other phrase in scripture like this, and it is spoken of the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. "This is not to eat the Lord's supper." They that know the original, know also this phrase to be singular, like this of the Lord's day, ex te kuriase hemera, and 1 Cor. xii. 20. kuriase deipnon, which is exprest unto, and contradistinguished from, to idon deipnon: which was not set apart from other suppers and common use, as this was. And these two by one particular phrase expressed, we must expound the one by the other. Now the Lord's supper, is called so, for three reasons; for which also, we conceive this day, to be called the Lord's day. 1. The Lord's supper, because of the Lord's singular instituting that bread and wine for a special and religious end, and distinguishing, differencing, and setting it apart from communion use, to a more special use. And so; this day, is called the Lord's day; because of the Lord's separating and setting apart this day for his special service and worship: and in that distinguishing it from other days, as he had done that supper, from common suppers. 2. The Lord's
upper, for its special signification, Jesus Christ and his benefits being especially set out in it, his death and sufferings pointed at, and the benefits we receive thereby. So this day is called the Lord’s day, because it is of special signification, pointing out not so much God’s ceasing from the work of creation, as our Lord’s ceasing from the work of redemption: as the Lord’s supper is for the remembrance of his death till he come again, so is this day for remembering the work of redemption, and his resurrection, till he come again. 3. The Lord’s supper; because of its special end, to set out the honour of the Mediator, and the worship, and ordinances brought in by him under the New Testament; so to distinguish it from the passover. So this day, is called the Lord’s day, for the same reason, to set out the honour of the Mediator, and that it may be enrolled among the ordinances of the New Testament. Therefore, when in the New Testament, ought is called the Lord’s, it points ordinarily at Christ the Mediator, and at the second person of the Godhead, as 1 Cor. viii. 6. One God, distinguished from one Lord. We take it then for granted, that it is called the Lord’s day, for these reasons. 1. Because it is a special day, set apart for the Lord’s use, of special signification, and for a special end. And Secondly, That it is a special day, known to the church, may appear: for else, John would not have given it such a denomination, and that it points at something of Christ, and so is separated from the Jewish day, and common day. It is a day known singularly to relate to Christ. To clear it, consider, it must either be the first day of the week or some other: but none other day it is. Ergo sec. If any other, it can be supposed only one of these two: either, not any particular day of the week, but any special day or time of Christ’s appearing or manifesting himself; or else the Jewish sabbath day. Now neither of these can be meant by the Lord’s day. 1. Not the former: for, such a day of Christ’s special appearing not being named here, it would leave the church in an uncertainty to know what day was meant; yet is this day mentioned, to point it out from other days; that is the scope why it is so designed. Beside, if it were any such day, it would point at no one day; for, there are many times of Christ’s appearing. It is not so to be understood then, though many by our Lord’s appearing may agree to the first day of the week whereon most frequently he appeared after his resurrection to his disciples, as Mat. xxviii. John xx. 26. Acts i. 2. Neither the latter, viz. the Jewish sabbath-day. 1. Because it is ever called the sabbath, and gets the own name that it formerly had; and the giving of it this name, will more obscure than clear the day. 2. Because the Jewish sabbaths were then annulled, as Col. ii. 16. Let none judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moons, or of the sabbath-day. Therefore then can they not be called the Lord’s day. And Gal. iv. 10, they are reproved for observing days and months, and times, and years, where it is clear the Jewish new moons, sabbaths and festivals were then, and before that time abolished in so far as peculiar to them, though all distinction of days was not taken away, more then all distinction of the elements in the Lord’s supper from other meat. Because distinction of meat was condemned there also; but this followeth, all Jewish distinction both of meat and days was taken away, but what is still alligned Christ, that continues. 3. The Lord’s day, in the phrase of the New Testament, looks to Christ, as having its name some way from him: which cannot be laid of the Jewish sabbath; but this called the Lord’s day, as pointing at an ordinance of the New Testament, whereas the Jewish sabbaths had a respect to the Old Testament-ordinances. 3. It remaineth therefore, it must be the first day of the week, because no other day can lay claim to it. It is that day, which we call Sunday, or, the Christ-an-sabbath; and was, in the primitive times, called the Lord’s day. 1. Because the reasons why a day is called the Lord’s day, do agree to it especially. The Jewish sabbath, was called the Lord’s day Exod. xx. 8. because on it he ceased from creation. This day is called the Lord’s day, because on it he ceased from the work of redemption. Mark. xvi. 1. 2. Luke xxiv. 1. 2. John xx. 1. It is that day, whereon our Lord not only rose; but several times did meet with his Disciples: and many mark several privileges and benefits conferred on this day as the pouring out of the Holy Ghost,
Acts ii. And more reasons might be given, whereby this day is singularly beyond others to be called his. 2.

Because this first day of the week and no other, was set apart for the Lord’s worship and service, as distinguished from other days. And John’s end here, is, to fix on a particular day, known to them, and to esteem among them, as such a day. That it was set apart for the Lord, and his worship, is clear, not only from places we have named, but from Acts xx. 7.

Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow and continued his speech till midnight. Which intimates a continued custom of meeting, and that for preaching, prayer, and celebration of the Lord’s supper. So 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.

And in the 1. ver. he tells, concerning the collection of the saints, he had given the same orders to the churches of Galatia. If it be asked, why doth Paul point at the first day of the week, and bids give themselves to charity that day? Here it is, because that day was dedicated to God’s service and worship, whereof charity was a pendant. And as he hinted, this was not peculiar to one church, as Corinth: but it was common to all churches. The like order was in all the churches of Galatia: and it doth not point at Paul’s instituting a day; but at his supposing of it to be instituted; and at his enjoining of a positive duty of charity meet for that day. And it is observable, that though the saints had meetings on other days; yet it is never said, they did meet the second, third, or fourth days, &c. but on the first: which certainly is done, to shew a peculiarity in that day, and the meetings on it; yet, few or none deny this denomination to signify the first day on this account, it being to clear from antiquity, and no other day being here to compete with it, and that can lay such claim, to this denomination, as this day doth; and was by the most ancient still so named.

For the second thing to be cleared. What is it to be in the spirit on the Lord’s day? To be in the spirit is, 1. To be spiritual; to have the habit of grace, and a new nature; and thus it taketh in the ordinary walk of believers, Gal. v. 16, 35. 2. More especially, it is for those who are habitually in the spirit, to be actually, and in a more eminent measure in the spirit, as Eph. v. 18. To ‘be filled with the spirit’ to be in a holy rapture and exaltation, is warranted and allowed to believers in a more special frame, and at more special times to be in a spiritualness abstracted from carnalness, and lawful things, more than ordinary. 3. It is to be in the spirit in an extraordinary manner and measure, or to be in an extraordinary rapture, the spirit revealing something extraordinarily. And this is to be in the spirit, and a state different from the former, albeit consisting with them. We cannot conclude any of these in this place: for John was regenerated, and was habitually spiritual and gracious; but we especially include the last two. As if he said, though I was absent from company and Christian fellowship, and had not a congregation to preach in on the Lord’s day; yet I was in the spirit, exercising the habits of grace, and I was in an eminent, spiritual and holy frame; the spirit elevating my spirit; (which is that spoken of, Isa. lvi. 13. ‘If thou call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord,’ &c.) And the Lord taketh him in his spiritual frame, and strain, and ravisheth him the spirit; and from the second step he brings him up to the third, to be in spirit as an extraordinary prophet, as we take Peter to have been, Acts x. when he went up to pray, that is, to the second step: and fell in a trance, and saw heaven opened, which is the third. We think the same hath been John’s case here.

The words give occasion to speak of several doctrines. 1. The good that is to be gotten on the Lord’s day, when folks are in a spiritual frame. 2. That when folks are separated from the public ordinances, they would be making it up in private, by giving themselves to spiritual exercises. 3. And that God not only can, but doth make us the good to be gotten by the public, by private and secret fellowship, with himself, when believers in him are banished from, or denied of the public ordinances. But not to insist on these, they give occasion to speak a little of these three things. 1. The institution of
the Lord's day. 2. The name that the Lord's day gets. 3. Of the sanctification of it, or of a special part, wherein the sanctification of it consists.

For the first, viz. For the institution of this day, several arguments are here; or, we may argue several ways to prove it. 1. If in the Apostles time this day was set apart for the Lord's worship and service; and in a special manner called his, as being kept to him on a moral ground; then we have warrant, and it is our duty to keep it for the same end and use. For the practice of extraordinary men, grounded on moral and perpetual reasons, and that were not peculiar to them as extraordinary, but are common to them and us, (as the grounds and reasons of the setting apart this day are, it being for the remembrance of his resurrection, and the bringing in of a new world; and therefore, all did from the beginning, keep that day) are binding to us, as is clear. But the first day of the week, was appointed to be the Lord's day, in the Apostles times; and singled out and set apart for his service on a moral ground, (for no ground peculiar to them can be given) therefore certainly it must be our duty to keep it. 2. If the first day of the week, was singled out from other days, and counted the Lord's day; then there behoved to be an institution for it, or a supposed institution, that is, it must be the Lord's day, either because he instituted it, when he spoke many things to his Apostles after his resurrection, concerning the right ordering of his house and worship; and by his practice, observed and sanctified it, for his special service; or because these that were infallibly guided and led by his spirit, instituted and gave warrant to keep it. For without an institution and command, it is not to be kept, or named so, more than another day; but this first day, was in practice, singled out before all other days; and is accounted the Lord's in a special manner as is said; therefore there must be some institution of it. 3. Comparing this text with 1 Cor. xi. 20. If the first day of the week be the Lord's day, as the sacrament of the supper is the Lord's supper, then it must be by his appointment and institution bis; but so the phrase in both places is to be understood.

ergo, By comparing these two places, the peculiarities of the phrase is such that there being no other phrase like them in scripture, it seemeth the Holy Ghost warranteth us to gather the reasons of this denomination of the one from the other, though the institution of this day be not so clearly expressed, as the institution of the Lord's supper. For it is a received rule for expounding scripture, to expound more dark places, by places that are more full and clear. And therefore conclude we, that the Lord's day is to be called the Lord's: because of its institution, though we know not where; because for the same reason, the supper is called his, there being no solid ground to conclude upon. And they who give reasons to the contrary, must make it appear, that there are other reasons more pregnant, or else the language of the Holy Ghost must have weight with us. 4. This first day is the Lord's, as the seventh day is called his, or any other thing in the old Testament; but that is ever because of his setting apart that day, or that thing for his own, from others of that kind; therefore it must be so here.

There are some exceptions, made by some worthy men, which we shall speak a word to. As 1. If it be so, it will follow that all days are not alike contrary to Rom. xiv. 14. Gal. iv. 10. Col. ii. 16. where the scripture seems to say plainly, that all days are alike. Therefore the Lord's day cannot be so understood. Answ. This doth indeed directly contradict the letter of the text: for either this text pointeth at one day by another, or else it doth nothing. 2. The Apostles scope in the places that seem to be contrary to this is clear; when he calls the Jewish-fabbath and holy days, he calls them alike in respect of Jewish observance only; or in so far as they were Jewish and typical: for Christ had taken them away in that respect, even as he calleth meats also, yet without prejudice of the sacraments, and this confirmeth our argument. For if Jewish days and fabbaths, were taken away forty years and more, as is clear by Paul, before John wrote this revelation, in so far as they were Jewish, and yet John speaks of a Lord's day as differentiated from other days, it says...
it continued when they were abolished. There is a great odds betwixt laying aside of Jewish days, and the Lord's day; and when John speaks of the Lord's day, he speaks of it in the singular number, in opposition to those many days, the Jews had under the ceremonial law. And even that learned Doctor granteth his place to speak of the first day, and the church's practice to meet on it also, and in several respects, to be priviledged beyond other days.

A second exception is this: If this day be so counted of, it will bring in the sanctifying of it, in as eminent a measure, as the Jews sabbath was. And is not that to judge? Anfw. Distinguishing betwixt things ceremonial or typical, and things moral and perpetual. We bring back nothing that was ceremonial and typical, as their sabbaths of weeks, sacrifices, any many other things were; but for moral duties, they become us as well as the Jews, and bind Christians to the end of the world. And this not back Judaism, neither leads us to sacrifices, and the like, which pointed at Christ to come; but contrarily, this day and the duties of it, hold out Christ already come: which destroys all these ceremonies and sacrifices, and declares them to be gone.

A third exception, It cannot be compared with the Lord's supper. For, 1. The Lord's supper is clearly instituted; but this is not clear in the institution thereof. 2. The Lord's supper is a sacrament; this is not; and days may be changed, as sacraments cannot. Anfw. 1. To the left part: it is begging of the question; if it be the Lord's day, let apart for his service, all the world cannot change it, except he who can change sacraments also. 2. To the first part: that the institution of this day is not so clear, as the institution of the supper. Anfw. We do not parallel them in respect of clearer of institution; but in respect of the ground, or reason why they get this name: which supposes an institution. If the sacrament of the supper, be called the Lord's supper, because instituted by him, for a special use, so must the Lord's day get his name on this reason; or some better or clearer reason from scripture must be given.

For the second, seeing that it gets this name to be called the Lord's day. It may be questioned here concerning our manner of speaking of days, calling the Lord's day Sunday, the next day after it Monday, &c. which hath the first rise from superstitition, if not from idolatry; some of them being attributed to planets, as Sunday and Monday; some of them to idols, as Thursday, &c. But to speak to the thing itself, look to the primitive times, we will find Sunday called the Lord's day; and the days of the week, by the first, second, third, &c. But the names of days, being like the names of places and months, folks must speak of them, as they are in use, and scripture warrants us so to do, Acts xvii. 22. Paul is said to fand in the midst of Mars-hill, Acts xxviii. 11. Speaketh of a ship, whose sign was Canopus and Pollux, So March, January, July, and August, are from the idols Mars and Junus; or derived from men that appropriate more than ordinary to themselves. And though it was ordinary to Christians, in the primitive times, to call this day the Lord's day among themselves; yet when they had dealing with the Jews, they called it sabbath; and when they had dealing with the Heathen they called it Sunday. And so, though it be best to speak of days as scripture nameth them; yet it is agreeable with scripture, to design or denominate them, as they are in use among a people, especially where no superstition use is in naming of them.

For the third, the sanctification of this day. It is pointed out in John his saying, he was in the spirit on the Lord's day. To point out this, that day requireth a special sanctification and letting apart to worship God. And there are four steps of it mentioned in the scripture: The 1. is, negative abstinence, not only from sin, but from our civil and ordinary affairs, which are lawful on other days, but not on this day, Ili. lvii. 13. The 2. is, positive: in devoting it to God, and spending the whole day in duties of worship, in reading, hearing, praying, singing, breaking of bread, or celebrating the communion, Acts xx. 7. And that not only in private duties, but in public: and in private, when the public is interrupted, except in
causes of necessity. 3. It should be spent in the duties of charity. Though the sanctification of this day cannot consist with working; yet may stand well with giving of alms, and seeing to the necessities of others, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. A fourth step is in the text. To have a holy sanctified frame, a divine stamp, a heavenly conversation, more than ordinarily taken up with God and Christ, and the things of another life that day. This is the main thing wherein the sabbath is to be sanctified, and wherein it represents heaven, to be abstracted from the world, and to be living above in our spirits, eminently ravished in spirit, as abstracted from things, we are to be taken up with on other days. The frame of a sabbath, should be a kind of ravishment, wherein not only we are not taken up with working our ordinary callings, but we do go about prayer and other spiritual duties in a more heavenly way, than on other days, and that with a difference in our frame, being more elevated and spiritual, we should be other men, in more divine contemplation. This is the main thing called for in sanctifying the sabbath: and therefore, Heb. iv. heaven is set out by the sabbath, wherein there ought not only to be a ceasing from our own works; but an entering into our rest, Heb. iv. 10, as it is (Isa. lviii. 13,) a delighting in God, calling the sabbath our delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable, the heart being taken up with it.

Remember from all that hath been said, this day is the Lord's day. And it faith that folks should spend it, not as they like, but for him, and about the duties of his service. It is not the sanctifying of the sabbath to spend an hour or two in public, and the rest of it in our own discourses pleasing and delightsome to ourselves. All days are God's; but he hath given you fix, and reserved the seventh to himself. Ye should be with him in the spirit on the Lord's day; which is the main use of all that hath been said.

Verse 10. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

JOHN hath in the Verses before, and in the beginning of this, put by the particular circumstances relating to this vision: we shall say no more of them. We come to the vision itself, in the rest of the chapter, with some circumstances, making way to John's writing what he saw.

We comprehended, under the vision, not only what is objected to the eye, or what John saw; but all that he sees or hears, whereby some new thing is represented to John, or that which he had heard or seen before, is again more clearly revealed, and made known to him, as it is used to be in the extraordinary Prophets, having God's mind several ways manifested to them.

This part of the vision hath three steps. 1. What John heard from the midst of ver. 10, to ver. 12. 2. What he did, ver. 12. And 3. Followeth what he saw, to ver. 17. The rest of the chapter, from ver. 17, hath some following effects and circumstances, to clear the vision and John's writing of it.

That which John heard, is three ways described. 1. In the nature of the voice, which he heard. 2. From the place where, or the manner or way how he heard it; the voice spake behind him. 3. The particular matter that was spoken. First, The nature of the voice which he heard, is set out with two words. 1. It is called a great voice. 2. It was a voice, as of a Trumpet, or like a trumpet.

A great voice, that is, a mighty sound, a voice
that made a great noise, as afterwards, ver. 15. His voice was the sound of many Waters, like the tumbling down of a great river over a high fall or precipice.

2. It was a voice as of a Trumpet, that is, 't. Not a confused or inarticulate sound, but a flatly voice, having a kind of Majesty with it. 2. Like a Trumpet giving a certain and distinct sound. And 3. Like a Trumpet, to stir up John to attention, to give him an alarm, to set him on his watch and guard, to observe what he law and heard. And it imports these four things, which might be so many grounds of doctrine. 1. The majesty of the person, who was speaking to John, that John may come and take him up; it is to show that it is no common person, but our Lord Jesus Christ, that is flatly in his coming. And this is the first thing that folks should have, when they come to hear the word, they should be affected with the majesty of him who speaketh, and consider it is his voice, who shaketh the heavens and the earth, that makes the Hind to calve, &c. Psal. xiii.

2. It is to point out to John the great distance between him and the person that speaketh to him, and to humble him, and to affect him with a humbling sense of his own infirmity. And these two go together, viz. an impression of the flatness and majesty of God, who speaketh; and an humble sense of infirmity in the creature. See it in Abraham, Gen. xviii. 27. 'Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' And verse 25. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' And they are also joined, Ezech. v. 1.

2. 'Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God: God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; let thy words be few.' 3. It is to put Job to a holy attention to hear, and to be watchful in hearing what he was to say to him: The Trumpet sounded, that he may be the better taken heed to when he speaks. And this also is a good property of hearers, when it is, Acts x. 33, we can say with Cornelius, 'We are all here present before God, to hear whatsoever things are commanded thee of God.' To be in a humble, watchful posture, having the heart laid open to whatsoever God will say, hanging on him as the phrase is, Luke xix. 48. 4. The sound of the Trumpet, is not only to awake to attention, but to put to action. It gives not only a distinct sound for direction, but it puts to doing; to point at the nature of our Lord's voice, and how it ought to be heard. It is not enough to hear, but there would be a suitableness to the voice heard, according as the Trumpet sounds distinctly, Folks would hear suitably, and welcome what is said, and conform their practice thereto; taking with convictions, challenges, directions to duties, promises &c. as the word giveth him. Therefore the preaching of the word, is compared to the sounding of a Trumpet, Acts xiv. 1.

3. 'Lift up thy voice like a Trumpet,' that is powerfully and distinctly. And as it supposes something on the ministers side, that he would have his voice Trumpet-like; so it supposes something on the side of the hearers, that they would conform their practice suitable to it, as Soldiers prepare themselves at the sound of a Trumpet, 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

The second circumstance is, the place where, or the manner how he heard the voice, it spoke behind him, it came not as before John, but as it were unawares, surprising him behind him. 1. The more to affect John with the sound, and to make him inquire in it. For the more surprising a thing be, it affects the more, and awakens the more to enquire into it. 2. That our Lord may even try John how he will carry himself in following the inquiry of the voice; and so to put John to pains to find it out. Therefore Isa. xxx: 11. it is said, 'Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee.' Partly, to signify that our backs are on God, when he speaks we are running away from him. Partly, to stir us up to turn our face about, as it were, and to enquire after what is spoken.

Verse 11. The third thing, is the matter spoken; and it contains two things 1. A description of the speaker, his title and name, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the last two words, are an exposition of the former two. 2. The commission John gets and the direction given him. First, Generally to write what he saw. And Second, More particular,
ly, to send it to the seven churches. For this title, we spake of it before verse 8.

It is our Lord assisting his own Godhead, as being the first, the beginning of all the creation of God actively, being of himself God essential, and giving a beginning and a being to all things that exist. John i. 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made: and the last end of all things: not only everlasting himself without end, but to whole honour are all things that have a beginning. He is the ultimate end, they are all from him.

Quest. Why is this title so often repeated?

Ans. Besides this general, that it is to hold out Christ's Godhead. Therefore, this and other such like titles, are so often given him in this book; which is of excellent use and benefit, to have this born in upon the hearts and minds of sinners. It is repeated here. 1. That John might know from whom he had this commission, even from him who had power to give him a commission both to speak and write, the first and the last. A thing that concerns ministers to know when they come out to preach the word, whose commission they have, that they take not this honour to themselves, nor from men, except in the ordinary way appointed by him; for except they have Christ's warrant, man's will not commissioneer them to go to churches and preach at their own hand. 2. It is also for the peoples cause to learn them to take the word off John's hand. It is not John's word, that cometh to them, but the word of Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. And it were good for us to so to speak, and good for you to hear the word. That fame Jesus Christ that gave John and the Apostles warrant to preach and write, it is that same Jesus Christ, that sendeth out pastors and teachers to preach; it is he that gives gifts to men for edifying the body, Eph. iv. 12. His warrant to both is one, and his authority commissioneerating both is one, and both are gifts for the churches good.

The second thing in this verse, is the commissioneer John gets. 1. in general, to write what he saw.

2. More particularly to send it to the seven churches.

1. Write what thou seest; that is not this vision only which thou hast seen, but all the words and circumstances thou hast seen, or shall see and hear. And so it is his first warrant to write this revelation, and, to send it to the churches. It points at the authority on which the written word is founded: it depends not on men, but on Jesus Christ that gives warrant to write: and we should look on the Bible, and every chapter thereof, as by Christ's direction written to us.

2. The matter we should write is restricted, write not every thing that pleaseth thee, but what thou seest. To point out the guiding and inspiration of the spirit in the holy men who wrote the scripture: they spake and wrote as they were inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost.

3. It shews, that there is need, that it is requisite, that men have a particular commissioneer to carry the word to the people: not only a commissioneer in general, to write or carry the gospel: but for every particular message. Not that men should be anxious, or perplexed about their warrant or commissioneer in an extraordinary way, but to weigh well the time, place, persons, and such circumstances as may clear their commissioneer in an ordinary way, there being some things to be written and sent to one church by Christ's warrant, which are not to to another, every church hath their particular message and commissioneer renewed.

2. More particulary, what he should do with it, when it is written in a book. Send it to the seven churches, that is, John this revelation is not to ly beside thee, but is for the benefit of the church; send it therefore to the seven churches in Asia. 1. Because most famous at that time, and because near to Patmos, where he was: and because it is probable John had some particular relation to them: and their need presently required it. This book of the Revelation, is sent for the benefit of the church, and therefore ought to be welcomed thankfully, as a rich Jewel.

We shewed before, why these churches were called seven, and not the church in Asia, verse 4.
fay no more of it now. These churches are particularly named. We shall not stand on geographical description of the places. Ephesus is spoken of at large, Acts xix. 20. This church and Smyrna, were in that Alia theofls, called Ionia, Pergamos in that part called Etolia, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia, in Lydia; and Laodicea in that part called Caïra, or Caria; which not being profitable to inlist upon, we shall take some general considerations from the words, and so proceed.

And, 1. It would be considered why these churches, are designated from the name of the cities wherein they were. We rather speak a word to this, because we find churches in the New Testament, named by towns. It is true the churches in Galatia are also named, but most frequently they are named by cities, as the church at Jerusalem, the church at Rome, the church at Corinth, &c. And Titus is to ordain elders in every city by Paul's appointment; which was for the city, and it is like also for the edification of these about, God making the gospel spread from cities to countries about, as it is said the word spread from Ephesus to all Alia, though there were other churches beside these, that were within the walls of these towns. The reasons of this we conceive to be,

1. Because the cities or towns, were most famous for their population, and were well furnished with officers; and there was most occasion for getting a harvest of souls in them, by spreading the net of the gospel among them, in respect of which accidental and politic considerations, which belong not to the offence of a church, some cities being more famous and able to keep the word of truth, and make it forth-coming to other churches. It is not unagreeable to scripture, to have particular respect to cities, and churches in them, as they may further the work of the gospel. 2. Because in these great cities, and places of concourse the ministers and officers of the church, who served in the work of the Lord, and went round in a circuit in the churches about, had their most ordinary residence as would seem, and that their fixed collegiate meetings and combinations were there. 3. Because we find no particular congregations men-

tioned, but only the church at such a town written unto, though there were many particular congregation about, and these cities kept not the word within themselves. 2. Where they are mentioned, as the church at Jerusalem; it taketh in only these within the walls, but all the churches in Judea; so Corinth takes in Cenchrea &c.

2. Consider those churches as once given to idolatry. Ephesus was famous, or rather infamous for that, Acts xix. yet now Christ esteemeth them all churches, belows an epistle upon them, holding out, 1. His love. 2. The power of his grace and gospel. 3. The sovereignty and freeness of his grace, breaking in on the kingdom of sin and Satan amongst them, and that Christ can win in churches to himself, out of the most profane heathenish and idolatrous cities and people.

3. Consider these cities are respected by Christ, and it is not because they are cities; but because they are churches: which makes them to be preferred before others, is the churches in them. And this is it that maketh places carry respect with Jesus Christ, more than all the glancing victories and glory of the world.

4. Consider them, as they are some of them more, and some of them les, yet none of them are called les or more churches. Ephesus was where were many thousands, is but a church, as Smyrna, and other lefer towns are; the reason is, the scripture goes not upon multitude, and external considerations of that kind, but upon the upcity that is among ministers and officers which is not affected to one particular congregation; and where it is, it makes an union among many, as amongst few, and amongst few as amongst many.

5. Consider that the number of these churches is according to the places where they were fixed, and where the members did inhabit; which shews that parochial marches by bounds or towns in convenient lying, is not unsuitable, but consonant to scripture; wherefore the church of Ephesus, or of any certain place, includeth all the professors living there; they are accounted of that church and no other, as Pro-
vidence hath put them together, and the churches are divided as they live sundry. No indweller of Ephesus, is accounted of the church of Smyrna, or contrarily; order in this, being well consistent with the gospel. And as we will not find mention made in scripture, of two churches in one place, whatever the number be, (save when they are subdivided, as 1. Cor. xiv.) So we will not find any faint spoken of, as belonging to any congregation, but as they dwell, and the church at such a place, and saints of such a place, are still taken to be of the like extent.

6. Consider some of them were more corrupt, others of them were more pure, yet he writes an epistle to them all; some hath a name that are living, when they are dead, some are fallen from their first love, some have in them those that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, some are lukewarm, &c. Yet they are all of them owned as churches, and written unto. 1. Because our Lord looks on them, as having that which made them to have the evidence of visible churches; and in so far he gives them the name, though many defects were in them; and therefore intitles them so. He stands not to give Laodicea the title of a church to him, which many, it may be, would scarcely count worthy the name of Christians. 2. Because our Lord’s way, is not at first to give up with churches, and persons, who are joined to him in church relations; but to press upon them to be forthcoming to their obligations. He says not, ye are no churches, but reckons them churches; and on that ground, founds his promises, threatenings and directions; and gives them reproofs for what is wrong, and his advice to amend the same: an excellent way of dealing, to have churches answerable to their obligation, and not cast them off. Rejection is the last thing used when neither threatenings, promises, reproofs, nor directions have place to do them good. And we may say it on the by, it is Christ’s prerogative to remove candelsticks, and dissolve ties between him and churches.

7. Consider these churches as they are now, comparing them with what they were once; Golden Candelsticks, now dens for Mahomet. The God-

head of Christ once written of to them, now trampled on. Which shews, 1. How doeful a thing it is to despise warnings. 2. To what a height church defection may come to: when there is not a healing in time; when fallen from the first love is not taken heed to, it may come to make a church no church. These churches were once as glorious as ever Glasgow was, and more, Paul writing to sundry of them, and here John to them all; yet for contempt of the gospel God breaks the flaves of beauty and bands, and they are no churches to him. Tremble to think upon it.

8. Consider that John now in prison writes; the Church is obliged to John’s imprisonment. We now have more writings by the Apostles epistles from their prisons, than we have from their liberty, God making this good use of man’s malice.

9. He repeats his commission, not only in general, but to every church, as their peculiar message was, that he might bear out his commission in his dealing with them; that they might know the warrant they had to hear him. Neither ministers ought to speak, nor people to hear, except they be warranted; there is an unwarrantableness in hearing as there is in speaking, Prov. xix. 27. And people would make conscience in hearing, that it be not done indifferently; and there would not be indifferent accept for all to preach, nor for hearing, but as the Lord warrants.

Lecture VI.

Verse 12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden Candelsticks:

13. And in the midst of the seven Candelsticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the Paps with a golden girdle.

14. His Head and his Hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a Flame of Fire.
Verse 15. And his Feet like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace.

THE second circumstance, or step, of the first part of the vision, is what John did, verse 12.; or his carriage when he heard the voice, spoken of before, verse 10. I turned to see the voice that spake. A voice is not properly the object of sight, but it is two ways to be understood. 1. Either John turned him, that is, gave pains more clearly to perceive and understand that which was spoken. For seeing in scripture, it is often so taken, for a more clear uptaking and understanding of a thing; and to the meaning is, John having heard the voice behind him, he leads to his ear to take up better. Or, 2. It may look to John’s desire, to see him that spake; and to, he turned, not to see the voice, but the speaker: and on the back of this, the heavenly vision is prefixed to him. And being turned, I saw seven golden Candlesticks. Follows what John saw upon his turning about; he gets this vision. Folks that go about the use of the means seriously, minding edification, they readily profit.

Let us speak to that which properly is the vision. It holds out, or there are Holden forth in it, three things. 1. The church is holden out under the similitude of a candlestick, or the seven churches of Asia, under the similitude of seven golden candlesticks, so they are expounded, verse 19. 2. The ministers of the churches, are holden out under the similitude of seven stars, verse 16. So are they expounded in the 20, verse also. We shall forbear any further exposition or speaking of them, till we come to that place. The main thing in the vision is our Lord Jesus represented these ways. First, In his offices. Secondly, In his excellent qualifications for his discharging them. Thirdly, In his care of his churches and actual executing of his offices, and exercising of his qualifications for the good of his churches and ministers. He is among the one walking, and holding the other in his hand, and hath a sword going out of his mouth, for the good of both.

Quest. 1. Whether is it Christ that appears and speaks here, or not? The reason of the doubt, is from verse 1. Where it is said, Jesus Christ sent and signified these things by his Angel.

Answ. It is he that appears and speaks here to John, who gave him the commission to write; and certainly it was no Angel that gave John commission to write, and send it to the seven churches; but it is Jesus Christ who intitles himself before, to be the first and the last. No Angel can give commission, nor take upon him these titles and offices, but Jesus only. 2. It is clear also to be Christ from the parts of the description, and from the particular charge that Christ is holden out to have, viz. in having a care of the churches, in holding the stars in his hand, and sending a sword out of his mouth. Who can do these but Christ? 3. From the seven epistles, which begin with some part of this description, as belonging to him. He is still filled by some part of it. Chap. 2. and 3.

Quest. 2. Whether doth Jesus Christ appear here really in his man-hood? Or is it only a representation of him in a vision, for signifying and holding forth the excellent properties and qualifications that are in him, as sometime God appeared of old to weak man, condescending to his capacity for his comfort, as Dan. vii. 9. and sometime Christ, as Dan. x. 5. to which this vision becometh to relate?

Answ. We take it not for any real Apparition of Christ in his humanity, or as he was man conceived in and born of the virgin Mary, crucified dead and buried, and in that nature risen again and ascended; but we take it only to be a representation, or vision of the glorious properties and qualifications, and lately majesty of the Son of God, who was, and is, and is to come, the first and the last; who as he is God, so also was, and is man, but doth not now appear in his human nature, but as God. Reason 1. Because in substance it is the same vision that we find, Dan. vii. 7. and x. 5. where God, and Christ, as God, are holden out under the same expressions. And if these expressions cannot be applied in these places, to signify the parts of a human body, (which God hath not, for he is a
Spirit) there can be no reason why the same expressions here should be applied to the parts of a body.

2. It is clear also, if we look to the end, which Jesus Christ hath before him in this representation. He being to direct seven epistles to the seven churches in Asia, he sets himself out by some excellent properties, to ground the faith of his people, and move them to reverence, receive, and give obedience to what he writes unto them. 3. Look through all this vision, it cannot be applied literally; the seven churches, cannot be seven candlesticks; the seven ministers, cannot be seven stars, &c. but it is to evidence the excellent qualifications that are in Christ, under these representations. And therefore what some would draw from this, or other representations of this kind, concerning Christ's body on earth, or the ubiquity of his humanity, or bodily presence with his churches; or for protracting of his body, (as Winckelmanns, and other Lutherans alleged;) hath no ground from this place, but rather the contrary. If Christ appeared after his ascension, no otherwiser than he did before his incarnation, he would take away all carnal thoughts of his bodily presence on earth.

4. It is said, *one like unto the Son of Man.* And this holds out, he was not indeed man in this vision; but appeared to John, as he did to Daniel, some way representing himself so. But, 5. The application and exposition of many of these expressions, Chap. 2 and 3, holding forth his eyes, to signify his omniscience, and the like, will shew the absurdity of this. But to come to the three parts of the description, more particularly: wherein as we said, 1. We have his offices and authority. 2. His qualifications for executing these offices. 3. His care of his churches, and his actual executing of his offices, and exercising of his qualifications for the good of them, and his ministers.

First, His offices and authority are represented; his kingly and priestly, princely offices, under his garments: his prophetic office, by the sword that proceeded out of his mouth.

Long garments, were especially used by two sorts of persons, kings and priests, Exod. xxviii. 29. Aaron the high priest, and his sons, have holy garments appointed them; and the high priest was to have a long robe curiously sewed and embroidered. So also, long garments, were for a sign of authority and reverence, and Christ cauls that up to the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. xxiii. 5, Mark xii. 38. And Christ was clothed with a purple robe; which was a special robe, denoting great men from others, though they did it in derision to him.

He is clothed about the paps with a golden girdle. A girdle that hath two utes, 1. It is used for binding the long robe, for binding it up, that it might not be cumberlome to men in their employment, Luke xvi. 8. 'Gird up thy loins, and serve me.' 2. A golden girdle, signifying authority and eminence, fo the girdles of kings signified, Isa. xxi. 21. When Eliakim is constituted a ruler, it is said, 'I will cloath him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle.' And what is meant by that, is expounded in the following words, 'I will commit the government unto his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah, and I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder: he shall open, and none shall shut,' &c. This girdle of Christ is spoken of, Isa. xi. 5, 'Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.' The expression holdeth out these three things, which we conceive to be understood by it. 1. The authority and warrantableness of our Lord Jesus Christ his kingly and princely office, as that which followeth, doth of his prophetic office; hereby letting us know, that our Lord Jesus his being in heaven, and in glory, had not made him lay by his offices, or the executing of them; but he remains king and priest for ever, Psa. cxv. even in heaven he bears his offices to his churches. 2. That our Lord Jesus Christ, not only bears these offices, but in an excellent and glorious manner; there is no such king, no such priest, no such prophet as he. So whatsoever belongs to any of his offices, or any part of any of them, he would have his people looking to him as eminent therein. He is a king, ruling in righteousness, stately in majesty.
and dominion; a priest that continueth for ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood; and is able to have all them, to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he lives for ever to make intercession for them: and such an high priest becomes us, who is holy, and harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,' Heb. vii. 24, 25, 26. He is a prophet, such as hath no equal; none teacheth like him. Therefore it becometh us not only, not to have low thoughts of Christ, as bearing those offices; but to think of him as being eminent and glorious in them, and all that concerns them.

3. It holds out that our Lord Jesus his flattness and glory, doth not marr, or hinder him in the application of his offices, and executing them for the good of his church: but for as stately as he is, for authority, having on his long robe, and being girded with a girdle, yet his garment is so trenched and girded, as he is fitted for his employment, and to make use of his offices, for the benefit of souls. (See John xiii. 3) as ever he did when he was on earth. Christ's greatness and glory, is so far from unfitting him for the discharge of his offices, that he hath robes compacted and himself so fitted, as he may handsomly go about the discharge of them, being still girded, though the girdle be of gold.

The second part of the description, verse 14, is his qualifications for his offices, set out under the particular parts of a body. First, Head and his Hair were like wool. This would not agree to Christ's manhood in all appearance, he not having some of that age, at which men use to become white-haired. It is an application of, or an allusion to that of Dan. vii. 9. if not taken out of it. And the reason of the allusion, is, to set out, 1. The eternity of Christ's Godhead; and though he was, and is man; yet before the world was, he was, and is the eternal God, without beginning, that white hairs of the hair, being spoken of God to set out his eternity. He is not from yesterday, as poor creatures are; but from everlasting, though his eternity maketh no change or alteration on him, as age doth on men. 2. It sets out our Lord Jesus his wisdom and experience, and the reverence that is due to him. He is set out as one having gray hairs, being eminently endued with wisdom and experience, as old men use to be in comparison of others, and as these of younger years usually are not. Therefore Dan. vii. 9. he is called the 'antient of days,' which expounds his appearing with white hairs Isa. xli. 2. 'The spirit of the Lord rests upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord.

The second part of this qualification, is in his eyes. His eyes were as a Flame of Fire. He is also thus set forth, Dan. x. 6. These eyes point out the omnipotence of Christ, who as God, seeth every thing. And they are said to be like unto a Flame of Fire, partly because of their piercing nature. That as all things are naked before him and bare, so he seeth thoroughly, in through and out through them all. All things are lying open and as it were, embowed before his eyes, Heb. iv. And partly because of the dreadfulness and terribleness that will arise from his omnipotence to the wicked of the world. His, and his churches enemies, nothing will be more terrible to them, than a glance of Christ's eye, whereby he can destroy worlds of them, as when he looked down on Sodom and Gomorrah, fire and brimstone followed his eye, and destroyed them.

The third part of his description, is verse 15. His feet is like unto fine Brass. This is excellent brass, glittering brass, nearest unto Gold, as being some way mixed with it. And these feet of brass, point out not only his power, but especially his ways and counsels, and dispensation toward his people in ordering of his churches, God's paths and ways being the manner of his guiding of the world. So Christ's feet do signify his stepping up and down in his church, ordering all things well, wisely, and holily to his glorious ends. And consequently, his dispensations, whereby he makes his presence manifest among his people.

1. Theses feet are said to be like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a furnace. To point out, 1. That all his dispensations are pure and perfect. 2. Excellent and firm, solid and; durable there is no
prevailing by the gates of hell against them. They are pure and spotless and clean; no iniquity is in them, Deut. xxxii. 4. ‘He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.’ We think this to be the meaning here. His ways in his church, his stepping up and down in it, are pure and spotless, firm and solid; all on-lookers cannot mark a spot in them, they cannot be mended, or bettered, or hurried, he so tickly sets them down. It serves to hold forth the flatness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bring our hearts to a holy awe and reverence of him. O that folks knew what he were, they would walk in more awe and reverence, before and with him who is such a flatly person! Love, reverence, and admire Jesus; there is no such flatly and lovely person in the world; submit to him he will do no wrong. Contend not with him, for on he will go; so tickly sets he down his steps, like pillars of brafs. The reasons of these explications, will appear more, in the inscription of the epistles, Chap. 2. and 3.

**LEcTURE VII.**

Verse 15. And his voice as the sound of many waters. 16. And he had in his right hand seven Stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged Sword; and his countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength.

I told you that this vision doth not represent the body of our Lord Jesus, or his human nature; but it is to point out his divine qualifications, wherewith he was furnished as God-man in one Person, for the good of his church. And these things spoken of, as parts of a body, bear out some resemblance and analogy of these qualifications that are in him, far beyond any thing that can be conceived.

The fourth property or qualification, is, His voice; which is said to be as the sound of many waters. It was said in the 10th. ver. to be a great voice like a Trumpet; there it is said to be like the sound of many waters, both high and great, heard afar off, and very terrible and dreadful. By his voice, in scripture is understood mainly two things, both which may well relate to this resemblance. 1. His effectual willing and commanding of things to be, as it is said, He spake, and it was done; be commanded and it stood fast, (Gen. 1.) Let there be light, and it was light. For, Christ as God, hath not a voice properly; but the voice, being that by which a man signifies his command and will, and being here attributed to Christ as God, it is to point out his effectual willing, and bringing that forth which he would have done: and to points at the effectualness of Christ's government. There is nothing called for by him, but it cometh to pass; nothing commanded but is done, and that with a word. 2. It is taken for the manifestation of God's terribleness and majesty, Psal. xviii. 13. ‘The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the highest gave his voice; hailstones and coals of fire.’ In which sense, it is applied to the thunder: because, by it he manifests his power, and shews himself terrible. Hence there is so much spoken of his voice, Psal. xxvii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. ‘The voice of the Lord, &c.’ To shew not only the powerful effects of the voice of God in the thunder, and the way that it produceth its effects; but the terribleness and majesty of God who hath such a voice, that as it is, Hag. ii. 6. ‘Can make heaven and earth;’ which is to point out his dreadfulness, and terribleness, against the enemies of his church. If he speaks the word, they evanish; one word of this kind will make the stoutest Tyrant to quake, as is clear from scripture, and the story of the former times.

A fifth qualification, is verse 16. He had in his right hand seven Stars. The seven Stars are expounded in the last verse, to be the ministers of the churches. And the reasons of it we forbear, till we come to that: only here our Lord Jesus is said to have a right hand, that is power, and skill, and activity in exercising his power: for the right hand, is the strongest
hand, and that by which men skilfully and dexterously go about the bringing to pass of that which they would be at. He hath not power and fury, but power and skill, and with power and skill he manages all his matters. Believers' hath not a handleless Mediator, (so to speak,) he hath hands, as well as feet. But more of this in the third thing contained in this description.

Sixthly, He is described further, Out of his mouth went a two-edged Sword. Whereby is meant the word of God, especially the gospel. His voice spake of before, is more general, relating to his universal power and sovereignty over all the world. This relates more particularly, to the written and preached word, called 'the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God,' Eph. 6. and 'sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing between the joints and the marrow, the soul and the spirit and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart,' Heb. iv. The word is compared to a sword, and a two-edged sword, for these reasons, 1. Because of the power of it: it hath a discerning, piercing, penetrating power with it, to come in on hearts; and to discover the thoughts and intents of the heart, when Christ blest it, and maketh it strike at the roots of corruption, it will humble the proud heart, and quicken the dead spirit, and pierce through the soul and conscience of the most obdurate person, as Acts 2. Peter's preaching did prick his hearers. This is the saving and proper effect of the word, when it anathematizes folks, and layeth open their thoughts, their security, pride, formality, &c. and strikes at the root of the body of death, to kill it, and be its death. 2. Because of the effect it hath among carnal hearers and hypocrites: in which respect we think it is especially looked on here, as afterwards in the epistle to Pergamos, chap. 2. verse 12. and 16. 'I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.' This sword when rightly handled, proves a torture to the wicked men in the world, when it discovers their rottenness, so it is said of the two faithful witnesses, Rev. xi. 10. that they 'tormented them that dwelt on the earth;' the word of God was so sharp in their mouths, that it did hew (Isa. vi. 5.) their minds and consciences, and galled them at the heart; so (Acts vii.) it is said, Stephen's hearers were 'cut in their heart and grieved upon him with their teeth;' they could not abide the plainness of evidence of the word accompanied with power. 3. Because it hath a further cutting virtue to wicked men, when it proves through God's justice, plaguing to their hearts and minds; and hath an instrumental efficacy for their flaying, when God draws out the sentence, and gives the word an edge, and makes it cut; and in his justice, to promote their destruction, Isa. xi. 4. 'With the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.' 1 Kings xix. 17. 'Him that escapeth the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay;' and Hof. vi. 5. 'I hewed them by my Prophets, and slew them by the words of my mouth, through God's pronouncing of sharp threatenings, and their corruption abating the threatenings, becomes their death. 2. This sword is said to proceed out of his mouth: to point out where-from the force, efficacy and power of the word cometh, when it pierceth. It is not the word, as it is written, or spoken by men's mouth, but as it proceedeth out of Christ's mouth, which makes it profitable or convincing; and it is this which makes sinners guilty of great, and tormenteth hypocrites when he addeth weight with it, to thwart their corruption, and they repine against it.

The last qualification is his countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength. Whereby is meant the love that he sheweth to his people, and the glory and majesty that is in himself, Psal. iv. 5. 'LORD lift up the light of thy countenance upon us; that is, the manifestation of thy love.' And Psal. lxxx. the crying of his face to shine, is several times spoken of. And this favour and lovely majesty of Christ, is compared to the sun shining: not as in the morning, or at even, nor under a cloud, but in his strength. 1. Because of the glorious majesty that is in it, as Chap. v. 15. of the song, 'His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars;' there is an excellency and beauty in it that dazzles and obscures all the excellency and beauty of the world even as the light of the sun.
obscures the stars. 2. Because of the lightfulness of it: for, Christ is to believers, as the sun is to the world, John i. 9. 'He is that true light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.' Light both for direction and consoation, and that is a third reason of the similitude. His countenance is as the Sun, shining in his strength, for the refreshingness of it, Psal. iv. 6, 7. His countenance maketh the heart more glad than corn, and wine, and worldly comforts whatsoever. 4. His countenance is compared, from the effectual influence it hath on believers growth: even as the sun hath influence on the growing of corn, grapes, trees, herbs, and all things in the inferior world: so Christ's countenance hath influence on believers growth in all things. Therefore, Mal. iv. 2. It is said 'The Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing under his wings to such as fear his name, and they shall go forth and grow up as calves in the stall.' His presence and favour, hath a real and effectual influence on all that are united to him as the sun in his strength, hath on herbs and plants. We point but at these things, which are infinite in themselves. O that necessity of union with Christ! O the excellency of that condition of being near to him! He is our light, there is no living without him; and how lightfoe is it, to walk with him, and dwell in him!

The third thing in the description is Christ's actual exercising of his offices and qualifications for the good of his churches and ministers, which are the objects about which his care is especially exercised, holden out in these two. 1. He walks among the golden candlesticks. And, 2. He keeps the stars in his right hand, that is in his work and great employment, as verse 13, 16, and chap. ii. verse 1.

His walking among the golden candlesticks, points out, 1. His special presence in his church: though he be omnipresent through all the world, yet he hath a special manifestation of his presence in his church; and there is a special relation between him and them, as it is spoken of Israel, Psal. civi. 19. compared with Deut. iv. 7. 'What nation is there is so great, hath God so near them in all things,' &c. He is near to his church in a singular manner, in the special effects of his presence. 2. It points out his special care of his church; he chooseth his church as the pleasant place in all the world to walk in; and he taketh pleasure there, as in his garden and gallery. His common providence is extended to all the world, but he taketh special notice, and hath a special care of his church above all the world, Isa. xviii. 3. 'I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day,' See Isa. xxxiii. 3, 4, 5. It points out his special taking notice of, and observing the carriage of his church, and of all within the same. He knoweth all the world, and the thoughts, words, and actions of every one, all projects, counsels, and events before they come; but in a special manner he taketh notice of all his church, how the work of grace thriveth in his people; what fruit his ordinances have among them, who are making progress, who are backsliding, what is the particular posture of every soul, to lend off luvian branches to purge out what is corrupt, to help forward what is right, to prevent any prejudice that may come unto them; to fore-see and provide for any thing as it may be for their good. Which shews, 1. What a great benefit it is to be a member of this church; if it be a mercy to be under his special and singular care, it must be no small privilege and benefit to be a member of his church. 2. It letteth us see what manner of persons we ought to be, who have Christ's presence so near us, nearer than all the world beside; when ever we are in the ordinances, we would take up Christ, as walking amongst the midst of us; and in all our conversation, apprehend him at our ear: it both calls for holiness from us, and layeth watchfulness on us, knowing how narrowly he taketh notice of us. 3. It points out how inexcusable, faults and failings of those who live in the church, are; Christ walks among them; and yet they stand not averse of him: the signs of his presence are always with them; and yet they take no notice of them; the nearer the signs of his presence, and his special care be, the greater is our sin, if it have not influence on us.
4. It points at Christ's tenderness and care for the comfort of them that dare not trust themselves, but commit themselves to him, and trust to his care and tenderness. He feeth well to all his churches, and every particular person's condition, and is never from them. His being in heaven, hath not made him lay by his care of his people. This were a great conflation, if we would singly make use of it. Matth. xxviii: 'Lo I am with you to the end of the world;' and he keeps his promise.

The other word, his **holding the stars in his right hand**, holds out his care to his ministers: the meaning is, that as he walks in the midst of his churches, and takes specific care of them: so he takes a specific care of the ministers of all these seven churches, and so of the ministers of all the churches. And under this is holden out, 1. The difficulty of the ministers station; they are not able to stand there alone, except they be upheld by Christ: partly, because of the malice and opposition of men, and devils that by wicked men seek to ruin and overturn the church and work of God in their hands; the venting of their malice begins at them: and partly, because of the greatness of the burden and charge, that lies on them: and partly also for their own infirmities, etc. 2. It points out the Lord's specific care of them, according to their station, strait, and charge: as their charge is great, and their difficulties great and many, so he exercises his power for their direction, defence, defence and protection. He hath care of all the world, but more especially of his churches; but for his churches sake, he hath most of all, a specific care: to his ministers, who are called the messengers of the church and the glory of Christ, I Cor. viii: they being the men that he makes use of for the handling of his sword, and subduing of souls to him. They often meet with little effusion from men, and walk among many snares and dangers: therefore he holds out his care and the application of his power, especially to encourage and strengthen them to duty in the midst of these snares and difficulties. 3. By **His holding them in his right hand**, he points at that dependency that ministers ought to have on Jesus Christ; they should go about their duty, as in his hand, depending on his strength and power, rather than ought in themselves, for the performing of the task committed to them.

1. This is for special conflation in evil times, that Christ hath such a care of his ministers and churches; let the devil pluck again and again to have a ministry down, sometimes by force, sometimes by flight, it will not be, they are stars, and in Christ's hands; sooner will stars be plucked from heaven, than they from him.

Christ's care of his church, kyth in his caring for his ministers. The right care of the one, is carried along with the right care of the other: and it is not a right care of churches, where there is not a respect to ministers. Christ knoweth the good and the ill of the one, stands and falls with the good and the ill of the other: there is such a connexion between them, and such a fitness, they are so interrelated the one in the other, that according as the one is, so is the other; ordinarily, if the minister be carnal and secure, so is the flock; and if the minister be in a lively temper, there will also be some life among the flock. And if we speak in reverence to those that have enmity at the church, hatred against the church is vented, and beginneth at hatred against the ministry. It is impossible to be careful of Christ's church, and despise and hate his ministers, to overturn a ministry.

3. It shews that there is a respect due to them that Christ puts in this place; and where Christ hath put respect, it becometh us to put respect also; there should be a sympathy with them, and a reverencing of them, if it were for no more but for this cause that he keeps them in his right hand. Respect to him, should make respect to them. It is a strange religion, to profess respect to churches and faints, and show so little to ministers: Christ never did fo.
Lecture VIII.

Verse 17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last.

18. I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen.

Ye have heard of this vision, which John saw: the Lord beginneth with it at the entry of this task of writing this book of the Revelation: to implant on him a stamp and impress of his own excellency, as a preparation and fitting of him for the work; even as he began with Isaiah, chap. vi. and with Ezekiel, chap. i. Bearing out, by three visions, and representation of his glory and majesty, thereby to fit and qualify them for their duty; for they are fittest to bear God's message, and to describe him to others, that are thus prepared, and qualified, and have some reverence and awe of God imprinted on their own hearts.

From the 27th. ver. and forward to the end, we have some confinements that followed this vision, or some circumstances for the edification of the church, for clearing of the vision before mentioned, and for making way for John's writing what he saw. And they are four in number.

1. The effect, which the vision had on John, in the beginning of verse 17. for as stately and lovingly as Jesus Christ represented himself he could not bear it; but faints when he sees him, and he falls at his feet as dead. 2. A confederation proposed by our Lord to John, which hath several steps in the latter part of verse 17. and 18. whereas in as John kithed weaknesses, so Christ kithed much love, tenderness, skillfulness in applying an effectual remedy, for curing the dilaceration John was into. 3. A repetition of John's commission and warrant to write ver. 19. And 4. An explication of that part of the vision, concerning the meaning of the seven golden candlesticks and the stars, verse 20.

1. And when I saw him, I fell down at his feet as dead. This is the first confession or effect of the vision, I fell down as dead. That is, I was blemished as it were and damned with the light of the excellent majesty and glory that I saw in him, and I was put out of capacity to act the acts of body or mind, as if I had been dead; I could know no more exercise, or act the acts of a living man, than a dead man can. Dan. chap. x. 8, 9. And it hath been often seen in the best of God's children, when more than ordinary representations of God hath been let forth, they have been as dead men, unfit for action. And it proceeds from two grounds. 1. From the exceeding great distance, that is betwixt the infinite majesty of God and finite creatures, the brightness of the glory and majesty of God the creator burdeneth and overburdeneth the weaknesses and infirmity of the best of creatures. For if the eyes of creatures be that weak, that they cannot look on the sun, what wonder that flesh and blood is not able to look on the Son of righteousness. This new wine is too strong for our old bottles. 2. From the fear of a begun quarrel, and grounds of a continued quarrel then apprehended, making not only a disproportion, through infirmity, betwixt the majesty of God and the creature, which is so many ways defective to comprehend him; but also making a disconformity through sin, and so a fear to appear before him: which makes the creature fear undoing, as in Isa. vi. 5. Wo is me, I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. For though before the fall, when God and Adam were friends, he could have endured God to speak to him; yet after the fall, the appearance of God is terrible to him: when he hears his voice, he is afraid, and runs and hides himself. And there is something of this fear, that sticketh to the beast; a fear that rileth from the sight of sin, which neareth to God doth discover. And it is like that something of both these grounds were in John, as may be gathered from our Lord's application of the remedy, and
the grounds whereupon he goes in comforting him, 'He layeth his hand on him, and strengtheneth him, and faith, fear not, &c. Whereby it seemeth, 1. John conceived, from a distemper of mind, Christ would reckon with him, and with Peter, Luke v. 8. fear (as a finful and profane perfon in his own account) his being so near such a glorious and holy majesty. And 2. This distemper of mind kynth, and hath influence on his body, and maketh him fall down at his feet; not out of reverence, to worship him, but being overthrown with the excessiveness of fear, that mattered and overcame him, he cannot stand up, but falleth down as dead.

1. This sets out to us the great disproportion, that is betwixt creatures and the majesty of God; the beloved disciple John, cannot stand before him when he kynth, but falleth down as dead. Isa. xl. 15, 17, and xli. 11, 12, 24. All nations are as nothing before him, or as the dust in the balance; a little nearness to God, should leave a stamp of humility, and an impression of the majesty and excellency of God upon us. This is one of the fountain graces, humility, and an holy awe of the majesty of God: and this is the way to come to it, to get a right light of that excellent majesty that is in him. 2. Reverence and admire God's wife and well ordered governing of this world, especially these things that concern his church and people: wonder that God hath carved out such a way in the works of creation and providence, and in the dispensation of the gospel, and mysteries of salvation suitable to our weakness, and so there may communion kept with him, Job xxvi. It is made one of the flatteries of his power, that he 'holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.' He draweth the veil of the firmament before his throne, to keep his glory from breaking forth, and eating up men. And in the dispensation of the gospel, he hath chosen the ministry of weak men to reveal his mind by them to us; and spake not immediately himself because we could not bear it. If ye heard him once speak, as he did on mount Sinai, ye would say as Israel did 'Let not God speak to us, lest we die.' And this way of re-

vealing himself, should be so far from making us cast at it, that it should make us wonder at his condescendance in hedging up himself as it were for our good.

3. It lets us see how much we are in reverence, that deals to tenderly with us, when a little glimpse of his glory, a looking of his eye, a drawing by of the veil, would kill us, and make us as if we had never been. 4. It sheweth us also, that humility and reverence even in the best of God's people, is often ready to degenerate into servile fear and discouragement. The worshiping of Jesus Christ in humble reverence, was a duty called for from John; yet this distemper of excessive fear, was not called for. Such is our weaknesses, and the flipneriness of our walking, that hardly can we keep the right path; but deviate to one side or other. Our faith is ready to degenerate into preoccupation; and our humility to fainting and depondency of spirit, and our fear to discouragement, heartlessness and daylight; our corruption is ready to abuse any thing. For though there be no excess in these graces, yet there may be in us excess in the exercise thereof, by reason of the corruption that is in us.

The second thing, Christ's tender care of John under this fit; when he falls at his feet as dead, he comforts him. And this is set down in three steps, 1. He laid his right hand upon him, as a sign of his kindness, for his encouragement. 2. Giveth him a general word of exhortation, for his comfort, fear not. 3. He giveth him three general grounds why he should not fear, to support his faith. Observe, in general, our Lord Jesus his exceeding tenderness of folks especially in their fits of fainting and discouragement, which ariseth through their mistaking, or wrong uptaking of him. First, It points at the exceeding tenderness and effectualness of his care, that on the back of this fit, layeth on his hand and faileth, fear not; that taketh him at this nicker of his distemper, and raiseth him. Secondly, What is the great ground of consolation that is propounded? it is a holding forth of himself, I am the first and the last. And it lets us see when folks fears at Christ, and discourages and faints through their mistaking of him; there is no such way of curing that distemper and p
mislike, as by a right uptaking of him. The note hath these two branches. 1. That the great ground of our mistaking of Christ, is our ignorance of him, in his offices and worth. 2. That the right curing of that mistake is the right knowledge and uptaking of him.

It says thus, that when souls are fainted and discouraged, Christ is both the cure and the curer. He must lay on his hand and speak the word. He is the cure that is applied, and the physician that applieth it; he toucheth, and speaketh, and the cure followeth. This also sheweth, 1. That there are some kind of bodily exercises, that arise from a diffuseness of the mind that so weakeneth the body that none can cure but Christ; and this of discouragement and fainting is one.

2. It sheweth to believers their necessity of having the word out of Christ’s mouth for their encouragement, ere they can shake off discouragement. He hath gotten the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary soul. If he were more waited on in ordinances, and if the word was taken as from his mouth we should come better speed than we do, and profit more by the ordinances. 3. More particularly, his right hand, is his power: and his laying it on John, is not any personal touch, but an inward strengthening and uplifting, as Daniel, Dan. x. 10. "Behold an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, that is, some power for my strengthening and comfortable uplifting. And Psal. cxxxviii. 3. David fayeth, "In the day when I cried, thou answerest me: and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul," which is the communicating of inward strength, to keek him unfinking under the sad condition he was in. 1. It points out what our need is; our weakness and discouragement is often such, that we have need not only of comfort, but of strength. 2. It points at Christ’s way of dealing with souls, that will sometimes strengthen, ere he comforts; first lay on his hand, and then let the word of comfort, fear not, come behind. He seeth this meet, and it is a main evidence of Christ’s tendereness, faithfulness, and wisdom, that takes this way with his people.

The second step of Christ’s care, is his laying, fear not: a word that is often used and repeated in the Prophets, especially, Isa. xli., xliii., lxiv., and lvi. chapters. Observe, 1. There is an excessive fear that God alloweth not in his people. Every thing that passeth for fear and humility, should not be admitted. Christ fayeth to John fear not: which hath three marks from his experience. 1. It is a degenerating fear that breeds mistakes of Christ, and fears them at him, that weakens and faints them in their fellowship with him. Christ alloweth not John’s fear to the manner of that. 2. It makes folks uncapable of hearing or receiving a message from Christ, so that when he speaketh, they are benumbed, senseless and dead, having ears but hear not; and locketh them so up that no word taketh hold of them. Christ alloweth not this in John. 3. It obviates, obstructs and marreth in the discharge of that duty that Christ calls to. When John is called to write the vision, he falleth as dead; therefore Christ fayeth fear not, but rife up and write; thou art called to reverence and fear me, but such a fear as may stand well with thy duty, and further thee and doth not hinder thee in it. And we would learn not to fear, in so far as it works any of these effects. Observe, 2. When fear exceeds, degenerates, and growth excessive in these three spoken of, our Lord alloweth it no more, than he doth proud security; only Jesus Christ, is much more tender of souls under the one, nor he is under the other; yet let us not please ourselves in these excessive fits, as if we were in no hazard. Observe, 3. It fayeth, that folks would be tender in dealing with souls under such distempers, knowing there is a great difference between them who are under carnal presumption and others, under fainting.

The third step of Christ’s care, is in giving John grounds of confidence to warrant his faith: and they are three. The first, is from his own Godhead, I am the first and the last. I am God that speaks to thee; I was before the world, and will continue when the world shall be ended, the eternal God, a singular property of God, and a demonstration of Christ’s God-
head. Therefore would he say, thou needest not fear John. I am not an enemy, nor a stranger, or terrible Spirit, but God; and that may sustain one in friendship with God; and it is also a proof, that 'the vision before, was a vision of Christ as God.'

2. The second ground, is the union of his Godhead and Man-head in one person, and his suffering in his Manhead, united in his Godhead, I am be that thou shall be ever more. In the original, it is otherwife, and better for the understanding of the words, 'I am the living, and I was made dead; and behold I live for evermore.'

'I am the living,' that is, I am the living God, who had life from all eternity of myself, and gave life to all creatures that live, and have life as it is, John v. 26. 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' And I that was, and is this living God, the way, the truth, and the life, was made dead, that is, I became man, was made of a woman, made under the law, Gal. iv. pointing out the true Mediator (God-man in one person.) His taking on the nature of man, and satisfying the justice of God, in undergoing the wrath of his Father; and in subjeæting himself to the death of the cross for the sins of his own elect: both natures are joined in one person, yet it was not as God that he died, though the person that was God died. And behold I live for evermore, Amen. In as far as I was once dead, as man, now I am alive, and shall live for evermore. And this last expression, hath two words put to it, to point out its excellency. Behold I live. Pointing at his resurrection, and the consolation that flows from believers; I have overcome death and live; and so I live, as I shall live for ever, for the benefit of believers in me. That is of special consolation to us, our life being linked to Christ's life, who is God-man and our Mediator. 'Because he lives, we shall live also,' John xiv. 19. His life is a pledge and a pawn of ours. 2. Amen, or verily: an assurance to confirm the truth of his resurrection, and to put all the world out of doubt of his living not only as

God, but as God and man in one person. Be assured ye have a living Christ.

The ground is, And I have the keys of Hell and Death. To point out his absolute sovereignty as Mediator in the state of humiliation, and exaltation. Therefore fear not John, for I have the keys of hell, and orderrth even what concerns them. The keys are a sign of government, Isa. xxii. 21. It is spoken of Eliakim, a type of Christ 'I will commit the government into his hand,' and then follows, 'The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulders.' The meaning is, I have absolute sovereignty and dominion over heaven and hell; I deliver and carry thee to heaven whom I please; none go there, but those whom I take in; and hell prevails not, at its own will, but is under my dominion; for I have supreme power over hell and death. Not that Christ's dominion is limited to these, but because hell and death are two things that believers fear most. He tells them, they need not fear them; for they are both his vaills, the devil bears not the keys, but he bears them himself. These are the grounds of consolation, that are given to John: and they are strengthening grounds of faith and salvation to all believers.

Observe, 1. Our Lord Jesus, is God; the first and the last: he that was born of the virgin Mary: and to a true man, is God, he that was crucified, dead and buried, is God. This is one of the articles of our faith; and this place of scripture, is to be looked on, as a proof of it, against all the most cavilling enemies of our Lord's Deity. He that died, was, and is, the first and the last; and the incommunicable attributes of the Godhead agree to him.

2. This is proposed, as a ground of consolation to John and all believers. And it hath a world of consolation in it. As 1. Not only that there is a God; but that our Lord Jesus Christ is God; and that notwithstanding his being God, yet he hath loved sinners so well that he took on him man's nature, and in that nature, died for them; and that he who woes sinners, and offers to marry them, is God, and yet is very tender to them, and of them: which is
And bebold, I am alive for evermore. Then, 1. Our Lord Jesus Christ who died once, shall die no more. 2. He who died out of love to his people, is risen and exalted to heavenly glory and dignity, and bears the office of Mediator, for the consolation of his people for evermore. 3. His exaltation maketh him no less mindful, nor less affectionate, and tender of believers in him. For John might have thought that now there was a distance and dryness come in between Christ and him, especially considered as God; but he tells John, he liveth for his comfort: and that he may expect, that he who gave life to all, and laid down his life for him, and other believers, would be tender of him, and of his life.

Which letteth us see, 1. That the price of believers redemption is paid. 2. That is paid by a brother, that had a human nature, and was like unto us in all things except sin. 3. That Christ, who is God, is also man; and that, to put us in a capacity of living. 4. See here Christ’s resurrection and victory over death; so that the bargain is completed and finished: and consequently, that believers shall rise and live for ever through him. Every word here is big with consolation to us, if we know how to suck at it.

LECTURE IX.

Verite 18. And have the keys of hell and of death.
19. Write the things which thou hast seen and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.
20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the Angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

THE Lord is now comforting John, 1. From his natures, or person. 2. From his dying and victory over death. 3. From his office, which as Mediator...
he executes; influenced especially over hell and death, for these reasons. 1. Because hell and death were the last enemies Christ had to subdue, as he had said, I have gotten power over the greatest enemies; and consequently, I have power over the rest: and it points at the greatness and universality of his power, as Mediator, he being made head over all things to the church, and having all things put under him, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, and which are under the earth, that is the name of Jesus every knee should bow. 2. For the comfort of his people. Particularly for the comfort of John; and because now John was afflicted with the majesty of God and the challenges of his own infirmities, and was over-charged with fear: therefore Christ saith to him, Fear not hell nor death John, for I have the keys of both, and can dispose of them, as they shall not hurt thee; to guarding him and his people against fear and down-casting, which may flow from the apprehension of hell and death, which are the main things that the wakened person cast down at Christ's feet, doth fear.

1. From our Lord's repeating these grounds of consolation for John's encouragement, in general, Observe, That when fear groweth excessive, and degenerates, even in the least that should least mistake Jesus Christ, it is not easily removed; but will take one ground of encouragement and confirmation after another, ere the soul be erected. This is clear from the many arguments, and the repeating of them, to remove John's fear: for Christ doth nothing idly; so apprehensive and jealous is flesh, when the majesty of God kylthes, and the fons of sin, and challenges for sin are wakened, and the creatures sinfulness and weakness are discovered, so strong is disbelief, that the souls of these who are most tenderly dealt with, (and readily none was more tenderly dealt with nor John, beloved disciple who lay in Christ's bosom) are hardly railed up to comfort and confidence. This flows partly, from the proneness of our nature to mistake Christ, and link in discouragement, and partly, through our weakenss and infirmities: so the worth of Christ.

gets no credit in the general, far less in our particular, at such a nick of time as this is, when discouragement prevaleth; a thing that experience teacheth, and that fools would walk in fear of; at such times, a temper like unto which we may see, Psal. lxxvii. 2. My soul ran in the night and ceased not: my soul refudged to be comforted.

The second general is this, that it is no great hazard for a discouraged soul to be laid at Christ's feet; it is a good posture, when a soul cannot bear the weight of a difficulty, to throw itself down before him. Christ is tender to thee, and though souls sin in giving way to excessive fear, through the apprehension of wrath and guilt, yet our Lord deals gently with them; and when the root is bruised, he will not break it; when the flax is but smouching, he will not quench it; when the ewes are with young, he softly drives them, and carries the lambs in his bosom, and suits his tenderne ses in reference to them, Isa. xl. 11.

If any be in such a condition, it were good to believe this; Christ's tenderne ses in such a case when the soul is laid low, is abundantly clear in this one instance. Thirdly, More particularly, Observe, 1. That believers may have apprehensions of hell and death; or the fears of hell and death may cease and be excessive in them: therefore Christ guards against it, which otherwise would not needful.

Obf. 2. Much of this fear proceedeth from the ignorance of Christ's nature, person and offices, or from the ignorance of him in the administration of these his offices. Therefore, when he comes to comfort John, he holds out his offices, and lets him know that life and death are at his disposing. There is some secret mistake of Christ, and some strange mould of Christ in the mind, where excessive fear prevaleth; therefore it is often laid, Fear not, it is I, Be not afraid. And through the following epistles to the churches, he ever telleth what he is, with some property.

Obf. 3. That our Lord Jesus Christ, hath the absolute guiding and administration of what concerns his people; yea, hath their greatest enemies at his command, he lets in to hell and death, and keeps out whom he pleaseth, he gives orders in all.
Ob. 4. That there is no greater consolation to God's people in time of their fears of hell and death, than to know that our Lord Jesus hath the keys of both, and all in both, that devils will not win out of the pit till he open the door and lengthen their chain one link, but as he lets it out, Rev. xx. 4, 14.

Ob. 5. Lay all the letters together, what needs John fear? If evil spirits act by Christ's orders and the most wicked in hell or earth cannot exceed their orders, what needs there be fears? Seeing Christ keeps the keys of the devil's house, and hath orders given, and employment carved out to them, as accurately as he hath to men on earth, good or bad; for death and hell are his servants, and go not their own errands, but his; and therefore dare not exceed their commission; yea they must not, nor cannot, whatever malice they have in prosecuting his order. What ground then of fear is there? And so it may serve to comfort us against the evils of our outward and inward condition. There is nothing comes in church, or commonwealth, but as he orders it, who is faithful in all the house of God, as a Son. It were good if our meeting together had this fruit, to get the faith, of his sovereignty sealed up in our hearts. If folks would chuse a good friend, patron, or master, he is the party; stick to him and fear nothing.

Verse 19. Followeth the third thing, and it is some circumstances, that make way for John's writing what he saw, or our Lord's repeating and enlarging of John's commission. This commission is so often repeated, to tell, 1. How punctual he would have John in keeping himself by his commission, neither altering nor diminishing it, nor doing any thing less or more, but what he had commission for. 2. To shew on what ground this word depends, and the authority of it. It is not to be accounted authentic, because John wrote it simply, or because the church accounts it so; but because John at Christ's command wrote it. Christ will have the warrant and authority of his word discernible, and out of question, especially what is contained in this Revelation. We will not find the warrant of any so often repeated, as the warrant to

write this. 4. It may be for this reason, John's former fainting and flagging might have made him forget his errand: therefore he will repeat it to him, to tell that discouraging and fainting must not mar folk in their duty, but they would always labour to compose their spirits, as the duty they are called to may not be neglected. And though they may be surprised with fear and fainting; yet they would up, and fall to work again. We may consider the reasons of this repetition more fully afterwards.

That which he commands him to write, both more accurately and distinctly divide this book, nor he did formerly, verse 11. So that these words, are the compendious division of the book and prophecy that followeth. And we take it to be a division of it, in three sorts of things. 1. The things which thou hast seen. 2. The things which are. 3. The things which shall be hereafter; or otherwise, the first branch comprehendeth the second also: and so it is divided in two.

The things which thou hast seen, that is, the things that in my time have happened, or fallen forth since the gospel began, the history of the gospel in it's rise and victories to this time. And we expound it thus, and do not refer it only to the particular visions spoken of before, for two reasons. 1. Because, These things which thou hast seen, hold forth the subject matter of the book, as well as the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. And the things which thou hast seen are distinguished from the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter: they must therefore be of one sort. And so, the things which thou hast seen, relate to the time past; the things which are, to the time present, as the things which shall be hereafter, to the time to come. 2. Because comparing these words with verse 11, we find a clear difference: for in verse 11, it is said in the singular number, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches: which looketh to the particular visions spoken of there, or to the following visions: looking on the Revelation as one vision of so many parts, but here it is written, the things, in the plural, and

Q. 2
which thou hast seen, in the preterite time, that is, write the things which are past, to distinguish them from the things present and to come; and so we expound these things past, from the rise of the gospel to this time, according to the scope of this prophecy.

The things which are, that is, the present estate of the churches, in the two following chapters; which hold forth the state of these churches, as they were for the time.

3. The things which shall be hereafter, or, which must be hereafter; point at the story and state of the church from John’s time to the second coming of Christ; for from the rise and the beginning of the church here, it ends not, till it bring the church militant to glory, and put the wicked in the bottomless pit, chap. xx. and xxii. I mark it, because it serves to be a key to the rest of the story. And this division sheweth, 1. That we do not seek in this book of the Revelation, things that were before Christ’s time, as some needlessly draw it to the four monarchies. 2. That the things contained in this book, relate not to a generation or two only, but to things falling out in the church to the end of the world. For though some though some little things before Christ’s time, be hinted at in this book; yet they are not brought in as principal prophecies, but as useful, to expound these principal prophecies, as when Rome is spoken of, (chap. xviii,) and its by-past Governments, under the name of Babylon, it is brought in, to clear what is meant by the whore which John say.

Again, two things further are observable here, 1. Our Lord Jesus his care and respect to his church; that will acquaint her with things past, present, and to come, for their comfort and edification. So well would he have them provided with lefions, and guarded against all times, and what ever difficulties may come. 2. Being now to enter into the story, which he is to write, he divides it ere he begin, both to make way for clearness in the thing, and for distinctness in the uptaking of it; to make it more intelligible to them to whom he writeth, and to all that should read it; he draweth it up to three heads. And there is a profitable use to be made of this for men, in speaking and writing to be methodically and orderly; our Lord’s way of writing, is no friend to confusion, nor enemy to order; if to be, order be made servient to edification, and not to curiosity; such is Christ’s orders here, and to that scope doth that recapitulation serve, Heb. vi. 1. and viii. 1. And so are the writings of Paul often most exact in this.

Verse 20. This verse containeth, an explication of the mystery, spoken of before in the vision, which John saw; at least of so much of it, as is useful and needful to be known; as usually he leaveth always somewhat at the back of the vision, to be a key to open the rest. So this serveth to open somewhat that is past, something that is spoken in the seven epistles to the Angels, and several times hereafter. There is something to be supplied here, while he sayeth, ‘The mystery of the seven Stars which thou sawest;’ that is, I will shew thee, or I will tell thee the mystery of the seven Stars, &c. as he sayeth, Rev. xvii. 7. ‘I will tell thee the mystery of the woman;’ that is, I will let you know what it meaneth; Jesus Christ being the best interpreter of his own mind, condescending to open up so much of the mystery as was useful and needful. 1. He expoundeth the stars: and then,

2. The candlesticks,

1. He expoundeth the stars: ‘The seven stars, are the Angels of the seven churches;’ that is, the seven stars signify, mean, and represent the Angels, or ministers, or officers of the seven churches. For it is a thing ordinary to call ministers Angels, 1. Mal. ii. 7. ‘The priests lips should keep knowledge, and the people should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.’ In the original, it is he is the Angel of the Lord of Hosts. So Judges ii. 1. it is said, ‘An Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim.’ The word in in the original is, a messenger come up, one particularly sent for that errand. Ministers are called Angels, 1. For God’s special employing them about his holy things, beyond others. 2. Because of that their sanctified habit: to put them in mind, that they should be in their conversation angelical. 3. To make them to be received as Angels by others, that is the dignity due
to them. By Angels here, is not meant some more eminent nor another in these churches, such as the Lord Bishop; but by Angels we understand all the Bishop's and Prefbyters that were over these churches. 1. Because when it is said, 'The seven stars are the Angels of the seven churches,' it speaketh of them indefinitely, whether they be more or fewer; and he saith, nor are the seven Angels of the seven churches, as it saith, 'The seven candlesticks, are the seven churches; but suppose, that the number is not so exact in the one as in the other. For if the number of ministers were definite, as of the churches, why should the manner of it be different? Nor saith it, 'The eminent Angel of the seven churches;' but indefinitely they 'are the Angels of the seven churches.' As Philip, i. he writeth to the Bishops and Deacons, supposing a plurality of such in one Town, less than Ephesus, or others mentioned here. Therefore, 2. It is not to be expounded of one man, as if some one man in each of these churches, had had the preeminence, because our Lord writing to some of these churches, and directing the epistle to the Angel, speaketh of them as more; as when he writeth to Smyrna, chapter ii. verse 10. he saith, 'They have no one of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried.' Which must relate primarily, to the ministers in Smyrna; and suppose more ministers than one, and that in directing the epistle to the Angel of such a church, he understood the whole collective body of ministers and church-officers, that afterwards he distributes in more individual persons. See the notes there, and on chap. ii. verse 24. where the church in Thyatira, is distributed in three, 1. In these, who are polluted members thereof. 2. In these, who were free of these pollutions called the rest. 3. In the ministers, who are named and described, as distinct from the other two, yet all in the plural number.

What then is to be understood by Angel of Ephesus (and so of the rest) we may learn from Acts xx. 17. with 28. where Paul having the same business to do on the matter, in recommending the care of that church to some, for preventing ill which he foresaw to be coming, calleth not one, but the elders of the church of Ephesus; and giveth not to one, the charge or name of bishop, but to all of them he committeth it. Therefore, seeing Paul comprehendeth all in his sermon under that name episcopus, verse 28. (and would by write, as well as word, done it) we must so expound John to do also, though he write in a more obscure style, as best agree with this prophecy. For this argument is sure, these that John wrote to, under the name of the Angel of Ephesus, and so of other churches, are those who have the oversight of, and authority over these churches. But these are clear to be many elders or bishops, Acts xx. &c. Therefore take we the style Angel, to be collective, i.e. to the Angels (seeing the style, as also the matter agreeeth to all) or ministers of such a church, as suppose one was writing to a city, governed by a number of magistrates, in the Aristocratick government, might it not be directed to the magistrates of such a city, and yet no particular person be pointed at, but the whole be collectively understood? and so we conceive it here. Even as by one beast, chap. xiii. &c. or head, chap. xvi. he doth express a civil government, viz. of Rome, before it was monarchical; so he may be understood to do, by the figurative title Angel here, though it be in the singular number; considering with all, that the things charged on this Angel, or required of him, are such as agree not to one; but to the collective body of church-officers together. Beside more ministers there were than one in these churches; that is certain. Either then they must be comprehended under the title of Angel, or else taken in as contradistinguished from them with the rest of the church. But that will be found absurd, that the church and her guides should be some way contradistinguished, and yet the ministers not to fall under that distinction: for stars they must be, that is, Angels; or candlesticks, that is, amongst the people as distinguished from the stars; but the last cannot be. Therefore of necessity, the first must be understood. We conceive then, as by church, or candlestick, is understood many professors or churches, (for
under church here, such who thus plead, will grant more particular churches to be comprehended; for say they, they are Diocesan churches) in an united way of worshipping or government. So by Angel, many church-guides in an united way of governing may be understood. Ministers are called stars, for these reasons. 1. To signify and point out the eminence and dignity of the office, that it is a glorious and shining office. 2. To point out what is the especial aim of this office. It is to give light, as the use of the stars is, to give light to the world; so it is ministers' main employment to shine and give light to others, to make the world which is of light night to be light home. In which sense, Matth. v. 14. It is said, 'They are the light of the world.' 3. It is to signify that they are subjervient lights. Our Lord Jesus is the Sun of righteousness; that light, that great light; and ministers are lesser lights. 4. It is to point out the way how ministers become light home. Stars receive their light from the sun, and by virtue of that borrowed light are made light home; so ministers are made light home, and shine to give others light, by virtue of the light they receive from Christ: they are lights, but their light is star light, a borrowed light; and eclipses betwixt Jesus Christ and them, will darken them, feigning they have no light, but what they receive from him. This would learn ministers and people a right up-taking of the nature of this office, and keep off contrary extremes, that both respectively are subject unto.

The second part is expounded, the seven candlesticks are the seven churches, as before he expounded, the seven stars to be the Angels of the seven churches.

The churches are called candlesticks for these reasons. 1. Because the candlestick is that which properly the light is set into; and it is fitted for receiving of light, though it have none of its own; so the visible church, is that wherein Christ Jesus sets his lights, 1 Cor. xii. 28. 'God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondly Prophets, &c.' The church is as it were, the candlestick to the candle, the proper set of the Prophets and Ministers after them. 2. Though the candlestick give no light, yet it makes the light...
excellent metal, so the church is the choice and wall of all the world beside; it is God's garden. 2. To let us see what is believers duty, and what all the members of the church are obliged to; they ought to be as gold that will abide the trial, and hath no dross. The church of Christ should be throughly sincere, as gold; to be like every sort of metal, will not be enough.

Quest. How can these churches be called gold, seeing so many of them are so little worth, that they could scarce abide the trial, as Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, &c. and Laodicea is so corrupt that she hath no commendation at all.

Answ. Our Lord Jesus designs the visible church nor churches, not according to the plurality, but according to the better part; and when there is any gold he counts by it; even as one may call an heap, a heap of corn, though the greatest part be chaff. 2. There is something essential to the church as visible, which makes them get this denomination; for the visible church hath a comparative excellency beyond others that are without; and Jesus Christ looking not to what they were, but to the nature of a visible church, he calls them golden candlesticks, even as he calls the ministers stars, though they were some among them little worth, as that Angel of Laodicea; because by virtue of their office they were so. So the churches written to, by the Apostles, are called fainst, and holy, in so far, as by virtue of their profession and church state relation that they stood in to God they were so. 3. He designs them so by virtue of their obligation, to let them see what they should be, and were obliged to be. This is a main reason, why the church of the Jews, is called a holy people; not for any great holiness that often was amongst them all, but because they were separated from other people, to be a peculiar people to him; in which respect, the children of believers, are called holy, 1 Cor. vii. which is not to be understood of any personal holiness, but of a holiness in respect of a federal or covenant relation; in which respect, they are separated from the rest of the world, who have not an external right to such church privileges. Thus both stock and branches are holy and no otherwise, Rom. xi.

Which lets us see, 1. What respect Jesus Christ hath to his churches and ministers. 2. That the scriptures way of expounding itself, is to expound one place by another; one verse or phrase, darkly set down in one place, by another, more full and clear in another place. 3. Particularly, how to expound the word are, or is, the seven stars; are, that is, they signify and represent; a word often used, Gen. xli. 26. The seven good kine, are seven years, &c. So the lamb is the passover, and Matth. xxi. 26. 'Take, eat: this is my body. This cup is my Blood,' &c. which expression holds out no transubstantiation, or transmutation or turning of one substance into another, more than what is said here imports that the ministers were transubstantiated in stars or the churches in candlesticks, or contrarily. But it is a mysterious and sacramental way of speaking, to set forth the thing signified or represented, by giving the name thereof to the sign, which represents it. And this is in many places to be adverted unto.

Concerning a calling to the Ministry, and clearness therein.

This command of writing, was particularly set down, verse 11. Here again it is renewed, and afterwards, chap. ii. and chap. iii. it is seven times repeated, with respect to every church he writes unto; which certainly is to shew, of what concernment clearness of a call is, and that both in general, and particular, and is done amongst other reasons for this end, to clear John in his call, and to warrent the people in their receiving of his message. From which we may gather this, that a minister that taketh on him to edify a church in the name of the Lord, had need to be clear of his call thereunto from the Lord; it is not the general that we now insist on, viz. that there is such a peculiar calling or that none but the Lord can authorize for it; but it is especially concerning that clearness which every minister ought to have in his call, that wills holy boldness he may go
about the work, having peace in himself (whatever he may meet with in it) as one who hath not run, whereas the Lord did not send him, Jer. xxiii. 21. That this is exceeding requisite to a minister, we suppose will be out of question to all who know that ministers are but ambassadors, and so for them to want clearness of the Lord's call, is to be uncertain whether they have a commission or not. And therefore they who look to it, can neither have that confidence of the Lord's owning them, or accepting of them in their duty, except there be some satisfaction herein, viz. that the Lord hath sent them, or doth send them. It will be a pushing question to many one day, man who made thee a minister? Who gave thee a commission to treat for Christ? And although others may have peace in the work-making of such a man's ministry, yet himself can have none, he being ever liable to this question, Friend, how enteredst thou hither? And how obtainedst thou this honour? Doubts from the defect of this trial, it is, in part that many thrust themselves into the work at first, whose after-carriage and way proves them never to have been sent: which they durst not have done, had they walked by this rule of waiting for a commission thereunto. And on the other hand, some really called to the ministry, are yet kept in a kind of bondage, both as to their duty and their peace, because it is not clear to them that it is so; for although the being of a minister and his calling, simply depends not on his clearness of his call: as the being of a believer doth not necessarily infer that he must know himself to be a believer; yet no question, as a believer's particular comfort depends on the clearness of his interest, for which cause he should study it: so a minister's confidence and quietness in his particular ministry doth much depend on this, that he be clear in his call to be a minister. For which cause, they who look thereon, or entered therein, would humbly enquire for nothing more than this, that they be clear that they have Christ's commission for their engaging. And although it be impossible to be particular, or fully satisfying in this, so as to meet with all the difficulties that may occur; but christian prudence and tenderness will fill find matter of exercise in the deciding thereof. Yet having this occasion here, (which is also frequent in this book) we may once for all, say a word in the general to what may give a minister clearness in his calling; which we may take up in a fivefold consideration. 1. Of a minister's call to that work in general. 2. To a particular person. 3. In carrying a particular message to that person. 4. What is required of him as to writing for the benefit of the church. 5. And what respect people ought to have to God's calling of a man, in their hearing and reading.

For the first, we say, 1. That ministers would soberly endeavour satisfaction at their entry, if they be called to that work, or not, and begin with that; this is certain, that it is not indifferent, whether men take them to this calling or another, for God hath not indifferently dispersed his talents, nor hath he left men to that liberty to chuse as they will, but will lead them to continue and abide in that calling whereunto they are called, and not which they have chosen themselves: yet that a man have some knowledge or affection to that work of the ministry, will not prove him to be called, although all that is externally needful for his promoting therein did concur; for that will not prove a call to another charge or office, and so not to this. And no question, it being a desirable thing in itself, to be a messenger for Jesus Christ to his church, many may desire the office of a bishop, and be approved of God in their look thereon, and yet indeed never be called of God actually to it, as experience may confirm.

Secondly, when we speak of a call in any of the former respects, it is not to be understood, that men now are to look for an immediate and extraordinary call, as John and the Apostles had, that were as unwarrantable as to look for an extraordinary measure of gifts, such as they were furnished with, and that in an immediate way; but it is that as extraordinary officers had extraordinary and immediate evidence of their call, (for so it required) to ministers and ordinary office-bearers, that are called in a mediate way,
And this is as the seal whereby he evinceth in the hearts of hearers, that he who treats, is his authorized ambassador.

2. To clear a man to exercise his gift: it must not only be a gift, but found and declared to be so, by thee to whom the trial of gifts is committed by Jesus Christ: For it’s not the having a gift that maketh a call; yea, nor that which maketh it a public gift, or to be acknowledged as such; but its the orderly authoritative mission, that followeth upon that gift: In which respect, the exercise of the gift, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery are put together; 1 Tim. iv. 14, even though it feemeth that he had knowledge and gifts before. If it were not thus, what a confusion would there be in the church of Christ, more than in any commonwealth? Where its not gifts that constitutes a magistrate, or an officer; but the orderly calling of a person thereunto by such as have authority, which ought also singularly to be observed here. And the Lord hath appointed this, not only for the public order of his house, which is exceedingly prized by him, but also for the particular clearing of the person to be designated. Thus, I conceive, a person that is at some doubt about his gift, and posibly thinking it fit to edify; yet, upon supposition that it be found otherwise by thee to whom the spirits, or gifts ought to be subjected, he may have peace in abating, whatever his own thoughts be: because the Lord hath not made these his rule. Hence also, on the other hand, some who may esteem their gift unfit for edifying of the church, yet if it be found otherwise by these whose place leads them to decide, and whose confidence will make them tender in it, they ought and may with peace yield; whereas if there were no authoritative trial, what a torture would it be to some to have the weight wholly lying on themselves? and what a door would be open to the most self-confident persons on the other hand? Yea, were it not thus, there would be no need of the trial of gifts enjoined, 1 Cor. xiv. 29. 31. which being in extraordinary gifted prophets, its much more to be respected in ordinary ministers; Neither were there use for so many precepts to try, and so many characters how to discern
them that are fitted for, or called to the ministry, whereof to be apt to teach is a main one; if there were not weight to be laid on the probation, and determination of a presbytery, who are to count to God for their election in such a case, and are not left to indifference or arbitrariness therein.

3. For a man's peace, beside the former two, singleness in himself is necessary, without which, both the former two will not sustain him against a challenge; except there be a testimony here, that conscience to duty, and obedience to God's call made him yield to it; that God's glory and promoting of the work of the edifying of Christ's body, was his end; and that his taking up of Christ's mind to be calling him to follow this call, was his motive that made him betake himself to this calling and not to another; and that upon deliberation and search made, to discern the mind of God. Where these three concur, viz. a gift, and that orderly approven, with the hearts yielding to the call upon that account, to do Christ service in that, more than in another station, because it apprehends him to call to that employment and not to another, we conceive there is good ground of peace, so as there cannot be a torturing challenge upon this occasion; for although men intrusted to try are not infallible in discerning of gifts; yet when use is made of this way as Christ's ordinance, for attaining satisfaction in this matter of a call, its not like that his ordinance will be a snare to any; and if tiers of gifts should mistake, yet may it be expected, that either the Lord will discover it time and time other way to the person concerned, or graciously some other way pity him, who did yield only out of respect to his call as it was supped by him. And who knoweth also, but gifts may follow by God's blessing upon labours, when he do clear a call, if the question only be there? As one may have peace in a magistracy, when singly is embraced out of the confidence of God's call, although it may be they who had hand in his election did not thereby make choice of such a person. And though this singleness be not simply necessary to the being of a call; for there may be a call without it as in Judas, yet its simply necessary for the man's peace that accepts it.

4. We take in here the consideration of God's providence and the concurrence of his dispensations; which, though they will not determine a call simply, nor make a thing lawful to one which is not in itself lawful; yet, in public duties they may be, much to call the balance in swaying a man to one calling beyond another; as suppose one hath means and ways in providence provided for his education, which others have not; or he hath been led to study, conscience puts at him to take some calling, and it may be pointeth at this, at least so far as to make proof of it: all doors for other callings are shut upon him, so that he must betake himself to this, or languish in doing of nothing. Sometimes others may be made use of to put at him, and the mind is kept in disquiet while he essayeth any other thing; reason here theweth such and such like things concurring, may have so much weight as to encourage one to follow this motion, and may confirm him when this goeth along with the former three, or hath them following upon it.

If there were more particular enquiry called for concerning that impulse of the Spirit, which may be in one in reference to the ministry, how to discern it; and what weight to lay on it; we confess that it is hard to decide therein; the operations of the Lord's Spirits being mysteries, and often seeming unreasonable to men, as also the deceits of our own hearts are deep, and not easily reached; yet for helping in this, we may say that it is not unusual to the Lord to route one by his Spirit, when he mindeth to have him to the ministry; and thereby to flir the heart of one more than another, though in all or at all times not in the same measure. This in experience hath been found, and God hath afterward sealed it to have been of him; and by this many have been brought to the ministry, who have been profitable in it, who had not this been, would never have thought on it, or have been persuaded thereto by others. And seeing the calling of the ministry is an especial and peculiar way from God, and eminently his choice herein doth appear, it is not inconsistent with his sovereignty and interest therein, that he use this mean or way of an inward impulse. And although what is expressly spoken of this in scríp-
ture be for the most part in reference to extraordinary officers, and that in an extraordinary manner, yet by proportion may an ordinary impulse be gathered from that as concurring in the seeling of ordinary officers, as there is an ordinary motion of the Spirit acknowledged in other lawful duties. Yet, 1. Advert, that this impulse of the Spirit is not in all alike or equally discernable. The Lord sometimes will thrust one forth by a more inward impulse, and will draw others by more external means; hence it will be found, that if the thing be of God, where the way is most improbable, and there be fewest encouragements and least outward drawing, there the inward impulse is the more strong, because by it the Lord doth supply the want of that weight which the outward helps might have on him. And again, where outward things do more convincingly concur, as that a man is purposely as it were, educated in reference to that end, provided for, and encouraged by others in the undertaking thereof, &c. In these, although the end may be single, yet often is the inward impulse less discernable, because the Lord hath provided other means to draw them forth, which do supply that; neither is he to be ascried to one way of proceeding in this. 2. Advert, that this impulse may be when yet it is not discerned, either because it is not taken heed unto, or because the inclination may be prejudiced, and the person not discern the language thereof; or because the Lord may make it ascend by the steps and degrees as it were, at first withdrawing the mind only from some design that it was last upon, and it may not be positively at first known what he aimeth at: And, Secondly, He may incline the heart to, and bring it in love with reading and studying, and other means, which afterward he may make use of in reference to this end, and yet possibly hide from the person that which he aimeth at by this. Thirdly, He may make a stir inwardly in the heart, making it some way disquiet in every other thing, and restles in whatsoever it turneth itself to, as not being its proper work; that thereby he may constrain it to look some other-where. Fourthly, When this is done, he may make the person content to essay the trial of his gift, if to be by that he may attain quietness, and yet still the person be but trying what the language of that impulse may mean, and not be distinctly clear of the result. And the Lord doth wisely follow this order, partly to draw on the person by steps, who might otherwise be scared if all were presented to him together; and partly that in due order he might effectuate his point, and train up the instrument to a fitness for the work he is to call him to; whereas if he had persuasion of God's calling of him to the ministry at first, before any acquired fitness for the same, he might be in hazard to slight the means, and precipitate the thing, which the Lord alloweth not; partly also he doth it to keep in dependence on him for through-bearing in every step, one after another, so that although at first one be not clear that God calleth him to the ministry itself, yet if he be so far clear, at that he calls him to forbear such another calling, to follow such a study, to essay trials, &c. he ought to yield to that, waiting for what God may further reveal to him. Therefore, 3. Advert, that difference ought to be made between an impulse to the study of divinity, and an impulse to the ministry; one may really be stirred to the first, and ought to account it so, and so far to yield without disputing what may follow; as we see in many, who in study of divinity and in trials have given good proof of God's approving them in going that length, and yet he hath thought meet by death or otherwise to prevent their being entered actually to the ministry, which declareth that they were never called thereunto; as therefore by any impulse, one cannot warrantably conclude that he is to live so long, so can he not certainly gather, that he is called actually to be a minister, which supposeth the former, and therefore certainly in this is not to be at first enquired for or expected; but so much is to be relift in, as may give the confidence quietness in the present step, supposing that death should prevent another, this being the Lord's way that the further one follow his call it will be clearer unto him, like one that ascended by degrees, he is still in capacity to behold the further. Yet, 4. Advert, that every impulse which may be to the calling of the ministry is not to be accounted an impulse of the Spirit of God; or, as
his moving either to the studying of divinity, or the following of the ministry, as we see in the multitude of false prophets of old, and in the experience of later times, wherein many have and do run, whom the Lord never sent. And considering the nature of our spirits, and the way that the devil may have in the seducing of some, and jumbling of others; this needeth not be thought strange. The great difficulty then will be, how to discern the voice of the Spirit of God in this particular, from the voice of our own spirits, or of the devil in this respect, transforming himself into an angel of light, and sometimes even driving honest hearts to the attempting of this as a good thing, who yet may not be called thereunto of God indeed.

To help then in the trial of this, consider, 1. That which is an impulse of the Lord's Spirit, doth more compose and sanctify the whole frame of the inward man, it being that same Spirit which is the Spirit of grace and supplication: therefore the more sensibly he poule, the more sensible are these effects, and the more composed and sanctified a heart be, the more clear and distinct will that impulse of the Spirit be; because then the heart is more impartial to discern the same. And although this impulse of the Spirit be but a common work, which may be in a hypocrisie, and so alway hath not this sanctifying efficacy with it; yet, we conceive where one out of conscience reflecteth on it, to try whether it be of God or not, there can be no conclusion drawn from it to quiet the conscience in the acknowledgment thereof, except it be found to be like his Spirit in the effects of it.

2. That this impulse of the Spirit is not backed with the affluence of our spirits, but some way it constrainteth them to yield to it, even contrary to their own inclination, so that it moveth and carrieth a man over the thoughts of gain, reproach, credit or loss, over his inability and unfitness; which are never more discovered than when this impulse is strongest and most distinct, as we may see in the examples of Moses, Jeremiah, &c. whereas motions from our own spirits, do often the lessen the difficulties and hide the unfitness and inability that is within us; and readily ground themselves upon some supposed ability or probability, more than there is apparent reason for.

3. That God's Spirit moveth by spiritual motives like himself, as the promoting of God's glory, the edification of his people, the preventing of a challenge, by giving obedience to him, and such like; whereas other motions have ends and motives like themselves as in the false prophets and other teachers in the New Testament may be seen; who fed not the flock, but themselves, and served not the Lord Christ, but their own belly, and fought their own credit, ease, &c. yet even Judas, though extravagantly moved by the Spirit; yet it is like that was not the motive which prevailed with him to yield, but some carnal motive, whether gain, credit, or such like, as is held forth in the gospel.

4. The motion of the Lord's spirit, is in its nature kindly, and in its way regular, according to the rule of the word, that is, it doth not drive the heart violently as the devil's injections do, nor doth it precipitate in the following and pursuing of what it moveth to, but as having the command of the heart, he moveth natively, without making the spirit confus'd, and he preseth the professing of what he moveth unto, orderly, it being the same spirit that hath laid down a rule to walk by in the word, and now fits within the heart: and therefore, the inward impulse, cannot but be answerable to the outward rule. Hence also the spirit's motion, is submissive to the way of trial, appointed in the word, and is not absolute or promiscuous; whereas motions from ourselves, or from the devil, are headstrong and irregular, aiming at the end or thing, without respect to the way prescribed for attaining it; or at least, do not so heartily approve of the one as of the other, especially if it be thwarted in its design by them.

5. That this motion of the spirit putteth to the use of all means that lead to the end, as well as to the end itself, that is reading, studying, praying, or what may fit one for that end; for the spirit never divideth the end of the means; and Paul's word to Timothy, subjoining that precept, give thyself to reading, to that other of his fulfilling his ministry, doth confirm this; whereas when these are divided, there can be no claim made to a motion of the spirit of God.
6. Consider, that the impulse of the spirit is a fitting, gifting impulse, and carrying along with it a capacity in some measure for, and suitability to the thing that it calls to. Hence in the scripture, the call of the spirit, and the gifts of the spirit, go together. And this last, is given as the evidence of the first, in this respect, although there may be an impulse to the study of divinity without the call of the spirit unto the ministry; yet can that never count, an impulse of the spirit actually to enter the ministry, where this gifting of the spirit is not; for it can never be infancy in all the width of God, that his spirit sent any, but his call was sealed by the gifting of them. And so in effect, the trying of his impulse to as one may have satisfaction therein, will for the most part resolve in the trial of these two formerly mentioned, viz. the fitness of one's gift to teach. Secondly, The sincerity and sincerity of the motive whereby one is swayed to follow the impulse; for although the spirit may move, yet if it be some carnal ground that persuadeth the person to yield to that which the spirit moveth unto, it can be of no ground of peace. These two then are at least, as to a man's peace, the fine quis non, in the trial of his impulse; so that without them, he cannot conclude himself to be called actually to enter the ministry, or have peace in the understanding thereof.

To speak a word then to what weight is to be laid on this impulse concerning it, we say, 1. That if all things beside concur to the fitting and qualifying of a minister, this is not simply to be accounted a fine quis non, in one's undertaking. 2. There may be some impulse, though we discern it not. Because there are more clear grounds to gather God's mind from, as the effects of the spirit fitting one with gifts for the charge, and other grounds laid down, whereupon weight may more safely be laid, than upon any inward apprehending, or not apprehending of the spirit's motion, which is never given to us in any thing as the alone rule of obedience; and we must suppose the motion of the spirit to be where these gifts are, seeing the impulse hath alway the gifts with it, and we may gather the impulse from the gifts.

2. We say, that where other things concur not, no impulse is to be accounted a sufficient evidence of a call to the ministry simply, upon the grounds formerly given. Yet, 3. A distinct native sanctifying impulse to may be a call to use means, and wait on in God's way for attaining of fitness in a submissive manner, seek rather to know what God intends, then as being absolutely determined in respect of the end. 4. Although gifts, graces, and an impulse concur together; yet will not this constitute a minister, though they may evidence a call to the ministry, and war, and one step in when a door is opened to them: because neither of these, do include an authoritative commission for him to treat, although they do put him in a capacity to be sent as an ambassador of Christ, when he shall be authorized. Hence it is, that in the case of deacons, Acts vi. who are by gifts fitted for their office, and of bishops, Tit. i. 7, 8, and 9. who are in the respects there set down, to be found qualified for their employment; yet it is the authoritative ordaining of both mentioned as that which did constitute them officers in these respective stations. Lastly, We say that the impulse, when all concur with it, may have its own cumulative weight for the strengthening of one that have it, to the undertaking of this charge, when the Lord in his ordinary way opens the door unto him.

To shut up this part of the discourse, we conceive, that it were useful to the church and conducing exceedingly for the clearing of entrance to the ministry, that there were some choice and way of trial, both of such as might be preferably found fit to enter the ministry, and also of others that might be advised to study in reverence thereunto; and that might not be left unto men themselves alone, whether they will offer themselves to trial in reference to that charge or not. For so many may, and no question do, another good gifts which might be useful, thereby prejudging the church thereof, who by this grave convincing, and (ere it fail) authoritative way, might be brought forth, and would be more easily made to yield thereunto, when the burden thereof were not wholly
left unto themselves; whereas, now partly, for shame and modesty, partly from custom, and undervaluing of the ministry, none ordinarily who otherwise have a temporal being, or any place, do become themselves to this calling: and it is hard to say that either none such are gifted for it, or that such gifts should be left. And by this on the other side we suppose, that many who now design themselves to the ministry, (because none but such as take that way are called thereunto) would be ashamed to thrust forth themselves; and so the church might have access a great deal better to the providing of herself with able and qualified ministers; whereas now the is, almost confined in her choice to a number that give themselves or at most are designed by their parents, or possibly constrained by necessity to follow such a study. It is true, this way the Lord may provide his house, and may so engage those whom he minds to make use of, yet certainly it looks not so like an ordinary way for attaining of edification as the other; and considering that the church as such is one body, and so ought to make use of every member, and any member as may most conduces for the good of the whole body. There is no question, but the church might call a member, upon supposition of his qualifications to trial, and being found conform to what was supposed, might appoint him to the ministry; and that member ought to yield to both, from that duty that lyeth on every member in reference to the whole body, is to be which preferred to any particular member's interest; and this with respect to men's outward condition or place, providing they are employed in this station, may be more useful to the church, and the edification of Christ's body, their being employed in no calling at all, or in any other calling. This being also to be granted, that some men may be useful in, and fit for public civil callings, as that thereby the church may be benefited so far, that it will not be meet in every case, and in every person to use this power; yet this extraordinary case being laid aside, no doubt ordinarily it were useful. And seeing all incorporations and commonwealths have this liberty to call and employ their members, without respect to their own inclinations, so as it may be most behoefful for the good of the body; this which nature teacheth, and experience hath confirmed in them, cannot be denied to the church, which is a body, and hath its own policy given to it by Jesus Christ for the building up of itself. This way is also agreeable to scripture, and to the practice of the primitive times; none can say that the church did not chuse her elders and deacons and other officers out of all her members indifferently, as she thought fit, Acts vi. seven men fitly qualified are to be looked out amongst all the people; so in Paul's practice through the Acts, and in his direction to Timothy and Titus; such only are to be chosen who offer themselves to it; but indifferently, such as may be best qualified are to be inquired for; and when found, whatever they be, to be called and ordained to the ministry. By all which, it appears like the apostolic way to enquire for men that may be found qualified for the ministry; and also, that choosing, or repining to enter the ministry in any person found qualified for it and thus called to it, hath never been supposed as allowable by the apostles, but it was looked upon as a duty, for those that were so called to obey, as it was the duty of others to enquire for such. To this also, may that exhortation of Peter relate, 1 Epist. v. and 2. verfe 'Feed the flock of God which is amongst you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly,' &c, whereby it would seem, that he is pressing obedience from those that were called and willingly they should undertake the oversight of God's flock. Which words, if well considered, would pinch exceedingly a tender conscience of any man, if a call were thus pressed upon him. And indeed, if it were at men's option arbitrarily to refuse such a call, the directions that are given to people and ministers for searching out calling and ordaining such were to no purpose, for this they might all be frustrated. We do not say this to prejudice the laudable way of training up students in reference to this end it seemeth that even amongst the Jews, these who were to teach the people were numerous, and as it were in colleges, trained up with the prophets, and
these who were able to teach them. The Apostles also were not defective in training of young men in reference to this, which threws the laudable effets of that way. And although the main part thereof be not to be placed in scholastic debates; yet is training necessary, which in the meanest calling is found useful; and therefore not justly to be denied here. We would only say, 1. That there would be some choice made in the deferring of youths for that study, so that in an orderly way, some might be trained, and not have liberty otherwise to withdrawal; and others timely advised to look to some other employment. We would not have elections bounded and limited to that number, for as either any whatsoever thus trained up might certainly be supposed as being capable of being ministers, or as if no congregation or presbytery might fix their eye upon, or give a call unto any other. This way of calling was long continued in the primitive church, as we may see in the example of Ambrose, who being a senator and presbyter (although not yet baptised) nevertheless, because of his known ability, piety, and prudence, was unexpectedly and unanimously called to be bishop of Milan; and notwithstanding of his great opposition thereto, was at length to pressed as he was made to yield; and after proved a notable instrument in the church of Christ. And it is remarked, that the good emperor Valentinian, did exceedingly rejoice when he heard it, blessing God that had led him to chuse one to take care of bodies, who was accounted fit to take care of souls. Theodret. Hist. lib. iv. cha. vi. The like is recorded by Eaugrius. Hist. lib. iv. chap. vi. Of one Euphrainius, who while he was governor of the caft, was chosen to be bishop of Antioch, which the Author calleth fides apopholica. This also the established doctrine of our church in the first book of discipline, in that head that concerneth prophecy and interpreting scripture, whereof these are the words, 'Moreover in men in whom is supposed to be any gift, which might edify the church, if they were employed, must be charged by the ministers and elders to join themselves with the fecon and company of interpreters, to the end that the kirk may judge whether they be able to serve to God's glory and the profit of the kirk, in the vocation of ministers or not.' And, if any be found disobedient, and not willing to communicate the gifts and special graces of God with their brethren, after sufficient admonition, discipline must proceed against them, provided that the civil magistrate concur with the judgment and election of the kirk; for no man may be permitted as beft pleaseth him, to live within the kirk of God; but every man must be constrained by fraternal admonition, and correction to bellow his labours, when of the kirk he is required, to the edification of others. Which if it were zealously followed, might by God's blessing prove both profitable, and honourable to the church.

To lay something to the second head proposed, viz. of a man's cleareness to the ministry of a particular congregation, we suppose that this also is necessary for his peace, seeing there is no reason that men ought arbitrarily to walk herein, but accordingly as they are called of God to one place and not of another; therefore we see, that in John's commission, the general is not only expressed; but particularly, he is instructed in reference to such and such particular churches; and according to this we see in the history of the Acts, that some were ordered to preach in one place, and some in another; and Acts xxiii. Paul and Silas in their leaving Antioch, and going to the Gentiles were not called by words, but confirmed and authorized by the laying on of hands, and we doubt not but this general also will be granted. For helping of clearness therein, the former general rules, are also to be applied with special respect to the particular case, as I. It is not to be tried, if the gift be not only suitable to edification in general, but to the edification of that people in particular; so that if when their case, dispositions, qualifications, &c. And his gifts, disposition, and other fitness, both in reference to his public ministry in doctrine and discipline, as also to his inducement in reference to his private conversation (yca their very corruptions and infirmities being compared together) If I say, such a man may, in well grounded reason, be looked upon as qualified for the edifying of such a people. In this comparison
also, respect must be had even to the more public state of the church; so as a man’s fitness would not only be tried with respect to the congregation itself, but with respect other things. 2. This fitness would be found and determined to be so, by these whose place it is to try gifts, even in this respect. 3. The testing of providences is to be observed, as the rise of the call, if it proceed from no natural or carnal end? If no other door to be opened elsewhere to him who is called, he may the more warrantably step in there, if no probable settling of that congregation appear otherwise than by him, so as his refusing might occasion a detriment to that place? If things look so as we have an esteem without prejudice in the hearts of that people; so as he may probably expect to be looked on as a minister, and to have the word without prejudice received from him in that place? Also if without carnal respects his heart be made to incline that way, or if unexpectedly and over many difficulties the people have pitched on him and adhered to him? These and such like may have their own weight, so as to help to gather this conclusion, that probably such a man’s ministration may be useful and profitable in such a place. Neither is the advice of sober and unbiased men, ministers and others to be neglected, seeing often they may see more in a man’s particular case, nor he can discern himself; and that is oft found to be a mean made use of by God, for manifesting of his mind in such cases. Again, if there be any competition of places, so as one be sought by more congregations at once, the case is here somewhat different, supposing the man to be equally fitted for several places; otherwise greater suitableness to the one, nor to the other, where it is palpable, doth caft the balance. In deciding what to choose in this competition there is much need of singleness and deniends to all outward and carnal things, both in him that sought and in them who seek, and in all others interested; this being a great ill to suffer carnal weaknesses and contentions to set in, even in pursuit of a good minister. Neither is there great weight to be laid upon priority or poverty in the applications that are made, the matter itself and causes which may be given for the last and for the first, can only satisfy the confidence as to the great scope of the ministry, viz. the edification of the church; seeing a man is obliged to look to edification in his ministration, and so to settle, where probably that may be best attained, and not as an occasion may be first or last, moved to him. And it were good that both he who is called, and they who call, would submit all interests, and be regulated by this. We conceive also, that the decision of this, doth not mainly or principally lay upon the person himself; for as he is not firmly to judge, whether his gifts be meet for the ministry in general, or for the edification of such a people in particular; so neither comparatively is he to decide, whether it be more conducing for edification, that he embrace one call rather than another; but this is to be done rather by those, whose place leads them indifferently to look to the general good of the church. This then is the general rule to decide by, whether his ministry, considered complexly in all circumstances, may most conduces to the edification of Christ’s body by the accepting of this or that charge, when all things are singly and impartially weighed and compared together? So as in the result, it may upon good grounds, be made to appear, that the one will prove a greater furtherance to the perfecting of the saints, and enlargement of Christ’s kingdom than the other; as if his ministry in one place, may be profitable to more souls than in another; and that not only with a respect to the particular congregation, but as it may have influence to the preventing or suppressing of some general evils, or, the promoting of some general good in more congregations beside. If his ministry may probably have more acceptance in one place than in another; if by some present circumstance, the planting of one place be more needful, and the delay thereof be more dangerous than in another, which seemeth more difficult than the place in competition therewith; if the man find after some trial, his liberty greater, his powels more shined, and his mouth more opened as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. vi. in reference to one more than another; if the harmonious judgment of single uninterested faithful men prefer the one, as more edifying to the other; and many such like, whereby
Concercning writing.

In reference to this we say, 1. That men may by writing communicate what light God gives them, for the good of the church. It is true, the gospel was at first spread and planted by preaching, that is more properly the mean of conversion. It is true also that all the apostles preached, but all did not write; yet we will find, that the apostles made great use of writing for the informing, reproving, strengthening, and every way edifying of churches and persons brought to the faith; for they wrote the epistles not only as scripture for the church in general, but also for the edifying of such persons in particular, and for clearing of such and such particular doubts or truths, which the state of such times, or churches did most call for. There is reason also for this, if we consider, 1. The relation that is amongst all the members of the catholic church, whereby all are tied to be edifying one to another, &c. 2. The end wherefore God hath given men gifts, which is to profit withal: And yet, 3. That a man cannot by word make his gift forthcoming in the extent that he is obliged; there is therefore a necessity of using writing for that end, it being a singular gift of God for promoting edification. It is upon this ground as we said, that many epistles are written, to be useful where the writers could not be, and when they are gone. It is upon this ground also, we conceive that many Psalms and Songs (as that of Hezekiah, I sa. xxxviii.) are committed to writing by the authors: that by it their case or gift might be made useful to others for their instruction, as the titles of many Psalms bear. This way for many ages, hath been blessed for the good of the church of Christ, who have reason to bless God, that put it in the hearts of many antients and others, thus to be profitable in the Church. And it may be, some able men have been but too sparing to make their talent forth-coming that way to others. And as we may conclude, that ministers may preach the gospel who are called, because the Apostles did it, even though ministers are not gifted with infallibility of preaching, as they were, because that was...
for edifying the body; so we may conclude that men called to it, may write for the edification of the church, although they be not gifted with infallibility in their writing.

We gather from this, that none should take on them to write anything, as the Lord's mind, for the edification of the church, without a call to it: I mean not an extraordinary call as John had, but this I mean, that as there is an ordinary call needful, to the preaching of the gospel, (and we may conclude from God's extraordinary way of calling the Apostles to preach, the necessity of an ordinary call,) So in the general, the same consequence will hold in respect of writing, for such an end. And if we look through the scripture, we will find a call for writing, as well as for preaching, and readily he who was called to the first, was also called to the second, as being a prophet of the Lord. Though this particular we do not absolutely and simply prens, seeing men may be called to write and not be fitted to preach; yet I conceive Solomon is called the preacher from his writing. And to warrant writing we would conceive so much to be necessary as may, 1. Satisfie the man himself, as to his being called to such an eminent duty by God, and therefore there must be somewhat to hold out to him, that it is God's mind he should undertake such a task. That men walk not by their own satisfaction alone; but that there be so much, as to convince others, that God put them on that work: and therefore though he would not press an authoritative million to write, as to preach; yet considering that John's warrant to write, is also a warrant to others, to make use of it, and that people would have a warrant for making use of writings, as well as a man for his writing. There is some orderly thing necessary, as to point out to the man his duty in writing, for his peace; to also to point out to others their duty in use-making of it. So that neither any that please may write (but he would give some reason, beside his pleasure) nor would every one use the writings of all, as they please.

Reason 1. A call is necessary for every thing, and men and lawful duties are to walk by it; otherwise all lawful duties would ly upon all men as their calling, or be at their pleasure: which stands not with God's putting the task, even of particulars into men's hands.

2. To write of the holy things of God, is to take us, to tell what God thinks, and what is his will, which is a most concerning thing; especially to do it lemnely in write, left it prove, at least a taking of God's name in vain: when without a call we do it.

3. This may clear it, that neither public preaching, nor private edification by word, can be discharged rightly, but when men walk according to God's call in these, which is also necessary in writing.

4. There is no promise to be guided in it, or of success to it, without some clearness of a call to it; and so it cannot be comfortably undertaken nor prosecuted.

5. All the saints had their call to write, who took that way; hence some Apostles have written, others not; some saints have recorded their cafe, others not. The reason of this difference is, because some were called to write, and others otherwise employed; else we must say, they failed who wrote not. Neither will it simply warrant one, that he writes truth; there was doubtles truth in the preaching of the sons of thunder, and also of the sons of consolation; yet God thought it not good to call them to write. And experience hath often made this truth out, that many have taken on them to write, whose writing have been exceeding hurtful to the church; so that had all men walked by a call in writing, there had been fewer errors, at least they had not come unto such a height; and the church would have been, free of many futile disputations, that have more prejudged than advanced godliness in it. As therefore some may fail in not writing, when they are called to it, for others may in going about it, whilst they are not called to it.

'If we might enquire in the general, (for particulars cannot be pitched on,) What may evidence a call to write? We shall shew. 1. What is not needful. 2. What will not satisfy and be sufficient. And 3. What is needful and may be satisfying.
1. An extraordinary call by revelation, or immediate impulse of the Spirit, such as John and the Apostles had, is not needful. It might make a writer as well as a preacher to be suspected, if they should attend to any such call.

2. We think not an authoritative mission in the person who is writer, simply needful. One may be fitted to edify by writing, whose gifts lead not to edify by preaching; yet ought not the church to be frustrated of the benefit of his gift.

3. We think not an prevailing inclination simply necessary, seeing often inclination thwart's with duty; and men, modestly, laziness, or other respects, may much divert the inclination, as in Moses, Jeremiah, and others when called to God's work.

4. We think it necessary, that there be any singular or extraordinary measure of gifts beyond others; some may be called to write by particular providences, when others of more understanding may be spared; even as some may be called to preach, and others of more learning and ability are passed by.

On the contrary, it will not be sufficient to evidence a call to write. 1. To have an inclination. 2. To have gifts: Or, 3. To be found in truth: nor 4. To have a good meaning and end. These will not serve in other duties, and so neither in this without respect had to the particulars after mentioned.

That a man therefore may have peace as to his undertaking we conceive there is a concurrence of several things needful to be observed. As, 1. There is a necessity of a single end, viz. God's glory, others edification; and in part may come in, his own exonerates as to such a duty. It is not self-seeking, nor getting of a name, nor strengthening such a particular party or opinion, that will give one peace in this matter. 2. It is necessary not only that the thing be truth, but that it be edifying, profitable, and pertinent at such a time. God's call to any thing, doth over time, and try it well, as most subservient to the scope of edification. Hence that which is error, or impertinent, can never plead a call in writing more than in preaching, yet we conceive the writing of many light frothy subjects or speculative jangling and contentions about words, is exceedingly contrary to edification, which ought to be the end, and also the rule of our practice in writing. 3. Besides these, there are circumstances in the concurrence of providences trying together, in reference to the person writing, to the subject writing, to the subject written of, the time wherein, and occasion whereupon, and such like; which being observed, may contribute to give some light in the thing. As, 1. If the person be called publicly to edify the church, if he be of that weight, as his testimony may prove profitable in the church, for strengthening and confirming of others, or the like consideration; though no new thing be brought forth by him: which ground as a moral reason, Luke gives to Theophilus of his writing the gospel, Luke i. 1.

2. Considerations may be drawn from the subject. As i. If it be a necessary point, that is contraverted. 2. If the scripture opened be dark and obscure, and possibly not many satisfyingly writing of it. 3. If the way of handling of it be such as gives any new advantage to truth, or to the opening of the scripture (though it not be to accurately every way) that is, if the matter be more plain, or more short, or more full, or touching at some things others have passed, or clearing what they have mistaken, or confirming what they asserted only, or such like cases wherein they may contribute and be useful for the understanding of what is already written; or occasion others to form and mould their invention, and what God hath given them, for better advantage to others; seeing some hath the faculty of inventing, others improving what is invented: thus both are made use of for one end, when they are brought forth together; even as in building some are useful for plotting or contriving, some for digging stones, some for hewing, others for laying by square and line; yet must be furnished by the former. So is it also in an edifying way of writing, every one have not all, yet should none refuse to contribute their part.

3. The time would be considered if such a truth be presently controverted, or such a subject be necessary to be spoken unto now, if such a persons interpolating...
may be usefull, if such a duty be neglected, or if such a scripture be not made use of, and the like. These may have there weight to put folks to it, even though they should pay little more than what is paid by others; because then all are called to put to their hand to help, that is the time of it. And there is this advantage, that when many who write, it varyeth not only to confirm and strengthen what another hath laid, but it occasions some to read that subject, and readily would never have read it, had not such a man written thereon, seeing another book of that subject might possibly never have come to their hands: and withal, this is advantageous when more are engaged in the same subject. This consideration is alluded by Bellar. praef. in Tom. prim. out of Augustine, as a reason to put men to write, who were not of the most excellent parts; that it was edifying and better than nothing; yea that it was becometh at such a time to see many armed in the camp of Christ, against his adversaries although all be not leaders and captains.

4. Occasion also may be, from God's putting one to have thoughts of such a subject, when others are otherwise taken up, some not having access to be edifying otherwise, as when occasion of study is given, and the thing by public delivery, or secret communion is known to others, and called for by them to be made public, or that they set them to it, God giving occasion of health, quietness, means, &c. for it: the getting approbation from such as are single and intelligent, judging such a thing usefull, in this the spirits of God's servants would be subject to others. Such considerations are frequently mentioned by worthy men, in their prefaces to their books. And it is observed in vita Pellicani, as swayning him to publish his writings, though accounted by himself at least to be of accurate learning, that mediocrer et simpliciter scripta, mediocrer docti sunt placitutem videmus, et quod illorum major sit copia, quam eximia doctorum, gratificari petentibus veluit. For as the most learned preachings, do not alway edify most, lo neither is it in writing; and although as a learned man observeth in a preface, that which is correct edifieth most intensly, and best explaineth the thing: yet often what is more popular, edifieth most extensly, and proveth profitable to many more who are but of ordinary reach.

Of Reading and Hearing.

In the last place, it is also clear that people are not indifferently and without warrant to read and hear, except they know they be warranted therein; for this command of writing, is not only inferred, for the confirming of John in his call to write, but also tendeth to warrant these who are written unto, confidently to receive and make use of what is written. And it follows upon the former, for if a call be necessary, to speak or write in the name of the Lord then ought also people somehow to be clear that in their reading and hearing they may be walking according to God's rule and call them to reading what he calleth them to read, seeing men cannot be supposed to be left to arbitrariness therein. Hence it is, that where the Lord dismissed the commissioning of such to teach, and accounts them guilty for running whom he hath not sent, and that either by writ or word, as may appear by Jer. xxiii. and xxiv. ver. 24. &c. So doth he reprove the people that do countenance such in their hearing or reading while as their call is not evidenced to be him. Hence so frequently, both in the old and new testament, we are commanded not to countenance such, but to beware of them; and that must reach the reading of their writings, as well as conversing with their persons, the one being dangerous, as the other is: for one of these two must necessarily follow, supposing them not be called of God thereto.

Either they are ensnared by such and such errors as others take on them to vent, and they are brought to give head to lies instead of truth; and altho' though reading and hearing be good in itself, yet that wise advice of Solomon, Prov. xix. 27. doth here take place, 'Cease my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.' This effect is frequent, the Lord thereby in his secret justice punishing the lightness and curiosity of presumptu-
ous persons, that dare hazard upon any snare. Hence it is, that so often that lightness and indifference in the practice of reading and hearing such as are not called, hath with it an itching after some new doctrine, and a secret discontent with found doctrine, which putteth them to this to heap up teachers to themselves, which is said, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. 1. To shew the difference that is betwixt teachers sent from God, and such as people choose to make fo to themselves, without his warrant. And, 2. It sheweth what ordinarily doth accompany that itching practice, ver. 4. ‘They turn away their ears from truth, and are turned to fables.’ For as it is ordinarily a lust to vent some strange doctrine, which doth make men write or preach without God’s call thereunto; so it is an itching after some fain thing, or at least a loathing of found simplicity, that makes people thus betray their time in the reading or hearing of such. And if no such thing be at first sensible, yet doth such persons tempt the Lord to give them up unto it.

2. Or if this follow not, we are sure that it shall no way prove useful unto the followers thereof, as that word is, Jer. xxxiii. 23. ‘I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all.’ And seeing edification is God’s gift, can it be expected but in his way? or can that be accounted this way, which he hath not warranted? At best it putteth, 1. The person in the hazard of a snare, which hath taken many off their feet, which sometime seemed to be strong; and can they pray unto the Lord that they may not be led into temptation, when they do cast themselves into the snare? 2. It carries offence along with it, in reference to the party who runs unfast, it proves a strengthening and confirming of him, and so partaking of his sin. In reference to others, it either strengthens them, by that example to cast themselves unto that snare which possibly may be their ruin; or it grieves them and makes them sad who are tender of such things, or gives occasion to make all difference of that kind to be thought light of. All which should be echeewed: at least it doth this, it diverteth men from that which, might be more profitable, and to which they might expect a blessing which they have not the promise of, nor can they expect in this.

And seeing reading is a special mean of edification if well employed, and a great step to destruction when otherwise, as experience doth prove, people who are commanded to watch, and to choose that which is most excellent, cannot be left in an indifference in this, yea the spending of our time rightly being the improving of a special talent, which in reading many things, may be exceedingly mispent, if not hurtfully abused. Christian wisdom therefore is mainly called for in this, that a right choice may be made. Especially considering, that it is but little time that many can spend in reading; therefore by a wrong choice they incapacitate themselves from reading that which may be more profitable for their cafe and station. And also seeing every one hath not that ability to discern poison from good food, there must therefore be a necessity that people regulate their christian liberty in this rightly, lest it becomes loosened, and turn to be a snare. Altho though some whom God hath furnished with gifts, and by their place and station calleth them to convince gain layers, may, and are called to acquaint themselves with writings of all kind, yet ought not all to take that liberty to themselves, more than they dare hazard publicly to debate with adversaries of any kind; seeing the strength and weight of their errors are stuffed into their writings, and we are no les unable to encounter their writ than their words.

In matter of hearing, it is not so hard to discern who are to be accounted to speak without God’s commission; because ordinarily such have either no warrantable call at all, nor in the outward form; and so cannot be accounted but to run unfast, or by palpable defection from the truth, and commission given them in this call, they have forfeited their commission and so no more to be accounted ambassadors to Christ, or watchmen of his flock, than a watchman of the city is to be accounted an observer thereof, when he hath publicly made defection of the enemy and taketh on him. For we are to rest in the external call, not to dispute that which is inward, because it
paffeth our reach; and Christ hath furnished his house with external ordinances, for the warrancing of his peoples peace in reference to these things. There is therefore a great difference to be placed here betwixt one that is called, and one whom we think not worthy to be called; it is the first that warrangs hearing, whereof we may afterward have some occasion to speak.

It is more difficult to give directions in reference to reading; yet seeing that now God hath furnished his people with many useful books, that in experience have been found to be such, we may for the help of the weaker propose these general rules. 1. That they would spend their time in the reading of such books as judicious tender Christians have found good of before, or shall recommend to them; such as (so to say) have been tried and tasted, and therefore may be, as good food in which there is no hazard, meddled with. And there is no difficulty here; for such and such books are commonly esteemed such, and it is easy to attain to the knowledge of them. 2. Some respect may be had to the author so far as may help to a decision in this, whether such and such a book may be made use of, if it be known to be his; that if by other writings, preaching or otherwise, he be known to be found and serious, such a book may with the more confidence be hazarded upon: It is for this that frequently the names of authors are inserted in their writings, as is done by John frequently in this book. For, though no man's name ought to bear such sway with any as to make them digest any thing without trial, because it cometh from him; yet it may give to on freedom to make use of the writings of such, rather than of another, of whom there is no such ground of confidence. 3. Where books and authors are noted by the judicious and godly to be dangerous and unprofitable, and in experience have been found to have been so to others, distance would be kept with such; lest we find the proof thereof by our own experience, which we would not learn from others. 4. Where books and authors are both unknown, we conceive that is more safe for private persons for a time to abstain the reading of them, until it be found what they by some others, who may more judiciously discern the same, and in the mean time to spend that time in the the reading of such as unquestionably are profitable; because by this we lose no time, and this may be done in faith, knowing that we are not hazarding ourselves upon a temptation, which by reading of the other that is unknown to us cannot be. And seeing men usually take this way in making choice of physicians for the body, who are in experience found by others to be skilful and useful, rather than to hazard on any who are yet unknown and have given no such proof; wisdom would say, that no less should be required in the making use of physicians or remedies that tend to our spiritual edification, it being of no less concernment than the other. And if these things were observed in writing, reading and hearing respectively, as they may be applied in cases, the church of Christ might be preferred from many errors and offences, which by this liberty is occasioned, and many persons saved from much hurtful and unprofitable labour both in writing and reading.

LECTURE I.

CHAP. II.

Verse 1. Unto the Angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things faith he that hath the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:

2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars;

3. And hast borne, and hast patience; and for my Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

FOLLOWETH now the particular epistles to the seven churches, wherein our Lord maketh them know how privy he is to their actions, ill or good, commending the one, and reproving the other, with some promises and threatenings intermixed. There-
are some things common to all these epistles: some things peculiar to the churches he writes unto, as they are commended only, as Philadelphia and Smyrna, or discommended only as Laodicea, or somewhat of both, as the other four.

1. It is common to all to have their epistles agreeing in the form, though different in the matter: As, 1. To be divided in an inscription, comprehending the party to whom and from whom. 2. A narration or body comprehending the particular message Christ sends to them. 3. A conclusion comprehending some promise to the overcomers, and an advertisement to all hearers to profit.

2. All are directed to the angels, or the ministers of the churches, and not to the churches themselves immediately, though the first direction, chap. i. ver. 11, be to them. And in the close of every epistle it is said, 'What the Spirit faith unto the churches.' If any ask how the churches and angels or church-guides are so indifferently and promiscuously named? Answer. For these reasons. 1. Because the church and the collective body of officers are so exceeding near of kin each to other, and in their interests so interwoven, that in the scripture-phrase, to write unto the church, and to write unto her officers are one: as to tell unto the church, Matt. xviii. and to tell unto the church-officers, are one. 2. Because the church is virtually comprehended, to speak so, under her officers who are not only the special members, but also the representers of that body: And as one writing to an incorporation or burgh, and directing his letters to the magistrate thereof, may be said to write unto the burgh, even so it is here. For, though ministers in respect of their authority and administration of the ordinances do not represent the church, but Jesus Christ whose ambassadors they are; yet in respect of their united way of acting together, and their sympathizing with all the members, and their joint interest in all the affairs belonging to the members, and the reciprocal sharing that is between them and the members of all good or evil temperatures, they may well be said to represent the church, whose servants they are for Christ’s sake; even as the magistrate acting in his duty representeth God,

yet in some sense also may be said to represent the people. 3. Because there is ordinarily a great suitableness and likeness between the minister and people of that church whereof he is minister; he lukewarm, and they are lukewarm; he lively, and readily it is so with them, as we will see in all the seven epistles following; and therefore the writing unto and describing of one, doth by consequence include both, especially considering, that whether the church’s estate be good or ill, the minister hath much influence on it, and therefore both in reproofs and commendations, the first word is directed to him. 4. Because the order Christ hath instituted in his church doth so require; he reveals not his mind immediately to the people, but first to his ministers, and by them to the church; for our Lord’s way is orderly, so as may prevent confusion in his church, which is done not by putting it in the hands of people, but by putting his ministers to it in these things which concern their station; and these being such things as belong peculiarly to ministers to be amended in the epistles, therefore doth he particularly direct it to them.

3. All the titles given to Christ are for the most part taken out of the vision, chap. i. only they are chosen and pitched on as may best serve the scope of every epistle; as the Lord is to discover their case, or accordingly to threaten or promise, the title is wailed which is most suitable to that end; as here Christ’s presence, care and sovereignty over his churches and ministers are laid down, when he is to discover a secret fault in them, and to threaten the unchurching of them for it, there being ordinarily in every epistle two titles, one respecting the case of the church written unto, the other the promise or threatening which is annexed; and therefore are they upon the matter, often in plain terms in the close of the epistle, which may give some insight into the meaning of them.

4. It is common to them all to begin with this word, ‘I know thy works;’ that so there may not only be an evidence of Christ’s Godhead, but also to remove all exception which might be made against his testimony. We take it to look ordinarily not so much to his approbation, as to his omniscience, simply; because it is indifferently made the ground of reproofs.
as well as of the commendation; and therefore it is used in the epistle to Laodicea, where no commendation is given.

For more particular use-making of these epistles, consider 1. The immediate scope of them, which is to stir up the seven churches, according to their several conditions, to hold fast what was right, and to amend what was wrong, having in them the discovery of the then estate of those churches, and some warnings suitable to that end, and so they are not in a prophetical way primarily to represent particular churches in ages following: Yet, 2. Are they useful in a special manner to other churches, being doctrinally applied to their case, as the Lord applieth the words of Isaiah xxxix. 13. Mat. xv. 7. ‘Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you,’ &c. whereas Isaiah's words do principally respect the people in his own time; yet may they be applied to all hypocrites in such a case, as if it had been intentionally spoken of them; so may it be here in the application of them to particular churches in the like cases; yea, to particular persons, according to the common close, ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,’ &c. And the epistles may be so much the more useful in application than other scriptures, because in one map they comprehend together the complex case of a church, with the particular directions, reproofs and encouragements, which befits the case. 3. The epistles being directed to both the angels and churches, to the one mediately, to the other immediately, as we shew we would beware of confounding the directions and matter contained in them as equally agreeing to both, as also of too rigid separating of them; as if what particularly belonged to the minister did no way belong to the people, and contrariwise; but to look what may agree to either, without confounding of stations or sexes. As in all other scriptures we take directions in things belonging to magistrates, to be given to them, and so to others in all several stations respectively; so here what belongeth to ministers, apply it to them: As for instance, preaching, and judicial trial of corrupt men; that so far as it is authoritative, belongs to officers; yet so far as people have access in their stations to promote such ends.

as many ways they may, in so far it belongs to them, and so in other cases.

Ver. 2. Followeth the body of the epistle, for the inscription is opened, chap. i. except what concerneth the application of it to the estate of this church, and it hath several steps in it. 1. A general word, which is the ground of our Lord's pronouncing his censure, 'I know thy works,' to hold out his omniscience without approbation or commendation. The meaning is, I know all thy works inward and outward, thy form and way of administration of all things in the church, all thy outward carries in things, the things themselves, and thy frame in going about them, the matter and manner of doing them, and the end thou hast before thee in them; and I know them perfectly, exactly, and thoroughly; a thing that in the entry to his service and every other thing, we would look to and bear in mind, that Christ is acquainted with all our carriage, and every thing that escapeth us. And this being often repeated, it layeth, that Christ counts this a main part of his message, to have souls convinced of his perfect and thorough knowledge of their words.

He proceedeth to the commendation verse 2, 3. the commendation is, 1. Shortly set down. And, 2. More particularly explained: primarily it is applicable to the angel, but secondarily to others. It is shortly set down in three steps in the words, 'thy labour and thy patience, and how thou canst bear them that are evil.' Having told them in the general, that he knew all their words good and evil, he tells the particular works he commends. 1. Their labour, the word in the original kopen the labour which is properly applied to ministers in their ministerial work. It is that word 1 Tim. v. 17. 'Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' And, 1 Thess. v. 12. 'Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord.' And it is a word that sets out the great carefulness and painfulness of the ministry, and being spoken especially to the Angels, the meaning is, I know thy carefulness and care in the work of the ministry, committed to
they found them out to be what they were, liars and deluders of the people, especially in alleging a commision from Christ, when they had none. And this being a main part of the condemnation of the Angel, and of his exercise, it is most largely insisted on.

Verse 3. He explaineth their patience and hast borne, and hast patience: their bearing looks to the sufferings they met with from the false Apostles in the persecuting of their trial, wherein they met with many afflictions, yet they endured to prosecute their duty as good soldiers do. 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3. 'And hath patience.' Which relateth to the quiet and patient manner of their suffering affliction. It is nothing to suffer when folks cannot eache it, but they suffered patiently in the doing of their duty, and continued in patient suffering. 3. He commendeth and explains their labour. 'For my name sake, thou hast laboured and not fainted,' which first words, for my name sake, will agree well to the word going before, and is the ground of their submission and patience under crosses; or it may look to the words following, and so the meaning is, for zeal to my glory thou hast endured all this pains; for my name sake, thou hast been at pains in doing, and hast overcome all rubs in the way. 'And hast not fainted.' That is, thou hast not been wearied of, or scared or boasted from thy duty, nor made to defer it for all the suffering thou hast met with, but respect to my name hast made thee persevere. So then their labour at it was spoken of before, points at their painfulness; and here it respects their lightness, that it was not in a way of self-seeking, but for his names sake. 2. That it was constant and continuing; they were carried on without interruption in prosecuting their zealous intention.

If it be asked here, how such as call themselves Apostles, or do count themselves not subject to the discipline of a particular church (as these who pretended to be Apostles behaved to do,) can be orderly proceeded against by church-trial and censure, especially of a particular church?

Answ. 1. There is no Apostle nor Angel, in the preaching of the gospel, that is altogether above trial,
they are as such above erring in doctrine, yet may and should their doctrine be tried according to the word, Acts xvii. 11. Gal. i. 8. Because even Apostles are but ambassadors, and are not Lords over the faith of God's people, but helpers of their joy, Col. v. 20. 1. Pet. v. 3. &c. Secondly, Apostles in the guiding of a constituent church, oftentimes used not their extraordinary authority, as acting by themselves by virtue of their infallibility, but jointly with others, in an ordinary way, clearing and confirming their doctrine and practices from scripture, and God's call warranting them in that particular, as appears by Peter's apology, Acts xi. and Paul with the rest of the Apostles, their proceeding, Acts xv. in which two respects, it is suitable for believers, to try the spirits, 1 John iv. 1. Thirdly, We say, that no presumptuous title assumed by ones self, nor any irregular walking, as belonging to no church, or not to such and such a particular church, can exempt any member of the catholic church from trial, and if need require, from censure of the particular church where such person or persons shall reside, which we shall confirm from these reasons. 1. Not from trial, because in so far the doctrine and practices of the Apostles themselves, who were not fixed members of any particular congregation for their membership, and their office belonged to be of equal extent, were subject to trial, that it might be known whether they were of God or not, as is said. Yea, 2. Neither from censure, supposing that it were possible that they should err, and them actually to have erred, as we may see by Paul's supposition, Gal. i. 8. 'If I preach another gospel,' &c. and also by Paul's open rebuking of Peter when he was to be blamed, Gal. ii. 14. 3. This same practice may confirm it, the church rulers of Ephesus, were not feared by that title, nor yet by their not having membership among them, as it seems such could not have been readily strangers, and thereby having the greater access to give out themselves for the thing they were not, yet they went on to try and censure, which is particularly commended in them by Jesus Christ. 4. It may be confirmed from that power that Christ hath given to his church-officers for edification and for preferving the church committed to them from infection, which would seem to be defective, if men had liberty under the former pretexts to vent error and to commit scandalous practices for the enflaming of others, in churches whereof they were not properly members. And though it might be said, that simply such persons were not under the trial and censure of such a church; yet in that respect, as it is necessary for the good of that church, to have these persons tried and censured, they do fall under their authority; and warrantably it is put forth for putting some note on them, for the preventing and removing the offences from the people. 5. It may be confirmed from the unity of the catholic church visible by which any member thereof, if no particular thing impede, may claim the privileges of a member, by communion in public ordinances, of word and sacraments in whatsoever church, though he be no particular member thereof; and therefore he ought also to be liable to the discipline of Christ in any particular church, where he shall fall, to: (seeing that claiming the privileges of a church, and submission to the ordinances thereof, are in themselves reciprocal) and though some profane wretch renounce his own privilege, yet that makes not the church to lose hers; but so long as he continues a member of the catholic visible church, as long as he is under censure of the church, which are put forth in particular congregations. 6. It may be confirmed from the absurdity that otherwise would follow. As, 1. There might be a scandalous member of the catholic visible church who could not be reached by church-censure. 2. One Christian might offend and stumble another; and telling to the church, would be no remedy to it, Matt. xviii. if no particular church had power over such a one, which is contrary to Christ's scope. 3. A door would be opened to a loose liberty within Christ's house. For in such a case, men could neither be censured, nor cast out of the church, nor in any ecclesiastical way be compelled to take on church-membership, or live regularly in the church; by this there might be some Christians sick and needing this cure of discipline, to whom it could not be applied.
by this the ordinance of discipline would not be of equal extent with the sacrament of baptism. All which are absurd.

Observe, 1. Christ would have us always walking in the sense of his omniscience, which make him begin all these epistles with this, I know thy works; a difficult truth to be believed by christians.

2. Christ is an unprejudiced witness, and should be esteemed so by his church, he beareth testimony unto them, as he taketh notice of their good as well as their evil.

3. Such as Christ never called, may take on them highest titles in the church, pretend confidently to a most immediate call, carry fair and gain respect, and have some gifts for that end, as it seemeth they had who called themselves Apostles.

4. That diligence and duty and difficulty in the performance of it often go together; to do and to bear are often enjoined; two things that in our resolution and practice we would not suffer; and if it were believed, we would not see at the very shadow of suffering in, or following upon our duty as we do.

5. Patience in suffering, and impatience against corruptions and corrupt men, can well stand together. This people is said to bear and suffer, and yet it is said, they could not bear; The reason is because their patient suffering or bearing in one word, relates to their enduring of crosses, and their not bearing, or suffering in the other word, relates to corrupt men, and their zeal against them. It were a good thing to knit these two together, and not let our zeal wear away our patience, nor our patience prejudice our zeal. There is a kind of zeal that puts folks always to do, to the end they may shun suffering that is not good, and there is a sort of patience and meekness that wants zeal and sharpness in reference to the purging of Christ's house, a patience that can bear with ill men; and this is no more to be commended than the former. This Angel is commended, that he eschewed both, and hath both patience and zeal in exercise running in their right channel, and put forth toward the right objects. And would God these were more seen and discernable in our practice, the one

would make our zeal to shine, and the other would make our patience and humility praise-worthy. And if they be not judged, our zeal shall be carnal and our patience lukewarm; and neither of these will be commended of Christ.

6. There is no name, privilege, or title, that should scare people, especially the ministers of God, from searching or trying corrupt men, that bring corrupt doctrine, pretending a commission from Christ when they have none, though they should have the pretext of ministers and Apostles, and had never to great gifts, for very like these men who took this name to themselves wanted not gifts, or so smooth a carriage to inflame themselves on people, and to commend their presumption to them; for it was commendable zeal in his Angel, to try them, and discover them.

7. If folks will put to proof and trial many things and persons that have fair names, they will be found very unlike the names they take. It is a time wherein we had need not to take every thing on trust from all persons, though their gifts were great, and they had big titles and names; but humbly and soberly to wait on God for light and direction, searching and trying both men's carriage and doctrine, and the commission they pretend to in carrying of it.

8. Where an immediate call is pretended unto and great titles assumed, ordinarily it is to carry on some strange doctrine or design, and is therefore to be suspected by the people of God. 2 Cor. xi. 13

9. The cenfuring of corrupt undent ministers, is a most difficult task, what from their nature and sometimes from their parts, and from the addictedness of many unto them; yet is a special duty. And although it be often difficult to follow, and be mistaken by many others, yet that it is acceptable before Jesus Christ, may appear from these considerations. 1. That the scripture holdeth forth no kind of persons as more acceptable in themselves, and more hateful to him; for which cause they are called dogs and dumb dogs that cannot bark, Isa. lix. 10. "Sleed without favour, wolves, idol shepherds, such as feed themselves, and kill his flock, blind guides, &c. Hence it is, that there are.
not more fain cried expostulations, with complaints of, or threatenings pronounced against any, than against thee. Our blessed Lord Jesus multiplies woes upon such in a more terrible manner than was usual to him. Matt. xxiii. 2. There is no kind of reproaches that prove more dishonorable to our Lord Jesus, and to his gospel than such. These make the law to be despised, Mal. ii. and the sacrifices and ordinances to be counted vile and contemptible. 1 Sam. ii. Such especially open the mouths of profane men against religion, and the author thereof, and exceedingly derogate from the authority of him they pretend to have sent them, and to the embassage they were sent with, while as they look so unlike him. And upon this account it is amongst others that such particular directions for the singular qualifying church-officers, are given in scripture. And the cenuring of such, and that by Christ's own authority vindicateth him, which cannot be but honourable and acceptable to him. 3. The scandalous miscarriages and unfaithfulness of ministers, bring a special blot upon all religion, as if it were but mere hypocrisy, and tended to the fouling of such ill. And profane men are exceedingly strengthened in such atheistical apprehensions, when such ill are not taken notice of, and cenured by church authority. Whereas by this severity in the exercise of discipline, the faults are seen to be in persons, and not in religion, or in the ordinances thereof. 4. There is no such contempt done to our Lord Jesus, as for one to pretend to have communion from him, and yet to be running unfast by him, or having gotten communion, to miscarry by unfaithfulness, in it. This is a betraying of trust, and cannot but be looked on as a high contempt against him. 5. As there is a suitableness in the cenuring of such church-officers to Christ's mind, so there doth appear in the fame a tenderness of, and zeal unto his glory. Hence it is his most zealous servants, as Elias Paul, yea and himself when on earth did set themselves most against that generation. 6. There is no sort of men more hurtful to the church by obstructing Christ's end in his ordinances, viz. the edification of his people. For such profit them not at all, Jer. xxiii. yea they stand in the way of their profiting sometimes by corrupt doctrine, sometimes by example, sometimes by hedging and weakening of those who look more tenderly to the practice of Godliness. And if no other way, yet by filling the room, and so standing in the way of peoples being provided with such as might be helpful and faithful. Now considering the great respect that our Lord Jesus hath to the edification of his people, and considering the weight that he hath placed upon his ministry, as a mean for promoting of that end, and withal the great obstruction that follows to that end, when this mean disappoints it cannot but be accounted acceptable to him to remove such an obstruction. Yes, 7. Considering that there is nothing he commands more than mutual love to his disciples, and there is nothing wherein love can appear more to them, than in seeking their spiritual education which was that wherein his own love: eminently kythed, and there is nothing wherein this kind of love kythes more to him or them, than that they be fed with knowledge and understanding, by pastors according to his own heart, according to his word to Peter, Peter loves thou me? then feed my lambs. It cannot therefore but be looked on by him as an acceptable service. And indeed if it be commendable to relieve a neighbour's beast from hazard, when there is a slothful shepherd; or to relieve the bodily life from temporal hazard, how much more must it be commendable to prevent the eternal hazard of immortal souls, which by corrupt ministers cannot be but in hazard? 8. There is nothing that more rejoiceth and hardeneth corrupt men than when they are like people, like priests, and have pastors according to their own heart, and there is nothing that they are more provoked and displeased with, than the cenuring of such. Yea even men who hath no respect almost to religion at all, yet abhor and oppose the cenuring of such as if it were a piece of religion, or rather of opposition to religion to do so. Which certainlyersheth that the following of this trial, must be a main furtherance to Godliness, and cometh near to the kingdom of Christ. 9. Not only is there an obstruction to Godliness by such, but they have a main influence upon the advancing of pro-
fanity, and the kingdom of the devil, as it professedly they had confederated with him against Christ. Hence it is said, that from them doth profanity go out to the whole land, Jer. xxiii. And they are called ministers of Satan, 2 Cor. xi. as ambassadors employed by him in his service. And where it is thus not only are scandalous practices committed, but avowed, as it were in contempt of godliness and faithful ministers, who seriously study the promoting of it. Hence it is that often there is a kind of flat enmity against faithfulness and faithful men, not only amongst such ministers themselves, but in their congregation and followers; which neweth the prejudice that cometh by them, and so that necessity of removing them. It may now look like cruelty, it may be, rigidly to pursue such, and like pity to spare them which may much be applauded unto by many; yet if we could consider what hazard may come to immortal souls in a short time by the want of a powerful ministry, much more by the having of corrupt men, either in life or doctrine in that station, and what thoughts souls will have of that cruel pity in the day of judgment. We are persuaded horror would affect the hearts of those who are concerned considering how many are palpably in hazard through defect in this. Can it be thought that Christ's ordaining of a ministry was only to have men bearing such a name, and not to have such as effectually and seriously would promote his design? And can that be expected, whilst men unfit for it, or unworthy of that calling profess the room? And if it be in a more deplorable condition to have congregations defolate without the ordinances, and living like heathens, or as sheep without a shepherd, or blind men without a guide, is it any less, yea is it not much more lamentable to have such as rather marr than further the main design? Which breedeth confidence and security in some natural men, occasioneth looseness and profaneness in others, and almost serveth to no end, but to keep a congregation from one that may guide them, and keep from knowing their want or hazard, and in some to obstruct and put in an non-entry, their edification, more than if none were there at all. For Christ's way appointed for edifying of his church, it not only to have the form of his ordinances by men, supplying these places; but to have such as may by their approbation follow his way of attaining this end. We conceive that the regulating of the entry of church-officers, so that none but such as are thereby approved may be admitted, and of the trial of those who are in, that such who carry themselves unworthily may be removed, is one of the main ends why church authority is given by Jesus Christ for the edification of his body, as the special directions to Timothy and Titus, which do regulate church-officers, especially in the admission and accustoming of elders to sermonize, and if this main point be neglected by church-officers, it may justly provoke God to weaken, if not to break that authority of them, and to make them and it in their hands justly to become despised, which nothing further than the admittance and permitting of corrupt and unmeet officers, to be in the church. And if people delight to have it so, and fret at any thing that may amend it, much more if they effect the continuance thereof, and concur to the supporting of such, it may be that the Lord give them a hill of their own ways; and by error, confusion, or some other way, so bring it about in his just judgment that either they shall have no face of ordinances at all, or have the carcasses of them as a snare and curie unto them, who received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and contented themselves to have the shape and form of Christ's ordinances only among them without respect to the end for which he appointed them. That pungent and zealous discourse, which Mr. Baxter, hath to this purpose in the close of his agreement, is most weighty and convincing, and the matter thereof, so far as concerns this, worthy to be considered. All which is still to be understood of such legal trials as are followed on solid grounds, and in an orderly circumstanced manner for such as was this trial of the false Apollos by the Angel or elders of the church of Ephesus, which usually is cited by divines to conform the power of the church in censuring her officers.
Lecture II.

Verse 4. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent; and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Our Lord Jesus is the faithful and true witness, who impartially testifieth both of what is right, and what is wrong in his church; we have heard his commendation shewing what was right, he began at that to make way for the other part of his testimony, which is to discover what is wrong; and it is set down, verse 4. 1. More generally by a transition from the commendation, 'Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee,' that is, though all these things be true, and thou be commendable in them, and I commend thee for them; yet there is a nevertheless added; that is not all, there are some things wrong, which I also take notice of, and will quarrel for, though there be many things right. This shews 1. Our Lord Jesus his impartiality in taking notice of all good and ill. And, 2. It shews the extent of duty which confineth in an universal respect to all his commands, and failing in some things, may be as a dead fly in a box of ointment, to mar the favour of the rest. And, 3. That it is meet for believers to know their whole estate, their ill as well as their good; both are useful to them to be known, and both are represented by our Lord Jesus unto them. His commending of them, alters not what is justly reprovable, his reproof prejudges them not in what is commendable; this way believers ought to take in reference to themselves. 4. It shews that even believers should take a reproof, as well as a commendation, especially when it cometh from our Lord Jesus his mouth; yea, though in many things they be right, yet should a reproof, notwithstanding thereof be digested in any thing wherein they are wrong.

2. The particular reproof is set down, 'Thou hast fallen from thy first love.' 1. By love here is not understood the object beloved, as it is said of widows, 1 Tim. v. 12. who had cast off their first faith; it was not so here. There was no public defection in matter of doctrine, as the commendation preceding clears. Nor, 2. Is it necessary here to be understood principally of a decay of love in the habit itself, but in the exercise and fruits thereof; as is clear by the opposition following, 'Do the first works,' which points out the fault reproved, to have consisted in the neglect of the same, which is again, removed by the performing of them; though we think there is a suitable ease between the habit and its fruits, as it is with the one, so it is with the other. And few acts and fruits do evidence the habit thereof to be cold and languishing. 3. Neither do we understand here by falling from their first love, a total falling from fruits, but comparatively a falling from some former acts and degrees, or their vigorous manner of acting from love as they had wont formerly to do, called first love here, and afterwards, first works. By comparing then this reproof with the commendation, we conceive it doth include these three. 1. A falling from these duties wherein especially true love to God, and charity to others consisted, that is, there were much in outward reformation, profession and zeal that way: but wanting inwardly heart burning love and affection to God, and so in some measure were hypocritical, in that their love within was not answerable to their profession without, but were more taken up in their external fruits than in their exercise of love, in so far agreeing with the Pharisees in that fault reproved, Luke xi. 42. 'Ye tithe mint, &c. but pass over judgment and the love of God.' 2. As it looks to others, it may say, though there was zeal in the external worship of God, yet there was great defect of that love, sympathy and affection of one of them, with and to another that should be this being ordinary, that love inflamed to God-ward, and love one to another togethers; and therefore as it importeth they had fallen from their former warm impressions of love to God; so also from their kindly affections one to another, and had
fallen in part to be more in sacrifice, and externals of worship, than in mercy and love one to another, John vii. 2. Matthew xii. 7. "The third is, a decay of love in the manner of doing duties, so that though they continued in the practice of former duties towards God, and towards others, yet in respect of love towards God, as to principal acting them in such duties or affections towards others, they had much decayed; and therefore may be charged to have fallen from their first love, though they continued in the external performances because the former native vigour and life in those duties were decayed. Whence we gather, that there may be many things commendable in the church, or in a person, and yet there may be a secret quarrel betwixt Christ and them, as Psalm lxxxvii. ver. 34, 35, 36. compared together do show, yea that there be many things right in a believer in respect of externals, and yet a dissatisfaction to Jesus Christ in their secret condition. That this Angel, and many of these written to in this church were believers, this reproof clears, which supposeth them once to have had love, that they have many things commendable, the former verse is clear, viz. pure profession of truth, zealous exercise of discipline, diligence in doing and labouring, patience in suffering, honestly in their end, for Christ's name sake, and continuing in all these without fainting; yet there is a nevertheless added, which may make hearts to tremble, and not to reckon their condition from external performances; and ought to put believer to it, to see how they will free themselves from this part of the challenge.

1. Our Lord Jesus doth especially take notice of the love of his people, and is much swayed in his commendations and reproofs according as he findeth it in exercise towards him and towards others. 3. Love within may be cold, when folks practices without look very hot, and upon the matter be accepted of Christ. 4. Believers often at their first engaging to Christ, have their love more warm towards him, and towards others, than afterwards it will be; or believers slips from the warmness of affection that accompany their entry, and becometh more cold in their affections towards God, and towards others; the first love continueth not. 5. Backsliding and declining from what folk have been, either in profession or practice, is, and will be a special article of Christ's charge. Hence is it, that bold fast is so frequently repeated in the following epistles. Not only to intimate what is our duty, but also to evidence how ill the Lord taketh declining when he finds it among his people, Hebrews x. 38. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." 6. Every decay is a falling, and hurts the works of grace proportionably, as great commotions do: and it is as impossible for a man to fit up in the exercise of inward graces, and not to hurt them, as for a man to fall from a height and not be wounded.

Verse 5. Followeth the direction, which our Lord prescribeth as the duty suiting their case, and the threatening wherewith he backs it. The direction hath three steps, every one of them making way for another. The first is, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen;' that is, advert and consider how it is with thee, and as it was at the beginning, so by reflecting upon themselves, and comparing their present condition with what is past, they may be brought to take up their own condition. In some it implyeth that there had been in them an inadvertency unto, and forgetfulness of their own condition for a time, which had made them without challenges slip unto, and continue in that backsliding condition. Unto this remembering is opposed, which taketh in not only a simple act of memory, but a sensible exercise of the conscience and affections also, following upon their reflecting on themselves, like the word, Ezekiel xvii. 61. 'Thou shalt remember thy ways.'

The second part of the direction is, Repent. This is the fruit and end of the former, relating also to what was past, that not only they should look upon their own ways, but that their eye should affect their heart, for the upstarting of them in the exercise of repentance; which includeth these two. 1. A kindly indignation against their sin, and against themselves for their sin, so as in some part, they avenge God of themselves in the judging and censoring of themselves in the behalf of God, as it is in 2 Cor. vii. 11.
2. It taketh in an inward and outward change of
their way for the time to come, which is ever a fruit
of true repentance; when the party is brought not
only to confess, but to forfake their sin, as the words
following clear in the third direction; which is, ‘do the
first works.’ This relateth unto the time to come,
that is, that what once they had been at in the per-
formance of worship to God, and in duties one to an-
other in the manner, as in the matter, and
were now fallen from, as we hinted at in the reproof
that they should by all means let themselves to re-
cover the fame, this being a native fruit and com-
panion of repentance, carefully to abstain from the evils,
and perform the duties which they have been most
touched with in the challenge. These three go well
together, and notably prescribe the remedy of a foul
backslidden from liveliness to deadness, and directs to
the recovery of their former state, which will not be
attained by lazy prayers and fainting complaints, but
by serious upturning, and exercise of these three, self-
searching, repentance, and practice, and that in the
native order as they lay.

More particularly, from the several directions, Ob-
serve, 1. That as forgetfulness of our own condition
and not reflecting on ourselves, is the great cause of
much declining and backsliding in heart, and of con-
tinuing therein; so upon the contrary, self-examina-
tion, and remembering of our own way, and reflect-
ing on ourselves, is a notable mean to prevent decay,
and to entertain a good frame; as also to further
the exercise of repentance, and to recover a frame
when it is loft. 2. Believers may fall into that ne-
glect. 3. When believers become negligent, they
decline in part, though not wholly. 4. When be-
lievers fall, they are to take the same way for
their recovery. 5. Believers may be under great
decay, and yet not take great notice of it nor
from whence they are fallen; yea it implieth fur-
ther, that where the decay is within and the car-
riage fair without, as here it is hard to get them con-
vinced of it.

From the second step of the direction, repent, &c.
Observe, 1. That repentance is a duty incumbent
even to believers, 1 John i. 8. 2. That it is called for,
whenever there is sin, even of omission, as here.
But, 3. Especially where there is declining. 4. Change
of practice, where there hath been sin, will not be
sufficient, if repentance for what is past, do not accom-
pany it.

From the third step, ‘Do the first works,’ Observe,
1. That believers first works are often more com-
 mendable, than those which come after. 2. There
may be great difference in the same works on the mat-
ter, even of the same person, in Christ’s account. 3.
Works, and works livelily gone about, are called for
from believers. Christ Jesus was no legal preacher;
yet both require both repentance and works from
these Ephesians.

The third thing in this epistle, is the threatening,
or certification, wherewith this direction is pre-
fixed, which doth the more confirm the former doctrine,
‘Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove
thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.’ In
which words, we are to consider the thing threatened.
2. The persons threatened. 3. The certification, upon
which it is pronounced. 4. The person threatening.
And lastly, the speediness or suddenness of his perform-
ing what he threatened. The thing threatened, is the
‘removing of the candlestick out of its place.’ By
candlestick, chap i. verse 20. is understood the church.
Therefore by the removing thereof, must be under-
stood the un-churching of them. So that Ephesus
now a church and a candlestick, should have that re-
 moved, and not be continued a church. This is in
effect like that Zech. xi. of the Lord’s breaking the
two flaves, and refusing to feed that people any more.
This is a fad, though a just threatening, which may
put us to enquire wherefore the Lord thus threat en-
theth this Angel, and church beside any other? Espe-
cially considering they were not the worst, as was
seen in the commendation, why then is the threaten-
ed? And how usually the Lord doth execute this,
shall be spoken unto, when the words are opened.

3. The person threatened, is most especially and im-
mediately the Angel, as is clear by using the singular
number, thy candlestick, and I will come to thee,
&c. And with him, we conceive, that the threatening respects most these who are really believers in that church. Because especially the charge of falling from the first love, and direction of doing the first works, agree to them. The threatening also of removing the candlestick, would be most laid to hear by them. Thus Christ usually threatens, yea correcteth his own, when he lets others slip, Amos iii. 2. Neither doth he here so particularly charge and threaten the heathens for refusing the gospel, nor yet the false Apostles, or Nicolaitans, for open abusing it, as he doth this zealous Angel. The reason is, not because he loves them less, but because their sins come nearer his honour, and he is more affected with them; and because he mindeth their good, he judgeth and chasteneth them, lest they should be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 32. whereas he suspended his judging of the rest, and beateth not a reproof upon them, until judgment altogether surpriseth them.

3. The certification upon which this great judgment, which is greater than either sword famine, or persecution is threatened is, except they repent. By which we may gather, the necessity of repentance, in itself, and its acceptation by Jesus Christ, not as if there was any merit in it to deserve, or any moving impulsive virtue in it to persuade him to pity, as humiliations use to persuade men, he is not capable of such motives. Nor yet as if he had any delight in the hardening and excreting of his people, but that he may shew the peremptory connexion between repentance and pardon, which in the order of salvation he hath laid down, thereby to make the sinner to know something of the ill of sin and worth of grace. Which is the reason why the preaching of the gospel ordinary begins with this. By repentance here, we do not understand strictly the grace of repentance, as it is contradistinguished from faith, much less any natural or worldly sorrow, which may be in a hypocrite, but we take it as it comprehends the whole work of conversion and faith in Jesus Christ as sometimes it is taken, Mat. iv. 17. compared with Mark i. 15. because it is proposed here, as the way to prevent wrath which is due for sin, which cannot be done without faith.

The fourth thing to be considered, is the person threatening, I will come, 1 Jesus who walks among the golden candlesticks, I the Lord of the vineyard. Mat. xxii. 40, 41. This is mentioned, 1. To let us see Christ's abhorreness and overweening over his churches, to dispoze of them as he pleaseth; that ministers and people may learn to hold their church-being of him. 2. To hold forth Christ's peculiar authority, in churching and unchurching, and that peculiarly this belongeth to him. There is no man nor enemy nor persecution &c. can lose the relation of a church in its being but Jesus Christ, or they as ordered by him.

The fifth is, I will come quickly, yea and unexpectedly, as the word imports. This is added, to shew that Christ's threatenings are in earnest, and that hearers would not daily with them. It sheweth also, how easy he can overturn a church, and make no church of it; he hath often gathered churches quickly, and can he not disdilve them when they look to be in their prime? Who having read the commendation Ephesus in the former verses, would have expected such a threatening in the close?

The words now being opened, we may inquire, 1. How this threatening of unchurching a church useth to be executed?

As we conceive it doth not necessarily imply the overrunning, wafting and destroying of such a city or land, that it should be no city, but that it should be no church. Sometimes indeed, God will even by such a mean bring about this thing threatened. But here we take it to hold out some other thing, than if he had threatened sword and persecution upon them. It is the same upon the matter, with that Matth. xxii. 43. 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you. &c.' Which was Christ's word to the Jews, and is especially these ways brought to pass. The first is sinful, that is ordinarily when a church fell themselves to false doctrine, which overturneth the foundation. In which sense, Hof. ii. the Lord denied Ephraim to be his wife because of her spiritual whoredoms, whereby she had broken her tie. Thus a people may be said to unchurch themselves by their unbelief, confusions and errors inconsistent with the foundation according to
that Isa. i. 1. And Rom. xi. the Jews are said to have broken themselves off by their unbelief. The second way is penal, that is, when the gospel hath not fruits among a people, the Lord removeth the light and his ordinances from them, taketh down his hedge from about them, and as it were fendeth them a bill of divorce, refusing to own them afterwards as a church; not by giving them up to outward enemies oppression, which for a time they may be free of, but by ratifying their own sentence of rejecting of the gospel, as it is, Acts xiii. 46. and thus the kingdom of God was translated from the Jews, and they became no church, when the gospel was taken from them and sent unto the Gentiles. A third way may be mixed, partly sinful, partly penal, a people on the one side not receiving the love of truth, and therefore on the other side, God gives them up to a strong delusion, whereupon they proceed from evil to worse in the believing of lies, as it is 2 Thess. ii. 10. However this is certain, this flourishing church of Ephesus hath now long since been a proof of this truth, for error growing to an height, and delusion and ignorance following upon the back of despising the gospel, hath brought that church into the estate that it is now into.

For the second question. Why the Lord peculiarly threatens the church of Ephesus with these punishments?

Answ. It is not because his discontentment was more with her than with other churches. But if they thought outward honesty and reformation for their church estate, and there was no cause of fear of un-churching so long as they continued pure in profession, and zealous in purging, &c. And therefore to beat down this conceit, and to shew the necessity of power, as well as of form, for continuing of a church estate, he doth subjoin this threatening of un-churching, especially to this church. Because these here threatened, would lay more weight on this threatening, and be more affected with fearing to be un-church’d, than with either sword or pestilence, &c. The Lord therefore applieth wisely that which he thinks most conducive to this end. It is like their outward church-estate was something thought of by them, and the external frame by ordinances in purity, and that of discipline in vigour might be retted on, and too much esteemed of, especially by the ministers it being too ordinary for men to think too much of external forms (the Lord therefore in this threatening touching the fault that might flick secretly to them,) even in their zealous profecting of external reformation. 4. Because he would have all men knowing the respect he hath to sincerity, and the influence which the exercise, or not exercise of grace hath upon keeping, or loosing of external privileges. Therefore doth he thus threaten this church when no outward cause of such controversy seemeth to be before men.

If it be asked farther, why this church is called the angels? For, thy hath reference to the angel, and by the candlestick, is meant the church itself. Or, 2. How this becomes a threatening to the minister, it being like a plague upon the people? or, 3. How the people can be plagued for a sin in their minister? we shall consider the first by itself, after we have gone through this epistle. And now to the second question, we say, this threatening becomes his plague. Because of his ingruff in them, and affection to them: nothing can come on a People but it affects the minister; their stroke is his: yea, often it’s forer which is on them, than what is on himself. 2 Cor. xi. 29. 30. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" was Paul’s touch of infirmities of the people. 2. It’s the nearest stroke can be on a minister, to be stricken in his charge, or blasted in his ministry, &c. In this he is stricken as a minister, in things peculiar to a minister: Other strokes are common to all men: Yea, thus to be smitten in the unchurching of his flock, is striking at his crown, and his joy, 1 Thess. ii. ult. for, a faithful minister will so account it. 3. It’s probable, it was some contentment, to him to see things go right in his outward ministry, cenfures to be weighty, discipline vigorous, the people to give him credit and countenance, &c. without reflecting on his own spiritual condition, or aiming at the inward warning of love in the hearts of his people, but thought
all well, and who but he, that had such a well ordered church? the Lord therefore threatneth to take all that ground of boasting, or self-pleasing from him. It's a sad thing when a minister cannot carry even, when things go well, and cannot look to himself and the people also, and be humble when he is countenanced: want of this spilleth many hopeful beginnings in ministers hands, and this relation tby, is particularly mentioned to her, to make the threatening touch him the more; it is not the Candlestick, but tby Candlestick which was to be removed. For there be two things that make a thing to be in effect, with men, and the loss thereof to affect them. The first is, That it be in it self to agapetor that is, a thing lovely and desirable. The second, that it be to idiom that is, a thing which is a man's own; these two going together, that it is both an excellent thing in itself, and withal a man's own: when once evil befalls that thing, it doth exceedingly press a Man. Now both these are here, a golden Candlestick there is its excellency in it self, and tby Candlestick, there is the Angels interest and propriety in it; both are set down to affect him the more. And indeed a church being in its blossoming and rising condition, and all things seeming to go well therein even then, to be threatened thus, cannot but greatly affect the heart of a faithful Minifter.

To the third, how can people be punished for ministers faults.

Anfw. If they were altogether innocent, it might seem hard; but when they also are guilty; yea and it's like here under the same guilt, there is no wrong, but it's the correcting of two by one whip, both minister and people, for their formality and resting in outward forms, without power. 2. Though people in one particular be innocent; yet a minister's fault may occasion a plague on the people, who are guilty by other fins, even as the fault of a magistrate, as we may see in David's numbering the people, and God's plaguing him in the people for it, though they were in many things free from that particular fin, and as sheep, what had they done? So when a peoples outward profession, or observance to the minifters and Ordinances, become the ground of a minister's pride, or boast, they may by some confusion be put through other, and to his pride and glory is stained, and their hypocrisy and formality punished; even as on the other side, a peoples vanity of their minister, may have influence on the Lord's blustering of him, that it may be seen, all flesh is gristle which consideration ought to make ministers and people walk respectively one to each other, yet soberly; lest the Lord be provoked against both.

From the threatening, Observe, 1. That no church or minister hath a leaf of a church-state and the gospel, if they abuse it. Ephesius is now no church; yea, Israel was broken off. 2. It's one of the greatest threatenings that can be, to be unchurched; sword and pestilence are not like it. 3. It may surprize a church in a very flourishing outward condition, if love be wanting. 4. Nothing hath more influence in procuring of judgement, than coldness in love to God and others. 5. The estate, good or ill of God's own people, have most influences on the continuing or removing of the gospel. It's not for the guilt of Nicolaitans, or false prophets, that this is threatened, but for their sin who once had love. 6. Repentance and diligence hath great influence to prevent such a threatening. 7. Ministers and people may have much influence on one another's good or ill condition; and sometime we may read our own distemper and fcourse, in the distemper of one another.

LECTURE III.

Verse 6. But this thou shalt, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

THE sixth verse containeth the last thing that is comprehended in the body of the epistle to Ephesius, and it is a kind of mitigation of the sharp reproof and threatening going before; as he began
with a word of commendation; so he will close with it, and will let them feel, that though he had marked their sin, and reproved them for it; yet he was the same in his love, and had the same thoughts he began with towards them: and it is in some, this for as much wrong as in you, and for as much as ye are fallen from your first love, yet there is some sparkle of zeal in you, ye have this good thing, that the corrupt doctrine of the Nicolaitans (which began soon to corrupt the simplicity and purity of the doctrine of Christ) is hated and abominated by you, even as it is by me.

To clear this a little more, we shall speak to these three things. 1. What these Nicolaitans were. 2. What this hatred was. 3. How it was commendable; or what is the ground on which it is commendable.

For the 1. We shall consider what the Nicolaitans were. 2. What was the occasion and rise of this error, or erroneous doctrine.

For the first, what they were. There is not much recorded of them in scripture, yet it seemeth from all that is written of them (being compared with what is written of them in this chapter) that they were such a sort of schismatical heretics, as had corrupt doctrine in their mouths, and corrupt and licentious practices in their conversations. Therefore their deeds are spoken of in this verse and their doctrine verse 15, both which are said to be hated of Christ, their being a suitableness between their doctrine and their deeds.

For the particulars of their doctrine and deeds, many are ascertained by the antients, but two things mainly are pitched on. 1. In their doctrine they opened a door to licentiousness, and maintained that fornication and adultery were no sin, and they cried down matrimonial chastity, though called for and approved of by God. 2. In their practice, without all respect to offences and scandal, they lived as they listed, eating things sacrificed to idols (a thing much flumed at in those days) abusing their Christian liberty to licentiousness and looseness, taking advantage of, and abusing the degree of the Apostles, Acts xv. 20, that Christians would 'Abtain from pollutions of idols.' and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood,' as if all these things had been of one and the same nature, as indeed at that time they were all necessary to be abstained from, as if they had been of one nature. These are granted by all to be the two main things that these Nicolaitans were guilty of: though there be that add many more, as Epiphanius doth; and if we look to the 14. and 15. verse of this chapter, it is not unlike, that the Lord points out at these two faults; for in the 14. verse he tells Pergamos, that she had them that held the doctrine of Balaam, 'Who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication,' and in the 15. verse, 'So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.' Where they that maintained the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans are the same; and he meaneth as Balaam taught Balac to ensnare the Israelites by drawing to their idol feasts, and commit fornication with the daughters of Moab, so mayest the Lord, ye have the Nicolaitans that follow the same footsteps and teach the same doctrine.

2. There is more difference concerning the occasion and rise of this here. It is commonly and by the most part (if not by all) attributed to that Nicolas that Acts vi. is mentioned among the seven deacons that were chosen to wait upon the tables, and who gets there a testimony, that he was a man full of the Holy Ghost: but there being various opinions about the occasion and rise of it, I shall name two that are special, and choose which of the two we think safest.

1. Some write of him, who having fallen from his integrity, and become dissolute in his practice, he strove to maintain it in his doctrine, a thing too common to draw our doctrine to maintain our practice, and formerly taught this error, and begat many profane followers. Neither say they is it like, that such a vile sin would have been fathered in scripture on such a man, if he had been innocent. Others let it down it down with more mitigation and charity to Nicolas thus, that this Nicolas having a beautiful wife,
was suspected to entertain jealousie of her, it is like
from some others, members of the church; and being
too inadvertent and rash in the way which he took
for removing that suspicion to make it to be seen
that he had none, he brought his wife in public,
and holding her forth, said he cared not who conversed
with her, so far was he from being suspicious of her
honesty.

This rash fact, though flowing from a good inten-
tion (say they) was abused by some to patronize the
errors formerly mentioned beyond his intention. And
they were called Nicolaitans on this occasion; not be-
cause he taught so, but that they concluded so from
his practice, and fathered what they maintained on
that worthy man; as it is ordinary for corrupt men
to father their corrupt opinions upon, and to shelter
themselves under grave and godly men's names. This
laxt in the doubtfulness of this case, it being asserted
by the most antient, viz. Clemens Alexander, we rather
embrace partly, because of that man's commendation,
Acts vi. where it is said, 'He was a man full of the
Holy Ghost.' And partly because it is most charita-
table, and therefore most safe, especially where such
a testimony is given to the man in scripture. And of
as abominable as this was, it was for many centuries
of years, revived and continued with many additions
in the church, by Gnosticks, Bafilides, &c. by those
called the Saturnians, Carpocratians, and many others,
who made a pretext of Nicolas for their patron. A
thing to be wondered at, that so soon after Christ,
while John the beloved disciple was living, Satan
should assault and set upon the church with such er-
ors; and yet as wonderful, that after those errors
were refuted by an extraordinary Apostle, speaking
from Christ's own mouth, they were vented and
maintained by those heretics, a symptom of that pervers-
efs and impudence that corrupt men are led with,
when so soon, at such a time contrary to so clear re-
proofs, men durst vent and abide by such gross things.
O what force and efficacy hath the spirit of delusion
when it is letten loose! and what a height may it
come to! Tremble at the beginnings of it; it is hard
to conceive, with what audacity and boldness it will
bear itself out, and though our Lord would write an
epistle from heaven, delusion will so blind fools, that
they will not question their errors.

The second thing to be spoken unto in this com-
mandation, is, that they hated the deeds of the Nic-
olaits: not their persons simply, but their deeds, and
them as promoting these deeds: though the church
had these men among them and was severe in their dis-
cipline; yet the Lord taketh notice of this especially,
that he kept a secret, sincere abhorrence of them in
her heart; not only did not the Angel and church
countenance them, nor only censure them, nor only
forbear their company, but they had such an abhor-
rence of their deeds and of themselves, in carrying
on these deeds, as the thinking of them was abomin-
able; as sayeth David Psalm. cxxix. 21, 22. 'Do not
I hate them that hate thee? I hate them with a per-
fect hatred.' And Psalm. cxix. 104. 'I hate every
false way.' So this hatred in reference to these Ni-
colaits, was not carnal, or in reference to their per-
sons simply, but in their three respects especially.
1. In respect of their deeds and doctrine, it struck at
their deeds as here, and at their doctrine, as verse 15.
And 2. Looking upon them as instruments and mi-
isters of Satan, made use of by him for corrupting
and poisoning of souls, and shaming of the gospel,
they abhorred them considered as such, and what
ever pity to their persons or desires, to their salva-
tion they had. As they conceived them to be hateful to
Christ and hated by him, so did they hate them, squar-
ing their hatred, as they did conceive Christ to hate.

Observ. 1. That there are some things and persons,
especially at times, that it is not enough for the
people of God to abstain from them in their prac-
tice, if there be not an abhorrence of them in their
hearts. The way of error and corrupt practices that
follow on it, should be abhorred as any other sin, how
gross and scandalous soever. Hereof as: murder and
witchcraft, Gal. v. 19. and there is good reason
for it, for if folk be not serious in hatred of, and
so out of love with the thing, they may soon fall in
the practice of it; and simple abstinence will never
be counted sincerity before God, whose trial is how it
stands with the hearts and affections, how the heart is affected or disaffected toward the thing?

2. Our Lord Jesu counts it some mark of sincerity, when there is a single hatred of the way of error as it is in itself evil and hateful to, and hated by him.

The third thing in this mitigation, is the ground on which their hatred is commended; it is conformity with Christ, ‘Which I also hate.’ I hate them; therefore it is commendable in thee to hate them; it is a sure ground of commendation, to hate what he hates, and love what he loves. This ground of commendation implyeth two things. 1. That it is well done to hate what Christ hates. Observe, God’s people should hate and love one thing with Jesu Christ; they should study to be conform to him in the exercise of all their passions and affections. 2. It implyeth a likeness to Christ’s hatred in the nature thereof, that they hated them that were hated by Christ, and not as they were enemies to them. Observe, It is a good way to square folks’ hatred and zeal so, as it degenerate not into passion; to look to the matter that to be such as is hated by Christ, and to the manner that it be such as he is, single and zealous; and that it be on that account, because hateful to him, otherwise men may carnally and selfishly hate, but without commendation.

3. It implyeth also, that corrupt doctrine is most hateful to Christ Jesu, and should be to his people.

Verse 7. Followeth the conclusion, wherein we have two things, 1. A general advertisement, or exhortation common to, and repeated in all the epistles ‘Let him that hath an ear hear.’ 2. A particular promise for upholding of them to wrestle and to overcome, ‘To him that overcometh will I give,’ &c.

For the exhortation, it is shortly the Lord’s giving this watch-ward and warning to all that are in Ephesus, and all that should hear this epistle, to observe what the spirit saith to them. 1. Because it is of Ephesus, concernment as the Angels. 2. Because it is of particular believers concernment as well as the churches; therefore he would have all hearers looking on it as particularly spoken to them. 3. Because usually all hear not. 4. Yet those that have ears should hear.

The scope implyeth these three notes. 1. The Lord supponeth here that every one this word cometh unto, will not have hearing ears, they will not hear this word so as to lay weight on it, and give themselves up to it. 2. It implyeth that folk that have any conviction, waking or life, fitting them for hearing, should especially be busy in approving the word heard: ‘To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given,’ &c. It would become believers, whatever others do, to be busy laying up some promises, directions, reproofs, threatenings &c. it is mainly for their use written and taught, to the man of God perfect. 3. It implyeth that hearers would labour so to make use of the word spoken, (to whomsoever it be first spoken) as if it were particularly and especially spoken to them; this being the excellency of the word, that it contains in it many conditions and fruits many generations, and some in this place as well as in Ephesus.

2. The last special part of the conclusion is a promise, ‘To him that overcometh will I give,’ &c.

Wherein, 1. The party is described to whom the promise is made, ‘To him that overcometh,’ in the singular number. To point out that our Lord Jesu taketh notice not only of a church that fights, but of every particular believer in it. This description of the party implyeth, 1. A cause or exercise that to whom the promise is made are supposed to be in, and it is, that they are wrestling or fighting; there are the object of the promise. It implyeth, that believers have difficulties to fight with, and a fighting life of it hereway. 2. Their duty to fight and wrestle with these difficulties, outward and inward. 3. That there is an actual fighting according to their duty. 4. A victory overcoming, a getting of their foot some way on these difficulties. A victory follows the wrestling to every believer, whatever he be, that in the way of duty meets with difficulties, and setteth to, to overcome them, he shall get the victory. Yea fighting seriously is some advancement in victory therefore it is in the present tenet to the overcomer, or who is a overcoming. Because fighting and victory are never separated, finally in this case.
This promise made to the overcomers, for their encouragement is, 'I shall give them to eat of the tree of life,' &c. It is an allusion to that tree planted in Eden, Gen. ii. 3. That tree was called 'The tree of life,' &c. not for any physical efficacy that was in it, as Papists gloss here, though God might have made it instrumental as a mean of it, therefore when Adam entered there was no use of that tree; neither could it do any thing, but it was so called to hold forth to Adam, sacramentally the eternity of life, which he might expect by keeping the covenant of works, that tree was given him to dignify and seal up that life to him, upon condition of his obedience. And in an allusion to it, Christ layeth here, to the man that fighteth and overcometh, I will make him partaker of eternal life, not in any earthly paradise but in heaven: for so paradise is taken in the New Testament, Luke xxiii. 46: 'This night shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By eating then of the tree of life, we mean heaven, with all the great advantages of it, especially Jesus Christ, who maketh up that life to fallen sinners, which that tree could not do.

From this promise, Observe, That our Lord Jesus would have his followers cheerful in their services: therefore he setteth a recompense in their view, not to make them mercenary and servile, but hearty and cheerful in their obedience, because they serve such a good matter. It is a great mistake in some to say, that looking to the reward maketh a soul servile, upon the contrary, it maketh a soul free and willing. And this is the ground of God's giving promises of rewards, and the use which the saints make of them, Heb. xi. Mofes had respect to the recompence of reward, and it sweetened his cross and made him cheerful in obedience.

2. From the particular promise he maketh, Observe, That there cannot be a greater promise nor encouragement for duty, than the happiness that God hath provided for his people in heaven, when it is rightly eyed. And the frequent laying down of this promise is for this end, to make believers bear difficulties patiently, and wade through them willingly. A broader fight of heaven, and faith and hope, strengthened, in expectation of it, would make folks fight stoutly.

3. The thing he promiseth for their present obtaining, is heaven, as that which they might hope for after this life, Observe, That Christ's followers would triumph in their full life, till after this life; they would not expect another life or heaven here. The hope of heaven should comfort wrestlers before it come. Believers take your wrestling life here, and expect and look for a quiet life hereafter, and look not for it till then. Christ spake of the wrestling, as here 'To him that overcometh,' and of the victory as in heaven, 'I will give him to eat of the tree of life.' The not thinking rightly on this, maketh us too often grumble, when we want satisfaction in the things of a world. We propose to ourselves a quiet life, whereas the word of God never promiseth quietness, and a complete victory and triumph here, yet the time cometh, when wrestlers shall be conquerors over crosses and corruptions. And carnal men, who live now as kings, without any fight, shall lie under wrath. There is no such promise made to them.

Before we proceed to any other of the epistles, there are somethings insinuated in this, the clearing whereof may be useful in many of the rest. We shall therefore take occasion to speak somewhat now, once for all, to these three. 1. To church-government and discipline in general. 2. To that relation which is betwixt a particular minister and his flock. And, 3. To the nature of the differences that is betwixt laying and common grace. All which will be useful for the understanding many things in these epistles.

1. Concerning Church-government and discipline in general.

The matter of discipline, is much insinuated upon in these epistles, and often the great weight of the commendations and reproofs that are given in them, is laid on this, as they were defective in the administration thereof; which doth certainly show, not only the usefulness of a church-government and discipline; but also the usefulness and necessity thereof to the church of Christ, when faithfully exercised,
as being a special mean and ordinance appointed by Jesus Christ, for the edification thereof; and a thing that is not indifferent to her officers to exercise or forbear at their pleasure, but lieth on them to be discharged as they would have Christ's commendation on the one side, and as they would eke his sharp reproof on the other; and as they would prevent the offence and defraction, and promote the edification of the people, over whom they watch as they that must give an account. It is therefore no wonder that the devil in all ages, either sought to oppose or corrupt so excellent a mean of the churches edification. He began even under heathen emperors to traduce this government, as inconsonant with civil authority; and did provoke persecutors by nothing more than this, that Christ was accounted a king by Christians, and that accordingly they did keep distinct courts under him, which the politicians of the world did account inconsistent with governments, as may appear from the history of primitive times, and the apologies of Christians, particularly of Origen against Celsus, wherein he doth particularly and fully inquit upon this. When the Lord had vindicated his ordinance of government, with all his other ordinances, the devil set himself to corrupt the fame, and to prevent it in its nature, and divert it in its exercise from the appointed end of edifying the church, to be occasion of offence to her, and tyranny over her, by the many debates concerning precedence which he stirred up after the churches freedom from heathenish persecution, till at last he brought Antichrist to tyrannize over the face of the visible church, that thereby he might either make the government hurtful or odious unto the members thereof and others. Even as in reference to the doctrine of Christ, he did endeavour the corrupting thereof by error, when he could not altogether suppress the fame. Again when the Lord brought the light of the gospel to public, at the time of the reformation, and Antichrist's tyranny is by many caften off, he seeketh by all means to effectuate one of these two, viz. that either the church should have no distinct government at all, or that, at least, it should be of another form, and of another nature, than is appointed in the word. Hence it is that there have ever been such debates in the church concerning the government and discipline thereof, and even whether there be such a thing or not. And although the opposers thereof, do not professedly oppose the truth of the gospel, nor intend confusion in the church, yet hath it with it no little advantage to the kingdom of Satan, and prejudice to Christ's.

For 1. By this means Satan obfuscates the beauty and excellency of the church of Christ, and draweth men to undervalue the fame; as being at best but a refined piece of civil policy, as but sublumvent to politic ends, and the upholding of temporal greatnens of men in place. Hence it is, that we will find the most worldly wise and politic men, that are least zealous ordinary in things of God, to be the greatest favourers and abettors of this. And it is no wonder, seeing Christ's way of government, even as his doctrine is foolishness to the wisdom of men. It is observably also, where this opinion hath place, there is little account of any other ordinance; the sacrament of the Lord's supper is prostituted promiscuously to all, the ministry is either accounted a thing indifferent, or ministers made the servants of men, and arbitrarily to be put out and in, as they are pleasing or displeasing to them; and it is specially intended to curb free faithful speaking, and to be a snare to make them flatter magistrates and powers. All which show the undervaluing principle that this opinion doth proceed from.

2. This opinion hath ordinarily with it more licentiousness, and that both in doctrine and practice. For necessarily, one of these two do follow. Either many errors and scandals in practice, are accounted light and not confectable at all; or if that in way of reason be granted, yet in practice it is never performed. And can it ever be made out in any practice past, or possibly to come; that offences in people or ministers have been so exactly taken notice of, and refrained or removed, where church government hath been denied, as where it hath been in exercise.

3. Although such magistrates, might be found, as would take notice of every thing exactly, yet their
meddling with it furthers not spiritual edification, as the way of church-government doth. For at best, it would make men but civil, and make religion look like the way of antient Philosophers, who prest the rectifying of nature; whereas a church reproof or cenoure, hath more edification to others, and more convincing shame to the parties themselves, in respect of the sin thereof, as flowing more immediately from Jesus Christ, and more directly representing to them his authority, and their reckoning to him, who more singularly binds in heaven, by what his officers is bound on earth. And we conceive that even the profane, in experience will find this true, that a verbal church-cenoure, which considered of itself is but light, will yet have more impression, as to the ends aforesaid, than sentences of a civil magistrate, in themselves may be heavier, and this will be even when the parties in their outward carriage will seem to reverence the magistrate, and to contemn the church.

4. Although it should be yet said, that magistrates could make things more effectual, as in cenouring of corrupt ministers and such like, which indeed is a benefit in itself, to the church; yet considering this manner of performing it, especially being compared with the performing thereof by the churches own authority, it proved more disparaging to the church of Christ. Because if ministers and church-members should be apt to fall in scandalous offences, and yet the church have no authority, but what is extrinick for the remedying thereof, then is the apt to be looked upon as a sufferer of profanity and as a nest to unclean persons of herself, if by the magistrate, course were not taken with her. And although by his means such should be purged out, yet in the opinions of natural men, this imputation sticks to the church, as if such things and persons were well consistent with her profession, and liked of by her special officers and members. Now cenouring of these by their own authority, doth fully and only vindicate her and them from these alperions, which are frequent upon the out-breakings of such scandals in the mouths of many profane men. And this revenging of disobedience, and vindicating of the church of Christ, is none of the least ends of this church authority, which by no other power can be attained. And no question the devil loves to have scandals breaking out in the church, especially in her officers, which do once put a blot upon her. And if it be to be taken notice of at all, he had rather that some other did it than the church herself, because the commendation becometh theirs, and the blot sticks to her. And thus as it were heproclaims to all, what sort of persons would these church-officers and church-members be for all their profession, if they were not even as other men, by some other hand restrained? And thus the wisdom and holiness of our Lord Jesus is reflected on, as if he had approved corrupt mens designs, who love to have a blot on the church; but not to have her vindicated from it. Because by this the church is capable to give offence, but not in a capacity to remove them, or to vindicate herself from them. Which standeth not with that zeal, that our Lord Jesus hath to his own glory in the church. And certainly it is not the punishing of faults simply that vindicateth the churches holiness; but it is the cenouring of them in such a way as evidenceth the churches abhorrence thereof, and doth it; otherwise Christians and heathens, living under one commonwealth, might be supposed to have the same indignation at scandalous ills. And so the deying the churches authority, if it doth not permit faults to be unpunished, at least all, yet it excludeth such a way of cenouring them, as may vindicate the church and Christ Jesus the king thereof, in a singular manner; and if we may say, for puts her, yea, the Lord himself in their reverence, whether the shall be free of corrupt teachers and members or not? or whether the shall lie under the blot or not?

5. By the denying of this ordinance, the other ordinances which are acknowledged, are made weak and obstructed in their exercise concerning the sacrament of the Lord's supper, it is clear; for by this the rail whereby it is in a singular manner separated is broken down; many offices of the church, as these of elders and deacons are made void, and that of preaching made contemptible or maimed. For public au-
toritative rebuking of all, and sometimes of some in particular, is a special part thereof. Now where church-government is deemed, either the minister must do it arbitrarily by himself, and so he is more liable to a snare, and the party reproved to be stumped, as having only to do with the minister, who may partially proceed therein; or it must be forbore, and to his ministr y be made obnoxious to defying, which by his rebuking, with all authority, is to be prevented, and every way of plaints and freedom even in preaching, especially towards these in place, in so far as can be restrained.

6. By this, the devil aimeth still either to make religion to suffer as a thing that men may crave on according to their interests, as in other matters of policy, therefore he mixeth all together, or he doth continually lay grounds of jealousy and difference between magistrates and ministers; thereby to make, that ministers and thele who will be faithful, should either finely connive at what may prejudice the kingdom of Christ, or by their testifying against the same, make themselves more odious to the rulers for, lay this once for a ground, that there is no church-government but what the magistrate hath, then either the minister must say, that none ought to be admitted to civil-government, but such as both for skill and conscience are fit to manage the matters of religion which civil states will not always be content with, neither often is it possible; or, they must account any man, who may be fit to manage civil things, fit also to manage the affairs of Christ's-house, which in conscience cannot always be done, whereby necessarily, they must be brought in, tops with magistrates, except we fay that either unskillfull magistrates ule not to be in place, or that such ay ye be tender and dexterous in the managing of every church-matter that comes before them, and on the by, we may say, that fathing qualifications, fitting one for any place and government, are simply called for in these who should supply the same, though sometime de facto they be not so qualified and feing special qualifications, are required for governing of the church of Christ, which are not required in these that govern a civil state, and will not be accounted simply necessary to them: it must therefore follow, that by the Lord's ordinance, these two governments are not conjoined in one person, seeing he hath not always conjoined the qualifications that are requisite for both. We shall infilt no more in this. The reading of these Epistles will sufficiently shew how concerning this truth is; and although this controversy be abundantly cleared by the writings of many worthy men that there needeth no more be laid therein; yet, having such occasion from these Epistles, we shall once for all, touch some things concerning church-government, as it is holde forth there-in: whereby we will find it clear. 1. That there is such a thing as church-government, distinct and independent from the civil. 2. Wherein it consisteth. And, 3. Who are the subjects thereof. And, 4. We shall lay down some conclusions or observations concerning the fame, as they may be gathered from the text.

1. The church of Christ is furnished with a government and authority within herself, for the ordering of her own affairs, trying and cenfuring of her own members, and that immediately from Jesus Christ, distinct and independent from any civil government, on earth. That there is such a thing as government and authority in her, is clear by these, 1. The practice of the Angel of Ephesus, in the trying and cenfuring of the false Apostles, which cannot be done without authority and government. 2. This practice of theirs, is commended by our Lord Jesus. It can therefore be no usurpation in them. 3. In the church of Pergamos, we will find the Angel reproved, that they had them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, &c. which doth suppose authority in them, even to have cenfured and cut off these from their society: for, if they had not had authority to do it, it was not their duty to have done it; and if it had not been their duty to do it, our Lord Jesus had not reproved them for omitting it. 4. The church of Thyatira is reproved also, for suffer ing the woman Jezebel to teach and seduce his servants. Which doth imply an authority, and government, setting them to whom he writeth, to have married and hindered her preaching; and somewhat to have Cc
been in their power to have done, which was not done by them; otherwise our Lord Jesus would not have so reproved them. The marking out of these three will confirm this. 1. That the thing commenced in Ephesus, and deisfated in the other two churches, doth imply authority and power. 2. That this in the church as distinct and independent from any civil government. 3. That this is a thing perpetually belonging unto the visible church, and was not temporary, as peculiar to that time.

That there is an authority implied here, the considering of these three will make out. 1. If we consider what is commenced in Ephesus and deisfated in the other two. The very expressions and acts do bear forth an authority. As 1. That is commenced in Ephesus, 'That they cannot bear them which are evil, but have tried false Apostles, and have found them liars.' All which hold forth a judicial way of proceeding and trying, which impleth a citing of such a party and witnesses for the discovering of such and such things according to the rule given to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 19. 'Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses.' For there can be no trial without witnesses, there can be no witnesses without power to call them, and extract an oath of them, that being the end of all strife, which cannot be done without authority. The word added 'And haft found them liars,' doth confirm, that it is a judicial finding after trial, whereby they decide.

1. In the general, that such and such things are evidences of false Apostles. And then in particular, that and such things are found to be in them. And therefore that they are false Apostles, which presupponeth this trial before they judicially pronounce: than which nothing doth look more judicature like. Which will be more clear if we consider, 1. That this trial and finding, proceeded from their zeal, and not with evil men: and therefore cannot be a trial for private information. 2. It is a trial tending to the edification of the church, and the preventing of that snare amongst the people, which no personal or private thing could effectuate. 3. It is a trial and finding, opposite to what is reproved in Pergamos and Thyatira, and so such a process and sentence as rid that church of them, which no private or personal act could do. 4. It is a proceeding and trial, which relates to these directions, which Paul giveth to Timothy and Titus, as the coincidence of the matter, scope and other circumstances do demonstrate such as, 1. 'Receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses,' which is the ground of that which followeth, verse 20. 'Them that fill rebuke before all.' Now if that rebuke be an authoritative act as cannot be denied, which is yet but the execution of the sentence that followeth the former trial, then the trial itself must be judicial and authoritative also; and therefore so must this trial be here understood. To say that this is a ministerial act, and that trial proceeding is only the minister's private act, for his own clearing cannot be admitted. For that trial belongeth to many, as after will appear. 2. To whomsoever it be supposed to belong, it infers an authority to try, and so to converse and examine, otherwise that trial might be made ineffectual; and so the party wanting authority, not to be chargeable with short coming therein. Or, 3. This trial must be commenced to church-officers without authority to effectuate it, and so will not be a mean suitable to that end. 4. Ministerial trial and reproof, will not be enough to gain the end, and to make a corrupt memeber, to be a member of such a church which is the thing deisfated in Pergamos and Thyatira. And considering the commendation of these Angels and churches, it is not like that they were defective in their personal avertness from and rebuking of these errors, and yet they are reproved as being defective: which must infer that they came short in respect of that judicial trial and censure, which is here commenced in Ephesus, as the considering of them will clear.

2. Pergamos reproof, verse 14. and 15. is, 'Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, and them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.' The fault is, not that they approved that doctrine or connived at it, for they denied not the faith, and...
Antipas is commended as a faithful martyr amongst them. Nor is it their fault that such lived in the town, or as other heathens might, did sometimes enter the congregations. Nor is his quarrel only against these Nicolaitans themselves, but against the Angel of the church, because they had them in their society as members with them, and had not cut them off. And seeing this cutting off is such a thing as made them cease to be members of that body, and relevant to that which Paul witheth to the trouble of the church, Gal. v. and commends to Titus chap. iii. ‘Him that is an heretic reject;’ &c. It must imply an authority and power, without which this cannot be done, this un-membering or un-churching of a person being a cenfure of highest concernment and that fame which we call excommunication. It followeth then that this church had that power, and ought to have executed it against those corrupt members, seeing her falling therein doth make her reproveable.

If it be said here that this doth imply no authority and power, but what is common to all societies by the law of nations and nature such as companies of Chirurgians, Wrights, and such like, have in excluding men from their own society. Which is yet no distinct authority, but subordinate to, and derived from the magistrate.

We answer, 1. That even these societies in these things act by authority, however it be derived; and so the argument holds that the exclusion of members from church communion, doth imply an authority. And what is the necessity of such a thing by the law of nature and nations doth confirm the same. For if every society be called for the maintaining of itself by the law of nature, so must also the church be; except we say that it is more defective than other societies. Besides even such societies could not do such a thing, were not privileges granted them by authority for that end.

2. We answer, that although the argument hold in the general, that there is an authority necessary, yet will it not prove it to be dependent in the church, as in these societies it is. For, 1. The derivation of au-

thority from the magistrate to these societies is clear. For such and such societies have that power because it is granted them by the superior magistrate; and others want it because it is not granted them. But I suppose none will plead for derived power to the church from the magistrate, in this place ye the greatest opposers of church government do acknowledge that it is not derived from him, as Lod. Mol. page 654. There is no reason therefore that church government should be subordinate to magistracy as other societies arc, which he exercises as they speak by a proper right and divine without delegation, iure proprio et divino, non delegato. 2. The magistrate may enter by his authority such and such persons to the rights and privileges of such societies and exclude others from them, though possibly it might be done unjustly, yet was it ever heard of, that a magistrate might privilege any with the privileges of church membership, or by his authority unchurch any? The parallel therefore cannot be universal in these. 3. All other societies as such, are parts of a common-wealth, and together make up the body. And therefore in reason ought to be subordinate to the common government; but the church, as a church, is no essential or integral part of a common-wealth. There is therefore not the like reason for the subordination.

If any should yet expect and lay, that an authority may be immediately from God, and not derived; and yet be by him appointed to be subordinate to the civil magistrate, as is instanced in that power, that a husband hath over the wife, or a parent over his children.

We answer, 1. That it may be questioned if a parent, as a parent, be subordinate to the magistrate, although as a man and a member of the common-wealth, he be. For he may command his children without any authority from him. Yea contrary to the commands of magistrates, and in some cases warrantably, suppose in their marrying, adhering to the truth of God, &c.: neither can the magistrate increase or diminish their power, although he may strengthen them, or marr them actually in the exercise thereof, yea suppose a parent to incline to match a son or
daughter in a way that is not sinful, or inconvenient, and for this end to command them to give obedience. And again, suppose the magistrate to command them otherwise to match: the magistrate’s command here, will not loose the child from the parent’s authority. Because although both parent and child be the magistrates subjects, yet their obedience is called for in reference to those things that belong to a magistrate only. Hence that case of a magistrate requiring one thing, and a parent commanding another to the same child, is by divines solved by this distinction, that in things belonging to the magistrates command the child ought to be obedient to him in what concerns the duty of a subject, but in things that concern the duty of a son properly, he is to be obedient to the father, whatever the magistrate command; which swearing, that simply the commands of a father, as a father, are not subordinated to the magistrate. And to that in reference to some persons, there may be two supreme powers, upon divers considerations, who may command without subordination, one to another, yet their authority be no way inconsistent together.

2. We answer, That although the authority of fathers and husbands were subject to the civil magistrate as such, yet can it not weaken this consequence, if the authority of the church be not derived from the magistrate, then can it not be subordinated to him for the authority of parent, husband, &c. is personal and natural, that is, founded in nature. And therefore is derived by nature to parents, husbands, &c. And such do make a body of themselves, but are members of another greater body; whereas a church is a society and incorporation complete in itself. And as such is not founded on nature, but by God’s positive grant and foundation is such; and therefore authority must be immediately derived to the church by the same mean, viz. of a positive grant by which it being as a church is derived. And can it be instanced, that there is any such, viz. a complete incorporation, having immediate power from Christ for the governing of itself, and shutting out corrupt members without any derived power from the civil magistrate who yet are subordinated to his power in the exercise of theirs. We grant indeed, that the church considered as subjects and members of the common-wealth are subjects to him; but will no way follow, that the authority or government wherewith he is furnished as a church, is to be subjected to him. Neither can this be thought strange, that a church judiciary considered as such, should be accounted independent, as to the civil magistrate, seeing we must either say, that a minister in his ministerial and pastoral duty, acteth by an authority immediately from Christ, without any dependency on the civil magistrate which yet readily cannot be admitted in any other case, viz. that a person should command without dependence on the magistrate. Or we may must say, that the minister preacheth and acteth in his ministry, in the magistrates name mediately, and by his authority or by none at all; which I suppose none will affirm. And what greater inconsistency it is with civil power, to have distinct authoritative courts, to have rulers distinctly and authoritatively commanding persons especially themselves?

3. If we consider the epistle to Thyatira, where much is commended; yet there is a notwithstanding and reproach cast in upon this account, ‘Because thou sufferrst that woman Jezebel that calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants.’ This suffering can be no defect in respect to civil authority; for that was not in their power, or it is any defect of any, personal or private duty: because none such can impede other persons teaching, if wilfully they will set themselves to it, nor can they be thought defective in that, that are so commended for faith, charity, works, &c. And that even in respect of their thriving and growing in their private conditions; it must therefore be a suffering of her in so far as by church authority she was not censured and restrained, that thereby the seducing of Christ’s servants might be prevented, whose edification is the end of this as all other ordinances: and so consequent, the church of Christ is furnished with power and authority in reference to her own affairs and members.

2. This will also be clear by considering these who
are primarily in this respect commended and reproved in: these epistles: it is not the body of private Christians, but the church-officers as peculiarly distinguished from them: so that these threatenings and reproves, do otherwise belong to them, than to the church, as we will find in the progress. And there can be no other reason given of this, but because those faults were the faults of those that had authority to right them, and did it not; which will be more clear afterward, when we consider the subject of his power.

3. These acts, are either acts of private Christians, or personal acts of the ministers and church-officers both which are already overturned by the fore-mentioned reasons, or it must be by some extraordinary act as Peter's slaying of Ananias and Sapphira, or it must be the exercise of some ordinary power and authority; there is no other thing conceivable; but none of the first three can be said. Nor one of the first two, for the reason given; not the third. Because, 1. There is no warrant to look upon those officers as furnished with that gift, nor was it ordinary to the church and her ordinary officers, such as these were. 2. That would not attain the scope proposed here which is in part, the restoring the offending party; therefore layeth the Lord of Jezebel, verse 21, 22. 'I gave her space to repent, and doth threaten her but conditionally; which she knew, that he meant no such extraordinary off-cutting of them. It remaineth then, that it must be the exercising of an ordinary authority and government: and therefore, such must be in the church.

The second thing to make out the argument is, that this authority and power in the church, is distinct and independent from any civil government; which from the text may thus appear. 1. The subject is distinct, viz. the church-officers. 2. The object is distinct, viz. the church, and the members thereof alone, and as such. It is not the inhabitants of Pergamos and Thyatis, but the church members that are under the same. 3. The matter falling under that cognition is distinct, viz. that which is hurtful to souls as the seducing of Christ's servants, and scandals, considered as such. 4. The censures inflicted are different, viz. no civil mulct upon estates, nor punishment upon bodies, nor cancelling of the freedom of Burgesses in towns or such like; but exclusion from church privileges and membership. 5. The end is distinct viz. the reclaiming of the party offending, and the bringing of them to repentance, and the preventing of soul-hurt to others, and the vindication of Christ's name. 6. The manner is different, there is no external pomp or power or force in the managing thereof, such as is in civil governments; for that is not here conceivable, considering the afflicted and persecuted condition of these churches, but the sword of the mouth, and trial, and censures. And 7. They differ in their rise, civil power being derived from superiors to inferiors, but this hath no rise or derivation from any civil power, although for the time these cities and nations wanted it not, but did arise from that intrinsic oeconomy and power, which accompanies the very being of a church, and which by Christ's appointment doth reside in such a number of persons, considered as a church, which did not reside in the other inhabitants of the same towns, nor did in these before their church-fate. 8. The account upon which this government doth consider persons and actions, is distinct from the civil. Men are not considered as men, nor as in-dwellers in such and such places only, but as Christ's servants; and actions are not considered, either as profitable or hurtful to men simply, but as profitable or hurtful to their spiritual estate. And therefore, it is seducing of Christ's servants, and as such the deeds of the Nicolaitans and Jezebel, are to be taken notice of by it.

2. We say, as it is a distinct government from the civil, so it is independent as to it, and if the former be true, that there is an authority and government included here, and in the former respects exercised as distinct from the civil power then in being, it will also necessarily follow, that this authority was independently exercised in reference to that civil power.

For 1. There is no derivation of this church-power from that civil power, as is said. Therefore it cannot be dependent on it, seeing it neither did, nor...
could derive it. And although some except as was hinted, that there may be a power in fathers, husbands, and other such natural relations, over children, wives, &c., which is yet dependent on the magistrate; yet suppose that by the law of nature, parents did combine in one society and government among themselves, as a church doth, and in that case had a distinct government, could that authority and government be accounted dependent, seeing no superior authority could marr them in the exercise of their power without injustice, more than a magistrate can marr a father in the exercise of his authority towards his children when he doth it unjustly? So this church-power, not being a personal privilege but belonging to her as a body and society of many members combining together, having that by the law of nature, as is granted, and we add, if Jesus Christ allowed them, she cannot therefore be marrd by any authority in the exercising of that government, whatever unjust violence may do.

2. It appeareth to be independent in this, that there is a church government among Christians even when magistrates were setting themselves to undo the same: if then government be necessary to the church, and yet it be so ordered in the Lord’s providence that civil government may be for hundreds of years enemies to the church, as was in these primitives times: then it will follow, that the church government and authority is not placed in the magistrate, or civil governors; because in that case either she would have no government at all, (which by these epistles we will find false) or she must have a government and authority destructive to her, which is contrary to the end thereof; or in the last place, her authority must be independent, yea of Jesus Christ alone; and if it were not so, considering now that thee to whom Christ willed were not civil magistrates, there had been no such access to expostulate with them for their omission, if they might not have acted independently on them.

3. It may appear thus, that if the civil magistrate cannot repeal by his authority any of their sentences, then is their authority independent as to him. Now suppose a church justly to degrade, or depose a false teacher, or to cut off a rotten member, could any magistrate by his authority continue that man to be a minister, or that member to be a church member, whatever violence might do. Suppose some Emperor as in some cases Julian did, had taken the recognition of Ephesus, sentence against these false Apostles, and had declared it null? Would not still their sentence have stood in force notwithstanding? Or suppose Pergamos, or Thyatira, had cut off Jezebel or the Nicolaitans from their society, could any civil magistrate, heathen or Christian, have enacted them to be continued church-members? And this dought not only flow from the injustice of the matter, for suppose a pro-confus had unjustly degraded some judges of Ephesus, and the town of Ephesus had unjustly cast out some of her members from their society: yet by the Emperor’s interfering his authority, as the supreme magistrate, both might have been fully restored (though unjustly) so as they might have been really again magistrates and burgesses of such a city: which cannot be said in this case. No Emperor’s authority could have constituted such (though unjustly) to have been officers or members at all of these churches. The difference then I say cannot consist in the injustice of the matter alone, for both are unjust, but it must consist in this, that civil sentences are subordinate to the supreme magistrate, but church sentences are not; although by violence they might have countenanced such and such persons, and have made the effects of the sentence in many things void; yet could their authority have never reached to the formal removing of them as in civil cases was hinted.

Thirdly, To make out the argument, we say that this distinct independent power here mentioned, is a thing that agrees to the church in all ages and conditions, and it is not peculiar to any one time; as suppose because the church wanted Christian magistrates at this time, it had been lawful to exercise authority independent from them; which in other cases where the magistrate is Christian, is to be granted. Therefore we say, 1. That which is attributed...
to these churches here, agrees to them as churches; and therefore to all churches at all times; for the duties are common and the hazards are common to churches at all times. Therefore this remedy of church discipline must be perpetual also, it being the cure that is appointed for such a disease. And that often repeated word, ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches, doth speak in all ages to the end of the world, as well as then. 2. If all other directions, exhortations, &c. in these epistles, be perpetual and binding to the church, to the end of the world, then this must be so also; and there can be no reason given why this is to be accounted temporary more than the other; especially considering that Christ’s sending of this revelation, is for the good of his servants to the end of the world; and that especially is aimed at in these epistles, as the forecited close doth confirm. It must then be injurious to Christ’s mind, to scrape out so much as concerneth government, as not belonging to his church for so many ages. 3. If the grounds, requiring the exercise of his power in the churches, during this time, be perpetual agreeing to all ages, then it is not to be referred to the time of the churches being under heathen magistrates alone, but the grounds are perpetual, for that is not because the magistrate is a heathen, but that the person offending may be brought to repentance, and the seducing of others may be prevented. Now these ends are perpetual, which the church is to study at all times, and seeing church authority and government is here held forth as a mean appointed by Jesus Christ for attaining these ends, it must therefore be of perpetual use to the church also.

Although these truths be clear from the word, yet there are some things which are partly exceptions, partly objections, insinuated on by adversaries, which we shall speak a little to, as the nature of our intended will permit.

A forecited author, page 545, doth confidently undervalue all arguments to this purpose, and denieth all distinctness of government in the church by any power distinct from that of the magistrate; and to maintain it, doth, 1. assert, That all sort of power whatsoever, is supremely in the magistrate, whether heathen or Christian, by that place, Rom. xiii. 2. he heaps up with many big words several absurdities that accompany as he alledges that opinion of a distinct church government, which he calleth invidiously the building of an empire within an empire. Yet, 3. He granteth that where the civil magistrate taketh not on him the care of the church and maintaineth it not, in that case by the law of nature and nations, the church cometh to have an authority, or somewhat equivalent in the place of that, whereby she is qualified for the ordering of what concerneth her members, during that case of such a magistracy alienarily, and denyeth any other authority to have been in the church, during the time that these epistles were written, but what was by voluntary confederacy and association of members among themselves, and therefore fayeth, they had and exercised no less authority during that time in civil things; for which end he maketh use of that place, 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2. &c.

In reference to all which, we say, 1. That authority cannot be denied here, however it be derived, being it is a power to excommunicate and excommunicate officers and members which they assume, as he speaks, page 654. Yea a power equivalent to that of the magistrates, because it is a power adequate for the time to this end of governing the church, page 545. And therefore we say, if this confederating or up-making of this government, be a thing jure called for and necessary to be done, for this end; it is the thing which we assert also, and in respect of the particular circumstances, that is, what places or persons, are to associate together is to be regulated by Christian prudence but if it meant of a voluntary association and confederacy such as trades and crafts use in their societies, as that alone, which is the ground of this power, this we altogether deny. Besides, 1. If that confederating be called for by the law of nature, then it is not voluntary and free. And this authority is not grounded merely upon voluntary confederating, because as it is not arbitrary to a converted Christian to be bap-
tized or not, so being baptized, it is not arbitrary to
him whether to join with the church or not. And
being joined, submitting to its government, is a ne-
necessary duty to him. And it become not authority
to him, because he submits to it, but he is to submit
to it because it is authority; and therefore suppos-
ing that these false Apostles, or Jezebel, or the Nicolai-
ans, had never consented to subject themselves to the
discipline of these churches, as by their taking such
names of Apostles and Prophets to themselves, it is
like they did never, yet notwithstanding they had the
churches authority over them, and it was their duty
to submit unto them. 2. It is granted that the au-
thority that the church hath in such a case, is equi-
vivalent to what the magistrate hath and might exercise,
and if it be not equivalent to this, then the church
of Christ under such magistrates would not be so per-
fected as to their church-state and well-being as other
ways; which cannot be said without wronging the
willock of God, as if he had left his church disas-
tute of inward power when he had left outward
protection, but if it be such a power, it cannot be
arbitrary and merely grounded upon the confed-
ency, but must be authoritative upon another account,
and may authoritatively enjoin one to confederate:
and so confederating, is not the ground that confis-
tuates the power, but a mean making way for the
exercise thereof. 3. If it were asked, What evi-
dence or proof could be given of such voluntary con-
federating in the churches at that time? It would
be hard to show, that universally in all the churches,
there was such formal compacting actually agreed up-
on, and yet that there was government and authority
in them all is evident. 4. Suppose confederacies
to have been, yet could they never have constituted
an authority and government distinct, and independent
from the civil supreme power, especially while the
supreme power opposed the same; as supposing to
keep the limitations propounded; that many chiru-
geons and tradesmen of any kind, did live under a
magistrate and laws, which would admit no such, by
their authority to live and confederate under them,
will any say, that in that case, by voluntary confedera-
ing they could assume an authority to themselves;
and sentence any person (especially against their will)
without wronging and encroaching upon that author-
ity, under which they live? Yet it cannot be denied
to a church, and that without any prejudice to the
magistrate: because it in nothing lessens his authority,
or withdraws any thing from his cognition, which
formerly used to belong unto him: but as the arising
of a new church within a nation, hath with it new
cases, actions and considerations of persons and deeds.
So it is reason that it should have with it a new author-
ity to govern the same. 5. If the church had another
kind of interest, in reference to spiritual offences,
than in reference to civil debates, then this confederacy
cannot be the ground of such an authority. This
will not be denied according to the former princi-
bles, which do parallel these in the primitive
church, and make this the proof of the former; but it
is clear that the church-authority did far otherwise
reach church members in spiritual offences, than in
civil things, which may be thus made out. 1. They
might excommunicate and unchurch for spiritual of-
fences, and for disobedience in these, if a brother did
not hear the church, and oft-times they did so, but
it cannot be said that if a brother had been disobed-
ient to an arbitrary degree in civil things, that upon
that account, they would have proceeded against
him in excommunication and constrained him to
have submitted; sure we are, it never was put in
practice, at least till Antichrist arose. 2. In that chap-
ter, 1 Cor. vi. 7, and 8. the Apostle reasoneth for
submission to this, and exhorteth Christians so wrong-
ed, to suffer the wrong rather than to pursue it be-
fore infidels. Which doth supposeth, that the church
was not furnished with authority to redress civil
wrongs, as she was to redress scandals. And therefore
Matt. xviii. our Lord giveth order to proceed, in
case of non-satisfaction to the highest degree. And
on the by we may say, it is an odd thing to expound
that place of Matthew, by this place of Paul. As if
the Lord did only there warrant a man to pursue in-
juries before heathen Judges, when he would not sub-
mit to the advice of church members, seeing expres-
ly Paul enjoineth them rather to suffer wrong than to make the gospel contemptible before infidels, by the contentions of Christians; which yet that exposition of Matth. xviii. will approve of. Which sheweth, that it must be understood to speak of church-offences. In respect of which, suffering and bearing with them is condemnablc, as we see in these epistles. 3. If what the church did in civil things, be common to any person or persons in any rank or condition whatsoever, and to Christians in any time or place; that is, that they may and should submit their differences to some; and these to whom they are submitted may decide. And upon the other side, if what the church exercised in reference to ecclesiastic offences and censures, be not common, but so that no submissi to others, but such as are in power, could warranr one to draw forth such censures, as are here mentioned, yea according to the principles which we oppose, it were not lawful for Christians to do so now in civil things; for they say, it is not lawful to do now in church-things as they did at that time. Then the church's authority was not equal in civil things, as in spiritual things. And so consequently, no confedency can warrantably ground this church-authority, but the former we conceive is clear, therefore &c. 4. It may be clear from this, that the church did never exact civil mulets, or inflict bodily punishments; which sheweth abundantly, that she did not exercise authority in civil things equally as in spiritual. And yet had her authority been only grounded on the voluntary confedency she might have inflicted the one as well as the other. 5. Suppose a church-member had wronged a heathen by his miscarriage, no question church-discipline would have reached him, which is not the intent of that, 1 Cor. vi. Therefore that cannot be the ground of their power alone. 6. That direction, Matth. xviii. 'Tell the church,' was given before this was written. Seeing then that this is the foundation of civil association as is pretended, that of Matth. xviii. must be of another kind. 7. This opinion will infer the setting up of a civil power in civil things, where the magistrate is not Christian; yet that was never asserted by any. 8. The ad-

verfaries themselves grant, that in such cases the church may do much more, in church-matters, than in civil. Because that the magistrate doth allow his power to rectify civil things, and yet this doth make both equally lawful. 9. Suppose the magistrate had repealed a sentence past in civil things, no question it had bound them, though it had been unjust. Yet supposing, he had repealed one of their church-censures, and declared excommunication void, it had not done so, nor had been acknowledged. Yea had he inhibited them to decide a particular in civil things, they would not have proceeded: but when he did inhibit censures notwithstanding, they did proceed, and actually did suffer martyrdom upon that account; which in a civil action, I suppose they would not have done. 10. That, 1 Cor. vi. admitted any to be judge the men submitted unto, nor had wisdom; but church-things were governed only by these who by office were rulers. All which do shew the vanity of that assertion, that they equally meddled with both kinds, and yet this one thing is the ground of all that is said to evert his authority. Add that, 1 Cor. vi. the parties offending are reproved for going to him; here the church-officers, for not cenuring these that offended: which supposeth a power to be in them. And it cannot be thought, that the Angels had been so cenurable, had they not decided civil busineses, as for this.

Befide page 548. He denies that there was a necessity of obedience in civil things. Which yet clearly is here asserted in these church-censures. Whereas it is said, as a further evidence that the churches authority during this time, was only built upon this voluntary confedency, that after supreme magistrates became Christian, they did intermeddle with church-power without any contradiction, page 544. It is either a mere mistake or an untruth. A mistake in this, that it accounteth their meddling in a civil way with many things which the church still meddled with as formerly, and adding of their civil function thereto, for strengthening, not for diminishing the churches power; to be an assuming of church power and authority which are things most distinct, even as a Christian.
authority had resided in him alone. Beshire, he commanded the preaching of the gospel also, as is laid.

Wherefore we may see that Christian magistrates did not meddle with that power and authority which formerly resided in the church. Neither ever was it heard of, that a magistrate did excommunicate, authorize, or ordain a minister, and much like wherein church-power is exercised. And though it be said that he doth these things mediate, by putting the church to it, and by calling church-officers to consult in ecclesiastical things, which he doth confirm by his authority, even as he doth govern other societies, as physicians, lawyers, &c. by authorizing some of their own number to manage what concerneth such callings and functions; in which respect some one, the function is different from the magistrate, yet he is not the lawyer nor the physician, more than he is the minister; but the authority is on him alone. To this we say, 1. That the parallel is most unequal. Because although a magistrate be not by his station a physician, or lawyer, yet supposing him to have skill, he might lawfully do any act incumbent to these stations. Which doth indeed show that the same authority whereby they act, doth reside in him. But suppose he had the theory of ecclesiastical things and skill in them, yet he might not step to himself, to act the acts of a ministerial function; nor as a magistrate, to sentence with church sentences, administer sacraments, as he might do in the sentences of inferior magistrates and courts. Which doth show, that such authority doth not reside in him. 2. We grant that he may be said to govern mediate by, as he may be said to teach and preach mediate, for he ought to provide for that. But that will not infer, that the authority of preaching is derived from him. Yet no way doth the weight of this controversy so much ly on matters of fact, what churches or magistrates did since the Apostolic days as by what right and warrant they did what they did.

The last assertion therefore, although made out, could prove nothing without the former; nor will the instancing of exorbitances in church-governors, infer any nullity of that power, more than the enumerating
of miscarriages, of men in civil place, will enervate that ordinance of God. Yea we are sure, much ill hath come by magistrates intrusion in this churchpower, and many have miscarried in it, much les will heaps of flanders against most faithful men do it, whom God eminently countenanced, and who singularly by sufferings were honoured to testify for him, such as Mr. Welch, Mr. Melvil, Mr. Davidson, and others; who we are perswaded, in the great day, will be as bold in reference to their being approved in their stations, as any of their opposers or traducers on this account. This way of writing, will not be found to proceed from zeal for the Lord, which hath so little respect to such, who eminently adhered to him; and let these traducers of his ordinances and servants prepare for giving account for both him, to which we leave them.

For the absurdities wherewith he doth load this truth, they being for substance the same, which often have been fully wiped away, we shall only say these two, 1. That either they are no absurdities, Or, 2. Not such as the ground acknowledged by him will infer. For, 1. It is no absurdity simply, that a man in diverse considerations should be subject to diverse co-ordinate powers, as a son is to the magistrate as a member of the common-wealth, to his parent as a child and member of the family; and in some things, as formerly hinted at, he is obliged to be subject to the parent, that no command of a superior can loose him from it, and in other things, to subordinate to the magistrate, that therein the parent's authority hath no place. And the same may be seen in wives, who in some things are subject to their husbands commands, and no authority can warrant them to do otherwise. 2. We say, that this same absurdity might have been inflicted in those churches, that the Lords writes to, supposing he doth in the other case, that the magistrate had appointed some, whom the church had called to her synods, as for example to that mentioned, Acts xv. to some other civil employment, as they were subjects; would not the same absurdity of the interferring of the two authorities have followed? He must either then say, that such a case was not conceivable in these times; or he must say, the absurdity must be evaded, or it will be fastened upon the way approved by the Holy Ghost, as the churches governing of herself distinctly is granted to be, at least during such a case. And when he looses and vindicates his own concession, it will be easy to answer his objection. 3. It cannot be denied but that a minister may independently command a magistrate in the name of Christ, according to the word, and that not only by reason of the matter, or as another private subject may do, but by virtue of his office and authority. In which respect, he is not only a reporter to tell what is truth, but a messenger and herald, authorized to charge all hearers to the obedience thereof, as John the baptist did Herod, who in some respect might be subject to Herod, as in other respects Herod was to him. And if this be no absurdity in reference to particular governors, why should it be thought absurd in reference to the powers by which these govern? Supreme church power then, and supreme civil power in distinct persons cannot be absurd. And we suppose there can be no authoritative officer, that upon any civil account can for independently command the civil magistrate. Church-power therefore is not to be regulated in every thing as the civil is. It is strange to say, that it is lawful to a magistrate to receive ministerial injunctions, or not as he pleaseth, or at least no more, than a sick person is subject to the physician, can it be said that a jail minister can have no more authority in prescribing duty in the name of Christ, than a physician in giving directions for health? Or will it be thought equally sinful or lawful, to disobey the directions of the one as of the other, even laying aside the matter? Or shall every one skilful in divinity, be counted of equal authority with a minister, as the counsel of one that is skilful in medicine is to be counted of the same weight, as if he were a graduate physician, if his reasons be as weighty? Or is there any exception of some, more than others from ministerial power, because of any outward place or grandeur? These things can hardly be conceived without wronging the ordinance of Christ. 4. It is thought absurd to say,
that the magistrate is not blindly to act according to
church conclusions and determinations, but deliberately to try his own act, and yet not to be the proper
judge thereof. It cannot be denied, that a minifter is
to try and judge of what commands the magistrate
shall lay on him in reference to his duty. If therefore
the magistrate's subsequent judgment, did demonstrate
him to be supreme in ecclefaftick things, the fame
will prove the magistrate's judgment in the cafe afores
said to be subordinate to the minifters. That therefore is no absurdity. 5. An ambaffador from one
kings to another, or to some inferior magistrate, is in
his personal carriage subject to the authority within
the bounds he is, but as an ambaffador in the fol
lowing of his commiffion and instructions, and as
such, he is only accountable to thefe that sent him. And
never was it heard that one subjected his ambaffador
to the authority of whom he was sent, even amongst
men but that was referred at leaft, for some
others appointed for that end by him. Neither doth
a magistrate account an ambaffador's independency
on him to be inconftient with his authority. Now
minifters being ambaffadors sent by Chrifian to magif
trates, as to others, we muft either lay thefe to whom
they are sent, muft judge when they faithfully exer.
cife their commiffion or not, in their master's name:
which is abfurd among men, and could not but look
partial like, or we muft lay, they are not countrible
or cenfurable on earth; or that Chrifian hath intrufed
his ambaffadors and church-officers with the power of
cenfuring men, who walk unworthy of their trust.
If it be laid, that an ambaffador is no magistrate, and
hath but an intrufed power?
Anfw. Yet it is a power, and in that refpect such as
church-officers have. And fuppofe there were a plural
ality of ambaffadors for a king, orflate within the do
minions of another, intrufed to act jointly for his af
airs, and to cenfure any of their own number or re
tinue, that should walk unworthy of their place, would
any magistrate think that these wronged his power, if
they shut some from their fellowship, without his
warrant? Or could he claim, to reconnoitre their
deed; although in a criminal cafe, he only might
have access to punish even their members in that
place?
For that qualification of his confeffion which is to allo
this confederate authority, only to the church
that lived under fuch a magistrate, as doth not under
take the care thereof, we fuppofe that it will not be
easy to free it of abfurdities, if this diſtinct govern
ment be not acknowledged to be perpetual.
For, 1. Do not the fame scriptures that place all
authority in the Chrifian magistrate, and require abso
lute obedience from his subjects to him in the fame
manner belonging to any magistrate, as a magistrate
and his subjects under him, and particularly that place,
Rom. xiii. And fuppofe the magistrate should not af
sume that power, and put in exercife; yet if ecclefa
ftick power be in that fame gift committed to the
magiftrate with the civil power, no private perfon
could upon any pretext meddle therewith. For fup
poſe the magistrate should abfain to punish fome kind
of murders, witchcrafts, &c. no private perfon could
confederate themselves to afume a power of punifhing
thefe. Because civil power to punifh thefe things
is not committed to them, but to the magistrate. If
then the church might cenfure scandals, without in
croaching upon thefe scriptures at that time, Why
may it not do fo even when the magistrate is Chrifian?
This church power then cannot be under
stood to be comprehended under the magistrate's
commiſion, feeing Paul is exercifing it, even while
he is extending to the utmost the magistrate's com
miſion in all things, and quarrelling Chrifians for
encroaching upon any thing due to him; and no
question he knew beft the extent of these direc
tions.
2. There is no magistrate, who will profefedly
dclain the charge and government of any people;
although in practice many of them prove negligent of
the church of Chrifian. Now it may be asked if this
necellicity of confederating for exercifing of church
authority doth ly upon the church only, when the
magiftrate if profefedly heathen, or if alfo when cr
raneous or atheistical and prophane, or in practice negli
gent and carelefs (like Gallic) in what concerneth
the church? It cannot be afcribed to the firft. Because
the church is no more obliged to an erroneous magis-
trate, than to a prophane and careless magistrates, though he be not professedly an heretic or er-
roneous, if that authority be not improven for them;
and so according to these principles, the church is to
confedere and exercese authority within herself even
then. Which will come to this, that the church is
called to assyme this authority, except in such ca-
es as the magistrate doth take it on him and exercese it
for her good, for if he exercese it for her hurt, it is
to better to want it, and so it will turn far to this, that
the church is to assyme this power, sware where the
magistrate is godly, and according to confedere exercese his power for her good. And then it
may be asked, supposing that the magistrate pro-
feis willingnes to govern the church, how shall it
be judged whether such, and such a magistrate be to
be admitted to govern? Or whether they be to
take government to themselves? It will come to
this, that it must rest in the judgment of discretion
of these private Christians, whether they will admit
the magistrate to govern or not? And according to
the principles of that author; if they judge him ac-
ccording to their light, to be one that taketh no care of
the church, they should assyme that power to themselves.
For elsewhere he affirmeth the judgment of discretion
to be the great decider, and that a man had bet-
ter do according to the light of an erring confes-
sion, than against it.

Yea. 3. According to his grounds, they may not only
assyme power in ecclesiastick things, but equal in
civil things also. And will he say, that the church
of France may take power in civil things as they do
in ecclesiastick and not wrong the magistrate? Or
can it be laid this is a privilege of the magistrate,
which makes him so to depend both in things ecclesi-
astick and civil, upon a peoples estimation of him.

4. By these grounds, either a church should never
assyme power under any magistrate however careless
and profane, and so as is granted, wrong herself con-
trary to the law of nature, or by assuming power,
they declare that they account the magistrate a hea-
then, erroneous or atheistical, &c. And is not that
a greater irritation, and probable occasion of division
betwixt the magistrate and church, than to continue
this power distinct under all magistrates equally? And
truly it looketh not like God's ordinance, that putth
his church oftentimes in this strait, that it must either
suffer prejudice, or disclaim and provoke the magistrate
to as to account him an atheist unworthy of govern-
ment; but to have forfeited so much of his power,
&c. And suppose a profane son succeed in the magis-
trate to a gracious father, or profane men be chosen
to succeed others who bare rule before them, even in
church-affairs, which case is often incident what strait
would it be to the church either to continue to be go-

ered by the magistrate as formerly? Or, with so
much disadvantage upon personal considerations, to
assyme a power which formerly they did not?

5. Either the church assyme that power contrary
to the magistrates command, and so there is clear
ground of perfeccion and war; or it is with his good
will, or at least permisston, and that must presuppose
this, that he doth account himself heathen, erroneous
or profane, which cannot easily be expected es-
specially from a man not so denied and mortified as such
a magistrate is supposed to be. For delegated it can-
not be, seeing in that case this assuming of authority is
not called for.

6. It may be asked what degree of erroneousnes,
profanity, or carelessnes in a magistrate, may war-
rant a church to assyme this power. Seeing even
amongst heathens there are degrees, and if so, then
how shall that be judged? Suppose a Christian ma-
gistrate should neglect church-affairs, otherwise than
as they fall within the compass of civil-government.
In which respect heathens did own them: Or suppose he should own some sentences, punith some
scandal, in which it seemeth Aurelian did in expelling
Sanctatenus and Severus, in commanding to give
again unto the church a place where they used to
meet, that some rogues had violently put them from,
saying that it was fitter that God should be worship-

bled there, than that it should be employed for such
an use. Now what is called for in such a case might
be a debate, whether might not such heathens be ac-
F f
counted to take care of the church, and so it became not these primitive Christians to have retained a power during their reigns? Or what may be thought of Christian magistrates that do no more, and it may be, less then these? Whether are these to be retained or not?

7. It may be asked in such cases, whether is explicit confederating for that end necessary or not? and suppose some would not submit willingly, How could they be compelled? Or if so, were they liable to no censure, because of their obstinacy? It was good that these things were cleared, if it be supposed that this be a practicable thing, and often to be practised.

It is further said, That the churches greatest hazard, is from the great power of church-men, and not of the civil magistrate as experience sheweth; therefore it is dangerous to give them power.

Answ. So the greatest danger of error, is from church teachers, Shall they therefore have no teachers? So the greatest hazard of tyranny to a state in civil things, is from a civil government. Is it not therefore to be allowed? Yea this is the reason of it, that corrupt church-officers wrong the church most, and that both in government and doctrine; because in both they come nearest her heart. And therefore when they miscarry it cannot be but worse when an authority more extrinsic doth miscarry, and by their power they had ever greatest access to do her good or evil. And this rather confirmeth what was said, that properly the power doth belong to her, and had need to be properly managed, because corrupta optima et possima. But was it ever heard of that church authority, well managed did hurt to the church or state either, under whatever magistrate? It followeth only that the abuse of church-power is ill, but no more.

2. We come now in the second place to consider wherein this authority is exercised: which we shall speak to only in so far as these epistles give ground, and we will find it to be in these four.

1. There is a trial, 'Thou hast tried them that call themselves Apostles,' &c. Which trial inferreth au-

thority to cite and warn parties, to call and examine witnesses, 1 Tim. v. 19. to take oaths; which is requisite to trial and witnessing as that alone which putteth an end to strife among men, Heb. vi. therefore Mat. xviii. the Lord giveth the same rule concerning procedure by witnessing in the church, which Moses gave in reference to all courts, 'That out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, &c. shall every matter be established.' This sheweth also, that they may receive the complaints of offended brethren, as is in Mat. xviii. keep meetings for that end, lead inquiry upon the crying fame of offences as is like they did in this case of Ephesus, and in a word do every thing that is needful for compleating trial. For whereth he end is approved, the means that are necessary to the attaining thereof must be approved also.

2. There is a power here to judge and determine, 'Thou hast found them liars.' Which doth respect these two, 1. The nature of offences. They must judge what is truth and what error, otherwise they cannot tell who is a false Apostle and who a liar. And they must judge what is scandalous in practice, and so what is lawful or not, otherwise they can make no progress in trial or censure. For they must find such a thing to be an error or scandal, and so not be suffered in the church. 2. It hath reference to persons. There is power in judging such and such persons to be guilty, whereby they pronounce not only such doctrine to be erroneous, but such a minister or person to be guilty thereof, as is clear from the text, and so must judge what is proven or not, and every thing tending to that, as citing of witnesses and parties, hearing exceptions and answers, &c.

3. There is a power of cenfur- ing a person found guilty. These words 'Thou canst not bear them,' &c. 'Thou hast them, and sufferest them,' do import that as is cleared. This having of them implieth a fault, which was that by their authority such were not cut off from the church; which is the highest degree of ordinary censures, for if it be a privilege and a benefit to be admitted to the visible church, and the ordinances of Jesus Christ therein, it cannot but be a high degree of censure to be cut off from both, and
yet this is implied here to be in the power of these churches and they cannot be conceived to have cut off such from their society so as not to have had them or suffered them to remain therein, but by this which we call excommunication. From which necessarily this followeth, that not only the church hath a power of cenfuring, but particularly of cenfuring thus, by cutting off one from church membership, and from the privileges of the external ordinances thereof. This is called by our Lord Jesus, Mat. xviii. an accounting of one, a heathen and a publican, 1 Cor. v. 13. ‘A putting away of the wicked person from among them, cutting off of troublest, Gal. v. 12. and Titus iii. 10. a rejecting of them. There is nothing almost more frequently and clearly held forth in scripture than this, both in doctrine and practice. The Lord hath furnished his church with this power to cenfure, that he may preserve a majesty in his ordinances, which appear to the most part but foolishness and weaknesses; and that he may have weapons of his own kind, to batter down the proud imaginations of church members and revenge all disobedience, as the Apostle speaketh, 2 Cor. x. 6. for which cause he calleth it a rod, 1 Cor. iv. 21. and a punishment, 2 Cor. ii. 6.

4. There is here a power of ordering and making laws of what concerneth the affairs of the church, as may be gathered, 1. From this that they try officers; whereby it is apparent, that the church had her laws in reference to the admission of ministers before they could be accounted such, and that these who were found by their trial to be liars, should not be accounted Apostles or church officers; otherwise authority in the former respects, would be maimed and defective. 2. It may be gathered from this that they might conclude what was offensive, and what not, who was tried, and upon what grounds, when the trial was to proceed; who and what was to be suffered in the church, and what not; who might preach and what might be preached, and in every thing that concerneth doctrine, worship, and order, according to the rule of the word, and the great end of the ordinances, viz. the edification of the people; beside which there is no church authority anywhere, it being a power indeed, but a power given for edification, and not to destruction, 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10. This power being exercised maketh decrees, therefore such acts are called, Acts xvi. 4. ‘The decrees that were ordained of the apostles and elders, and by Paul a setting of things in order,’ 1 Cor. xi. 34. And 1 Cor. xvi. fisch were contributions for the poor, orderliness for preventing of confusion in preaching and hearing, calling to the people to faits, as Acts xii. 5. and xiii. 3. and chap. xiv. 23. &c. trying, proving, admitting, or cenfuring of officers and such like, as in the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, are clear.

The third thing we are to enquire for in these words, is, who are the proper and first subject of this authority and power? And we answer i. negatively.

1. The civil magistrate is not the subject of this power. For they to whom Christ writeth these epistles, are the subject of this power. But the civil magistrate is not the party to whom Christ writeth these epistles, as is clear, and it can be alleged by none. Therefore it is clear that the civil magistrate is not the subject of this church power. Yet no question, our Lord Jesus knew best to whom it belonged. Neither is it like when he accounts them to have authority, that he doth account them to have it from voluntary confederating for the time; for he accounts their neglect of the practice of it, to be a sin, against the breach of their duties, even as he quarrelleth with the angel of Sardis for being defective in the doctrinal part of his ministry; and he commendeth the angel of Ephesus for his labour in doctrine, zeal in discipline, and duties equally belonging to the ministry upon one and the same account. And it must either be said that a magistrate, in his election to be a magistrate over a church, is necessarily to be qualified in reference to these affairs; or that the government thereof doth not belong unto him; or that one may be called of God warrantably to a government over a society, and that in respect of things and persons of no less concernment than the civil
state, and yet it not be necessary that he should be qualified in reference thereunto, which is absurd.

2. We say, that not the body and community of the church, and people to whom this power is committed, which appeareth thus, 1. By the same argument, there are subject of this power to whom Christ principally directeth his epistles, whom he commanded for the exercising of this power, and reproved for the omitting thereof. But these are church-officers contradi distinguished from the rest of church, as appeareth not only by the common inscription, ‘Unto the angel of the church,’ &c. whereby they are distinctly considered, but also chap. ii. verse 5, where the church is distinguished from the angel in the threatening, ‘I will remove thy candlestick,’ &c. which sayeth, that what he had spoken in the former commendation of that trial, did peculiarly belong to the angel, whom he considereth as distinct from the church, spoken of under the term of Candelstick. Also in the epistle to Thyatira, the officers are especially reproved, as appeareth from verse 24, ‘But unto you, ‘&c. That is the church-officers, to whom he had been formerly speaking, and to the rest in Thyatira, that is, the members, as distinct from them. It is hinted also, in the epistles to Pergamos, as the exposition thereof cleareth; and no where in any of these epistles is that distinction so clear, as in thefe, where he speakeoth of the exercise of this power; thereby the more clearly to shew where it resideth. And though it be said in the close, ‘Let him that hath ears hear what the spirit sayeth unto the churches.’ Yet that is not to extend every thing equally to all the members; for then the ministry of the doctrine, would be common to all also. It is therefore to be understood with respect to their places and stations, as was said in our entry to speak upon the second chapter. 2. The church here, is divided in angels and candlesticks, that is officers and members. Now we must either give the power to the whole that are comprehended under the titles of angel, that is officers and candlesticks, that is churches and members; or we must give it to the officers alone, as distinct from the churches, for there is no warrant to give to give to the angels, and to some of the church members, and not to all; for that were again to divide the church, as if all its members were not as to government of one rank, contrary to the way kept here. And indeed we know no other reason why the officers and members of the church are so distinctly set forth, but that their distinctions in this respect might be held forth. But the first cannot be said, that all come in equally in government who are members, because that would take in women and children. Therefore it must belong to the officers, as distinct from the other three; seeing much of this church-power is conversant about things of that nature, as trying of false Apostles, corrupt doctrine, &c. which doth require both fitness of qualification, and continuance in respect of time, and painfulness beyond that which always church members use, or are called to have in respect of the one, or can be in respect of the other. And these are certain truths, that these who are ordinarily called of God to the exercise of any authority, are to be fitted for it and patiently to follow the trial, for here these who are to cenfure are also to try. It will follow therefore that this power in such things cannot be thought to be committed unto the body of the people; especially if we consider these two. 1. That in the choice even of a deacon, there is such exactness required in the trial of his qualifications and authority to his admission to that office; yet the power of governing, doth not belong to this officer as such, but he is inferior to that. Now if it be supposed that the people generally have interest in government and ruling. Then it will follow, 2. That there are more qualifications required in a deacon, which as such, is but a service, than there is required in these that govern the highest things. And 2. That to be a member of the visible church, hath more authority in it, than to be a deacon, at least than a deacon can have as such; because the one governeth by authority in the highest things, and the other as such but serveth. And by the institution and rules for the election of deacons, it would seem that there is by that office an accession of somewhat to them like authori-
ty, more than they had before, or other members have; and seeing this accession hath no authority with it. It will seem strange to say that a church member that is oversee by an ordinary deacon, hath authority in him, which the deacon as such, hath not.

In the second place we may add this consideration, that it is simply impossible for all church members even the generality of them to understand many questions that may be agitated, yea we may say further, they are not called to understand them; and again others cannot possibly give their attendance for the trial of intricate things, which may draw a great length. For it is asserted by Mr. Thomas Hoker of New England, part 3. chap. 3. p. 36 and 37. That the preparation, is to be made by the elders, because the body of the people if numerous, they will be unable with any comely conveniency to consider and weigh all the circumstances with all emergent difficulties, which will certainly and necessarily occur in such agitations, nor can in reason be dowered their time and pains upon them, as the intricacy and perplexity of the work will require. Thus far he, which doth certainly render it at least exceeding fulsome, that they should be invested with authority to judge and determine, who cannot possibly wait on the trial, especially considering that in all the judges and governments mentioned in the scripture, and in particularly in these epistles, these two are joined together, viz. trial and censure.

3. We say that it is not one person or church-officer above other church-officers, to whom this power and authority is committed. Because, 1. It is to the officers who are contradicted and disfined from the people, and are not comprehended under the title of candlestick or Church. But that must be understood of all members, and not of one only. 2. By this one angel, collectively taken, many rulers governing one body in associated manner, are to be understood as was cleared, chap. i. verse 20.

And therefore 4. The associated number of ruling church-officers, is the proper subject of this church power, because it is to them that Christ directeth these epistles under this same Angel as was shown, chap. i. v. 20. It is these he commandeth and reproveth, it is those to whom the oversight of the people belongeth in reference to these fames, Acts xx. 28. &c. It is these to whom the power of trial and admission of church-officers pertaineth, 1 Tim. iv. 14. which is the work here commended in Ephesus. And if this be true, that by Angel here is to be understood a plurality of united church-rulers as was said, then this affection laid down will also follow; for no other rest to lay claim to his authority.

To close then, in the fourth place, we may shortly lay down these conclusions further from these epistles. 1. That this discipline and authority to be exercised on all sorts of persons, members of the church, whether they be pretended teachers, as apostles and prophets, whether men or women, in a word all who are capable to have offence and to be edified by church-censures, which young children, mad men, and such like are not in the reach of.

2. It concerneth all sorts of causes, whether of error or practice, and is to be exercised in reference to the first, as well as to the last, as is clear from these epistles.

3. These highest censures, are to proceed against errors and scandals of a high nature, as these mention in the text are; or such as are agreed with heightening circumstances, as disobedience and contempt in not hearing the church, &c. Matthew xvii. And which after trial which are clearly made out; that thereby the sentence in its equity, may be convincing for the gaining of its end, both on the offending party and others.

4. It followeth here, that when offences are so circumstantiated in church-members, censures are to proceed against them, and they are not to be suffered to enjoy church privileges, as if they were not under these offences, except they repent of them; yea that unchurching and excommunication in such cases, is an ordinance of Jesus Christ.

5. Church-officers may be often defective in reference to discipline as well as doctrine, which is also guiltiness before the Lord as appeareth here.
6. Although a church be defective in the purging out of corrupt members, yet that doth not pollute the ordinances to others, or necessitate them to separate from them. These churches continue to be churches, and the ordinances to be ordinances of Christ although such were continued in communion with them, and notwithstanding thereof, those who were free of these corruptions are approved and commended by Jesus Christ. And if it were not so, that a person’s endeavouring in his station to amend such a fault, and to have such scandals censured, did not exempt him from guiltiness, so as to continue in church communion, although the plurality should be short of their duty. In that respect there might be still separation in infinitum. Which absurdly the learned Hooker, and Norton of New England, do press for the obtaining of submissiun to their church censures, and keeping of communion with their churches, even upon supposition, that the plurality of a congregation, should refuse to suffer out from deferring the fame. Other otherwise they say they when these did separate, upon such a new emergent occasion, there behoved to be a new separation and so forth, because no church or men can be expected to be so clear, as either not to keep, in some unjustly or not to suspect that some such are kept in; which also would be a snare to their confidences who judged so, and be a cause of separation although it were not so indeed. And were this applied to the defects presbyterian churches, there would be no pressing necessity of separating from them, or from communion in any ordination, with them.

7. We may see from these epistles that although exact holiness be de jure, required of all church-members; yet de facto, often, they are not till exactly such, and that therefore the holiness which is spoken of; as essential to visible churches or to membership in them, is not rigidly to be extended to a reality therein. If this church of Laodicea, wherein nothing is commended but much found fault with, be considered, it will be found that this holiness will not abide a rigid trial, yet it cannot be denied, but they have what is essential to a visible church and membership therein, even as her ministers, were ministers, although not answerable to their stations as was said; and if what these worthy men, Mr. Cotton, Norton, and Hooker, do assert unto in their writings, were accordingly adhered to in all practices, we conceive there needed not be any great controversy concerning this point. The second of these forecited authors, part 7, page 10, lays down the principle of the difference in their words as he calls it. Whether such as walk in a way of profaneness, or remain pertinaciously obstinate in some wickedness, though otherwise professing and practicing of the things of the gospel, have any allowance from Christ, or may be accounted fit matter according to the terms of the gospel, to constitute a church? Which authors also do acknowledge, that casting out of a church, is but to proceed upon clear scandals of a great nature, convincingly made, and no other ways, part 3, page 39. And if there be defect in the executing thereof, separation upon that account is disclaimed as is formerly hinted, if the church in doctrine and administration of ordinances be pure, that is, without error.

The judicious Cobet of New England hath an excellent saying as he hath many to the anabaptists against whom he writeth, p. 2, chap. 1, sect. 11. Better fayeth he they who have not so peculiar a title thereunto, be folded unto the church, than that one of such lambs be left out in the wild wilderness. And again chap. 3, sect. 3 is full to view that there was no strictness observed in the admission of professors to baptism, but rather an enquiry of their purpose for the time to come, in bidding them bring forth fruits, and believe in him, that was to come, as from John’s example Mat. iii, and Paul’s Acts xvi, where there is no mention of trying the faith of the household of Lydia, and the sayer, who yet were instantly baptized; as also were the Pharisees so checked by John, Mat. iii, and much more hath he well to this purpose. I have but hinted at these things, to shew that although there be many questions of church discipline, yet they are not all of one nature and hazard, with all adversaries. And the left doth rather
concern the constituting of churches and admission of members, supposed yet to be without than the governing of churches, reference to which and unchurch'd members; in this there is great difference.

8. We may see that the sustaining of, and submitting unto this church power, is a necessary and concerning duty: and if what is said of church power and government be true, then this submission must follow, otherwise there could be no government nor exercise of power if those who are called by their stations to be governed, were not submissive thereto: and if it were the church-officers duty to try and censure, even by cutting off such, and such scandalous person. Then it behoved to be their duty to submit, and the churches to acknowledge these sentences, as Christ's word is, Matth. xviii. 'Let him be to thee as a heathen, &c.' And Heb. xiii. 17. it is thus expressed, 'Obey them that rule over you, and submit to them.' Which certainly looks well to the authority of discipline, that requireth submission as to the obedience that ought to be given to by the title rulers: which is often given to civil governors, and the fainting of such foul-overrears, is marked as a thing most unprofitable to the people themselves, and therefore the more to be shunned.

Amongst other batteries against this ordinance of discipline, this is not the least that is raised against it, that it hath no compulsive force if men willingly do not yield, which indeed tends to place all authority in strength and force; for by that same argument, a strong son rebelling against his father, or a people or army against their magistrates or general, should be exempted from their subjection to them; and the parent magistrates or general, be denied of their authority over them; because they have not force to compel obedience. Authority lays in God's appointing of such to rule, and such others to obey; although some sinfully should invert that order, as such disputes teach men to do. And the question here cometh, if in reason a church member may disclaim church authority and censures, or de jure, though by power or violence they may do so de facto; yea this doth indeed prove church government to be distinct from the civil, because it is not armed with worldly power and strength, as other governments of the world are; and in that respect, 'Is not of this world,' as the Lord Christ said of his kingdom, John xviii. yet was he still a king, and it cannot be but a high guilt to marr this either by overturning of it altogether, or by encroaching on it, and thereby to marr its freedom or encurvate its power, or by refusing to submit unto, acknowledge or authorize the sentences thereof, as mens places call them to do.

We may therefore propose a word or two to all, but especially to magistrates in reference to this. 1. Let magistrates in the fear of God consider what they do, lest they involve themselves in this guilt; it hath ever been hard to kick against the pricks, and although some would make encroachment on this government to be a sweet thing; which men easily admit in their own persons without any restraint, yet the end thereof is bitterness. And it would be considered, if such counsels tend to commend religion and further it, or not? which at the best are but to mould and restrain it, so as it may be subervient to their own greatness and ends, as in Henry the viii. of England did appear. 2. They would consider if conscience put them to it, or if the most zealous prefer it, or if some other thing drive it on, and to what sort of persons that design is most favour'd? If it not be ordinarily the most profane, or otherwise erroneous, and shall magistrates be subervient to such? 3. They would consider the absurdities and consequences allowed, if they be hindrances or ills to religion and godliness, or but to their own power and greatness, and that in pretext only? Is it because they will more zealously or profitably do it themselves, or because they had rather it were not done at all, nor done by them and such like? If it be the strengthening of their own power, more than of Christ's that moves them; for it hath often been a miserable mistake of the powers of the earth, to seek the strengthening of their government by their encroaving of Christ's, which hath proven to be the overturning of their own. If magistrates cannot in conscience clear themselves in those things, it cannot but be found to be an encroach-
ment on Christ's ordinances, which are useful and necessary in his kingdom. 4. Consider the consequences, when things are marred and undone, or when misguided by undiscerned hands, who love nothing more than to make ordinances despised; for if indeed a distinct government be inconsistent with the civil, then a distinct incorporation as a church is, must be inconsistent even in its being, with a civil state and commonwealth. And if church government be needless, because all things may be done by civil rulers that are incumbent to it, a minister also will be needless, because civil men that have knowledge may supply that; and seldom is any found that rejects the one, but he is at least exceedingly lax in the other.

5. Suppose it be obtained, that this government be borne down, what doth the magistrates gain thereby? It is but either that such things, that church-discipline takes notice of, should altogether be slighted, that so there may be confusion in the church. Which is but a poor advantage: or it is that the burden may doubled on him who had it heavy enough before, and so he be made more immediately liable for all the defects that shall be in those things. And at the most, supposing that they should be diligent in the outward duties for the restraining of the outward man, yet doth that never come up to the use of edifying, as it doth by Christ's ordinance of discipline. For men are but punished as men, and not as Christians, and faults are but cenfured as in other states, and not as in Christ's church.

6. Let them consider, that the establishing of this power, as distinct from theirs, doth not exclude them upon the matter from having access to any thing which may edify the church, for they are admitted to oversee the spreading of pure doctrine, and the restraining of false doctrine, error and vice, and to every other thing conducing to the end of edification in the way suitable to their places; only it binds them here, that pure doctrine be preached by Christ's orderly-called ministers, and not by themselves or others, upon their mere command, and so that order may be preserved, and discipline and cenfures be exercised,

and made effectual in the church in the same method. And this is not to restrain them in government, and incapacitate them for edifying the church in their places, more than by refusing them power to preach authoritatively, and to administer the sacraments, as Christ's ambassadors; or more than a Father is incapacitated to exercise his fatherly power on an unruly child, because a magistrate or church judicatory doth concur with him.

7. They are no way weakened in civil things: for whatever the magistrate formerly possessed before the constituting of the church, or whatever magistrates in other states, where no churches are, do possess, that is still allowed to him, where this distinct government is erected. Therefore it cannot be said, that it doth encroach on him. For what cases do flow from a state, as a state, are still left untouched by this authority. Only what cases flow from it as a church, or from the members thereof, considered as Christians, these only are meddled with by it, viz. trial of gifts, admission of ministers, cenfuring of church-officers and members, and that with church-cenfures, others than have been, or are used in any mere state or commonwealth, and such like, &c. And seeing none of these belonged to the magistrate formerly, and do but flow from this consideration of their being a church. It follows that the keeping of power distinct in these, can no way be said to encroach on the magistrates power, seeing he possesseth still, whatever any magistrate possessed. Yea seeing by the church, there is a new relation arising from what formerly was, it seems convenient and necessary, that there should be a new distinct way of ordering and governing the same; else supposing that a magistrate had under him both Christians and heathens in the same incorporation, he were neither to cenfure Christians otherways for their faults than heathens. Which is absurd, seeing the fault of a Christian hath a distinct notion from the same fault in a heathen, viz. it is an offence and scandal, which ariseth from this, that the person committing it, is a church-member, and to by their miscarriages, they reflect more on their head, and the profession of the gospel, than the faults of others. Or
he must punish the same faults that are done by persons, under the same civil law with several and distinct punishments, which is no less inconsistent with the nature of a civil state considered in itself, which admits not of distinct censures of the same faults and persons, more than of a distinct power. And so if the consideration of a new church relation, will admit of distinct laws and censures, without wronging the nature of a state, and that equity which ought to be kept in reference to subjects, neither ought this of a distinct power to make these laws, and execute these censures, he thought inconsistent with magistracy, seeing it flows from the same new relation; and this equity among subjects, is no less essential to a well-ordered common-wealth, than universal supremacy and power to the magistrate. And the convening of church officers for the exercising of discipline and that without dependence on the magistrate, can be no more inconsistent with subjection to him in civil things, than the convening of church members for hearing of the word, and receiving of the sacraments, even though it should be expressly contrary to his command.

8. It would be considered, that the right exercise of church power, doth not only not weaken, but on the contrary, doth exceedingly strengthen civil authority and obedience throughout the church. For where this is, a magistrate hath all authority, that civil laws give him, and all the power that the word upon the confessions doth impart, and he hath beside these church power and censures concurring for his strengthening. Because disobedience to him, is accounted a scandal by the church, and therefore is among other scandals to be taken notice of, and censured by this power, even as they take notice of disobedient children, servants, and wives; which doth exceedingly strengthen the authority of these relations in the church, beyond that which can be elsewhere. And thus the churches power doth confirm the power of the state, when they censure disobedience to them, and when they censure the same faults in the same persons, which the state doth, though under a different notion. And by so doing they pronounce the power and proceeding of the civil state to be just, when the things punished by it, are thus represented to them, and not only as faults against human laws, and inconsistent with civil states, but also as sins against Christ, and unbecoming his church; which certainly cannot but add a great impression of reverence unto the civil power. Thus these two distinct governments, do no-way interfere, but support each other. And so as it is no obfraction, but a great furtherance unto church-power in the exercise thereof, although it be still distinct and independent as such, to have civil power after its own manner concurring with it: so is it a strengthening to civil-powers to have the accession of church power in its kind, to concur with it. And if indeed we suppose magistrates to punish all things that are scandalous in the church, there can be no prejudice to the power by this, which doth censure the same things on another account. And if we suppose them not to do so, then there is necessity for this church-power, that such things may be taken notice of, as hath been said.

9. The exercise of this distinct church-power, is a great advantage to the church, and so cannot but be well consistent with magistracy. For these two ordinances, cannot but be consistent. 1. It maketh sin hateful. 2. It strengtheneth the authority of all other ordinances. 3. There can be no such way for trying qualified men fit to manage church-censures, and church affairs, as such who are purposely chosen. 4. It hath what the magistrate can give, and this besides. 5. It proveth more convincing and edifying to the person censured. For whatever is said to the contrary, experience doth prove, and censure hath such convincing weight on consciences, as when it is distinctly administered by church officers. 6. It doth more shew the holiness of the head Christ and the completenes of his ordinances, and other advantages that may be gathered from what we said at the entry to this digression. In a word, if civil powers mind edification in their place, and be a terror to evil doers, this proves strengthening to them, because it furthers that end. If they mind not that, it is no
marvel such a power be suspicious-like, which tendeth only to be carried on thereof.

It is ordinary to men to suspect more the encroaching of church men in power and their exorbitancy, than of any other, that being ever thought by natural men to be a bondage, and these ever esteemed to be proud, rigid, &c., and I know not what in the exercise of their power. But men would soberly consider, 1st. That be the fault of the ordinance, or of the persons, and if discipline well discharged and ecclesiastically followed with love, meekness, conviction, &c., if it were not useful? And if the fault be in the persons, why should it be imputed to the power itself in this case, more than in other cases? 2d. Is there anything in a church office to occasion this exorbitancy and miscarriage, more than in another civil station? This looketh not like in itself. 3rd. If more nearly we consider church officers there is no such reason to suspect them. For is there any rank of persons so regulated, and to be tried in their qualifications for the exercise of their trust, as by the scripture they are? Or are any places more deliberately filled, that men conscientious and fit for such a trust may be called thereto? And are there any sort of persons so bounded with profitable rules in the exercise of their authority? If there be defect in the observing of these, it ought tenderly to be remedied, yet it cannot be thought but church officers must be most fit to manage church matters. 4th. Let them that are employed in church power be considered, without respect to that, are they not of themselves men of tenderness, confidence, and gifts proportionally, as men in any other station are, so that it may be supposed for their qualification and carriage, they might have been men of other stations, and if called thereto, judges, rulers, &c., without any just ground of suspicion more than others? And if so, shall the very office which ought to capacitate them more, only render them obnoxious to suspicion? This had need to be adverted unto, lest their office be reproached. And may not that power put in civil hands, be as ready to miscarce as in theirs? 5th. What church-men are usually most mistaken? Is it not they who still have been most faithful and zealous, in their duty? Have not such ever also been thought most intolerable even in respect of their freedom in the word, as we may see in the case of Elias, John the Baptist, &c., and the two prophets, chap. xi. Shall therefore doctrine and power in the word, be thought inufferable? Or shall the false prophets of Baal, or of Antichrist, be thought more fit to have places, than the Lord's faithful servants? This can be no good ground that doth reflect only upon them that are faithful, others being ready to apply themselves to the pleasing of men, both in word and discipline. 6th. It would be considered, what may move men of judgment and parts, especially if they be conscientious, to stop with magistrates? It is not like that self interest doth that, feigning flatterers that seek that most, take the contrary way and come speedly, when as the most faithful are often under a cloud. Or is it like the most zealous, humble and tender, should be most subject to miscarriage? And if there be ground to reprove or censure, either by word or discipline, is it most profitable, even though most displeasing, that it be done? 7th. Consider, who most readily fret at this power? It will be found that they are such, who from inclination to looseness or error cannot abide any bands, or from a principle of political indifferency in the matters of religion, would mould all in a state frame, and such are embittered at freedom in preaching, as well as power in governing; or they are such as are led with a prejudice at the power of ordinances, which certainly men naturally are not free of. And it would be adverted in this. 8th. Consider, that this mistake of church-men's power, doth often arise in such cases, wherein they are serving Christ. And men entertain it most in such times, when their frame is least spiritual and sober, as the observation thereof in experience will evidence. What man at the approach of death, hath been comforted in, such an opposition, or challenged for submission? Although contempt thereof hath lain heavy on many, and that to scare others from following their ways. All therefore of all ranks, would be obtested to advert
to this, left they be found even fight-ers against God; especially at such times, when this design by some is driven, left by putting to their hand to pull down this authority, they themselves perish in the fall there-
of. And what doth the advantage, at most amount unto? It is this, There shall be greater freedom to fin and fewer means to reclaim from it; or what cen-
Sure shall be inflicted, may be done in such way as may stand with mens laughing at their fin, with-
out being affected in the conscience by any convinc-
ing mean? Hath this ever profit in hitherto? or hath the right exercise of discipline ever been pre-
judicial to any? And do not ordinarily religion and discipline flourish together? And are not congrega-
tions in best case, where this ordinance is most vigo-
rous? And do not the sad effects of the want of this in other places, evidently demonstrate the necessity thereof? People would consider these things especially these who are engaged singularly for the sup-
porting of this ordinance. For a time reckoning will come, when this exercise of discipline and submision thereto, according to mens places and engagements, will not be found so indifferent as now it is esteemed by many. And disputes of this kind, we suppose, will not be admitted, when the Lord will declare that he hath ratified in heaven what according to his will he hath been pronounced in this ordinance of discipline upon earth. Which by divines, is well accounted to be the ratifi-
cation and confirmation of the threatenings contained in his word, and added to make them the more weighty, as the factaments are unto the promises of his grace.

2. Concerning a Ministers relation to a particular Congregation.

T
HIS relation between the angels and the church-
es, is mentioned in all the epistles. The minister, or angel, is called the minister of such a church pecu-
larly. Here the church or candlestick, is called his, ‘I will remove thy candlestick.’ It will not therefore be impertinent to enquire a little concerning this mutual tie and relation, in these three. 1. In the
general. 2. In the grounds of this particular tie. 3.
In the nature of it, particularly in these two, 1. If a
minister as such, be only a minister to a particular congregation in which he serves. And, 2. If that tie be as such, as upon no consideration it may be brok-
en or looted, and be removed by transporation to some other charge. We are the rather to take no-
tice of this, not only because it supplieth somewhat yet defective in reference to a ministrers call, of which we have formerly spoken, viz. what may be thought a call; that is, by transporting of a man that is already fixed in a particular congregation, or if a minis-
ter settled in some particular charge, may upon occasion act ministerially in things peculiar to a minister without the name.

For clearing of the first, we would distinguish a threefold relation that a minister of the gospel stands into. The first is, a relation that is between Christ the master and Lord, and him as a servant and am-
bassador. This is the first relation and fountain of all the rest. In this respect, they are the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and ambassadors for Christ, 2 Cor. v. 20. &c. because they have their authority and commisson from him, and he peculiarly is their master and own-
er. In this respect also we may consider the church, and so he is Christ’s church purchased with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. This is the principal relation, by which both angels and churches are Christ’s, as he is the sovereign master and owner of both. And so neither are the churches the ministers, nor the mini-
ters the churches, but both are Christ’s.

2. There is a less principal relation, which is delega-
tory, flows from the former, he to whom both mini-
ters and churches do belong, thinking good to be-
flow ministers as a gift unto his church. In this re-
spect, ministers relation is primarily unto the cat-
tholic church; and so 1 Cor. xii. 28. it is said, ‘God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondari-
ly prophets, thirdly teachers,’ &c. And again, Eph.
iv. 11. 12. ‘He gave some apostles, some pastors, some teachers, for the edifying of the body of Christ.’
Here we may see that ministers belong to the church universal, and have relation to it, being ministers of that same church, that the apostles were apostles of, and for that same end, viz. the building of Christ's body, which takes in both Jew and Gentile, as from that 1 Cor. xii. verse 13. &c. doth appear.

In this respect, the ministers principal relation and charge, is Christ's church universal, and his body. And they are given thereto, viz. to the house of God, which is the church of the living God, into the which they are to behave themselves as stewards, &c. as Paul hath it, 1 Tim. iii. 15.

3. We may consider this relation as more particularly, and less principal, and as subordinated to the former end. And so ministers are ministers to particular churches and not to others, and churches are the churches of such ministers and not of others, as we may see in these epistles. These relations are neither inconsistent, nor yet to be confounded, and may from the comparisons used in scripture, be thus illustrated: The church is compared to a city, or a vineyard, or flock; the ministers are watchmen, dressers or pastors. The Lord Christ is the sovereign, and owner of all. Now if the question be moved concerning these watchmen, dressers, or pastors, to whom they belong? First of all, They are Christ's as appointed by him for such a work, and countable to him in it, as watchmen are the watchmen of such a state, or king whom they serve. Secondly, They are also watchmen of the city, in common, as that is the object of their watching committed to them; or they are dressers of the vineyard, &c. and so it may be laid, they are watchmen to the whole city. Yet Thirdly, Because there are several towers of that one city, and requires several watchmen, and these require an orderly appointment of them to their several posts; and so in this respect, a watchman that is a watchman of the whole city, may be called peculiarly the watchman of such and such a particular tower, and for distinguishing him from other watchmen of the same city; who in that respect, cannot be called watchmen of any particular tower, but such as is allotted to them, although they be watchmen of the whole city principally, and so may be said of the other similitudes. Even so it is with ministers who are primarily Christ's, and by him are delegates principally to the oversight of his whole catholic church; yet so, as for the better attaining of that end, each hath his particular post assigned him; from which for distinction's sake, he is denominated, as especially belonging to it. The former relation is essential to a minister of Christ, viz. that he belongs to Christ's church, and is commissioned for the edifying thereon.

Of the last, viz. a minister's relation to this, or that particular church, is not essential to a minister of Christ, but is to be subordinated to the former. For we see apostles and evangelists had no such particular relation. And it is not impossible, but a minister may be separated from such a relation, yet is he still to continue a minister of Christ. Much less is the difference between one particular church and another, to be counted essential to a ministerial relation. Thus in a great house, there may be many stewards for distributing to the children and servants. And for order each may have his number assigned to him, for whom he is to provide, and on whom he is to wait. They are all, 1. Stewards of that one matter. And, 2. In reference to his own house, they are all also stewards of it. Yet, 3. By peculiar delegation they are only stewards according to their peculiar assignments. It is essential by their commission to be stewards of that house, but not that they should be stewards of such and such a number. For this addeth no new power to them; but orders them in the exercise of the former.

In the second place, this particular relation between the minister and a particular flock, doth arise from these grounds, 1. From the Lord's special assigning of one particular church, to one man rather than to another. In which he is to labour for the good of the whole. In which respect as he is a minister of Christ to the catholic church, and hath that common with all other ministers; so hath he this peculiar to him, that he is specially designed in reference to that portion, as it were his particular post, as hath been said. 2. Upon this delegation by the master, such a
people become peculiarly his, and by the master's appointment, are subject to the ordinances administered by him. Because that the same Lord and master of the minister, who warrants him peculiarly to treat with such a people, being also master of that flock calleth them peculiarly to submit to him; from which according to his appointment, there doth arise a mutual obligation between such a minister and such a people. He is obliged to minister unto them in the gospel, and they are obliged to submit unto him, strengthen him, acknowledge him, communicate to him in all good things, and to provide for him, &c. And this mutual relation is not founded merely on voluntary consent, nor is of a personal nature, (to speak so) that is, as if he, or they, were disposing of themselves as principal parties, but it is an obligation flowing from the former delegation, and cannot but follow from the nature thereof, and by virtue of the general commands given, Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Thess. v. 12. Gal. vi. 6. &c. although there were no explicit covenanting in reference to these ends, amongst these parties. And where any is, it is but a formal expressing of that which otherwise is implied, and is necessary, not for binding up that relation simply, but for the furthering of the ends thereof. Therefore in that tie, ministers and people both, are to look upon that obligation as a mean subervient to that end, and so to be regulated by it, and as was hinted (at both would remember, that they do principally belong to Christ, and that therefore it is not free to them to article or not, or as they will in that obligation, or otherways than may stand with the ministers end, and delegation forefard. 3. From this mutual obligation, there doth arise a more mutual sympathy between that minister and church, than between him and any other church, or them, and any other minister. They have common interests, common hazards, common joy and grief, &c. In which respect, a cross to one of them, is a cross to both, as this threatening here doth clearly. And in this respect, there is a greater fibre's between them than others not in this peculiar relation. 4. As there are peculiar duties called for on both sides, from each to other, which are not so required between them and others; so there is a particular charge or reckoning and account, which will follow thereupon: in this respect, a minister is to count more peculiarly for that particular church, than others: and the people again, for the reverencing and encouraging of him in a special manner, as may be gathered from Heb. xiii. 17. And upon this account, Paul did particularly aggrege the Gentiles fighting and grieving of him, in his epistle to the Corinthians and Galatians, because of his particular delegation in reference to them. In which respect, although he was an apostle of the universal church, yet peculiarly was he the apostle of the Gentiles; and upon that ground, did plead a peculiar claim to them, but still as subordinate and subervient to the former.

The third thing proposed is, that which mainly is to be enquired into, viz. the nature of this tie and relation between the minister and a particular church, if it be such as doth bound him in his authority, so as he may not perform any ministerial act without the same? And so upon the other side, if he be so tied to that church, that for the greater good of the universal church he may not be loosed from it, and be made use of as a minister, elsewhere?

For the first, We may take these general conclusions for helping us in the understanding thereof. The first is union and communion in the catholic, visible church. Which is one body, 1 Cor. xii. and that both of Jews and Gentiles one city and house, one common-wealth, Eph. ii. 19. &c. one mother of us all, Gal.vii. one bride and spouse &c. Which expressions do hold forth this union in reference to all visible churches, and all the members thereof. There are not two bodies, cities, or common-wealths in this respect; yet must these places be understood of the visible church, in being that body, into which we are entered by baptism, Cor. xii. 13. and that city, in which watchmen are set, and external ordinances. And that common-wealth, which succeedeth to that which once was peculiar to Israel, and from which the Gentiles were once separated by a partition-wall, which is now taken down by the gospel.
Conclusion 2. Although this church be one in itself, yet it is subdivided in particular churches, which are as parts of that whole. This arises from accidental considerations of the number of professors, distance of place, and such like. In which respect it is needful for her edification, and the going about of the ordinances that this should be, yet is this subdivision without the prejudice of the union foretold, yet it is subservient thereto; even as supposing a numerous city or incorporation should be subdivided in so many quarters, or lesser societies, for the good of the whole. Thus the church at first, being one upon the former considerations upon this occasion did extend herself in this manner, and these who just now were of one church, and meeting together for the ordinances, were induced to divide in several societies and meeting places, (as may be gathered from the history of the Acts) yet continuing still of the same body together in the first respect. In which respect sometimes the visible church is spoken in the plural number, sometimes again only in the singular, as pointing at an unity; such are these phraseos, to edify the church, to add to the church, to cast out the church, &c. which respect the whole church, confedered as an integral whole existing in particular churches, as we say the whole world which doth yet but exist in so many particular nations, and hath no existence distinct from them; and to say it confedered as a genus in this sense, would be intelligible.

Conclusion 3. Our Lord Jesus, the owner both of minister and church, hath given ministers principally for the edification of his catholic church without respect to this or that particular congregation, but as that is subservient to the former end, as it is, Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 28. it being one church to which both apostles, pastors, prophets, and teachers are given; and they having all one scope, viz., the perfecting of the saints, and one commission, viz., the preaching of the gospel which is principally to engage souls to the bridegroom. Hence in their preaching, we are to consider this order, 1. apostles, ministers, &c. Treat with sinners to have them engaged by faith to Christ as the master for whom they treat. 3. To enter them in the catholic visible church by baptism as the entering within Christ's house in general, without respect to this or that particular congregation, as when Philip, Acts viii. did first preach Christ to the Eunuch, and afterward did baptize him and then left him. And, 3. Being thus entered and brought unto the catholic church thereupon followeth their entering into particular congregations, so they may be the more conveniently and commodiously edified and provided for, as all that are in Christ's house should be; who therefore are committed to some special overseers and stewards for that end; as suppose the Eunuch had been admitted to some particular church for partaking of the ordinances therein after his baptism; that he should be a member of Christ's church in general, which is sealed by baptism, 1 Cor. xii. 13. was not indifferent to him, but of what particular church he might be a member, that by after conveniency was to be regulated. Whence it doth appear, 7. That there is a confederation of the church as universal, beside the confederating of her in particular churches. 2. That the church so confedered, as an integral they are deriv'd from her. 3. That the work of the ministry doth relate principally to the whole, their commission being in common, to build the body, to watch the city, feed the flock, preach the gospel, &c. their delegation to particular churches, is in a subserviency to this, that is, so as this may be the more orderly and conveniently followed; even as suppose so many eldersmen or watchmen were by some superior-designed for the governing and watching of one city, and should for the better accomplishing thereof, have their several quarters and divisions assigned to them; yet still were they to be accounted as governors and watchmen of the city principally, and not of these particular portions only.

Conclusion, 4. Although they be designed principally for the catholic church, and their commission will bear them to treat anywhere, yet they are not catholic officers of that church, nor at their abitri-
ment to treat where they will; but according to the order which he hath settled in particular churches as parts of that whole; that being the way which he hath laid down for edification. I say that catholick officers there being great odds here betwixt officers of the catholick church, and catholick officers of the catholick church, such the apostles and evangelists were, such the Pope claims to be, that is, to have an immediate access for exercising the trust equally to all places. Officers of the catholick church are such as are placed in it for the building up thereof and have commission in reference to that end; yet is it to be executed according to the rules laid down, that is, as Christ's call in an ordinary way shall give them access. For although (as was said) they have a power and commission, actu primo, to be ministers of the whole church, and watchmen of the city indefinitely; yet actu secundo, they are especially delegated for such and such congregations or posts as was hinted in the former similitudes. In this respect, Peter and Paul were apostles of the catholick church equally; yet for the good thereof, by special appointment Peter becometh the apostle of the circumcision and Paul of the Gentiles; and so Paul could not be called the apostle of the circumcision, nor Peter of the Gentiles, in an equal manner. Hence that argument may be answered. If a minister be a minister to more congregations than his own, then he must either be a minister to them as his own equally, and to have common charge of all. Which were indeed absurd and would constitute him a catholick officer; or he behoved to be to them a minister or officer of some other kind than to his own, which were also absurd, and would introduce a new kind of office and officer. It is answered actu primo he is a minister of the same kind to all the churches, viz. a minifter or ambassador of Christ; but actu secundo, and in respect of a special delegation, he is peculiarly minister of that congregation, whereo particularly he is appointed. In which respect, Paul and Peter are equally, and yet not equally apostles of the same catholick church.

Conclusion 5. Notwithstanding of this particular delegation, yet is it profitable that a minister should exercise ministerial acts, upon occasions warrantably calling for the same in other churches, and when called to it, he may do it not only by the virtue of his gift but also authoritatively and by virtue of his office and commission as a minister of Jesus Christ. Even by that same authority and warrant, whereby ordinarly he ministers within his own congregation; and they are acts of ministerial authority in the one as well as in the other. For ministers in the church are not to be looked upon as majors of several towns, or sheriffs of several counties, who cannot exercise authority out of their own bounds; but they are to be looked upon as heralds of one king, having authority to charge in his name wherever it be within his dominions, although for the better supply of the subjects, some of them be designed for one corner, some of them for another of the kingdom; or they are like ambassadors authorized to treat with rebellious subjects, who have each of them authority to treat and conclude with whosoever shall come in their way; although for the better carrying on of that treaty some of them be designed for such a corner, and to try it at such a place, and others elsewhere; yet all of them being jointly ambassadors, and any of them warranted if it were possible, to treat and conclude with all, by virtue of their power. So that the ending of the capitulation with one of them, is equally strong and binding, as if it had been closed with another although for effecting of confusion they meet in their treaty severally, it is so here, every ambassador of Christ, upon God's occasional call, hath warrant to propose the same terms and conclude the treaty with the sinner, ye to seal it in any congregation, as well as in his own; which may be cleared and confirmed further in these following considerations.

1. The power and commission which a minister hath to perform, ministerial duties he hath it from Christ, the master and Lord of the whole church; and in this respect is the minister of Christ, 1 Cor. iv. 1. And his ambassador, 2 Cor. v. 20, and therefore may his power extend itself to his visible kingdom, he being a herald authorized to proclaim in the name of that king. As far therefore as his authority as
Master do reach, so far may his ministerial delegation under him, upon just occasion be extended. Indeed were his authority derived from a particular church, it could be extended no further than itself, which is the ground of this mistake, but his authority being derived from Christ, the master though in a mediate way; and the minister being his ambassador treating and performing all his acts in his name, there is no ground to deny this ministerial authority of the servant where the master is acknowledged.

2. Consider, that the master's intent in sending ministers, is by them not only to edify particular congregations, but the whole body, as is said. A minister therefore in his acting as a minister upon such occasions, must be as minister in them. Otherwise he were only given as a minister to that particular church.

3. If his relation to the catholic church be principal, and his relation to a particular congregation subordinate to that, must his ministerial authority, in the case forefaid, extend itself to others in the visible church, beside that particular congregation. Because according to the rule, propter quaem unum quodque, sibi tale, id ipsum sibi magis tale, that is to say, if because he is a minister of the catholic church, he is therefore capable to be a minister of a particular church, or if his authority reacheth to that particular church, because it is a relation to the whole. But the former is true, as hath been cleared. Ministers are in a capacity of taking the oversight of such and such congregations, because such congregations are parts of the whole church; and ministers are appointed to edify the same, and to undertake that particular charge as it is subservient to the general end of edifying the whole, even as watchmen take the oversight of such a post, because they are watchmen of the city; and therefore their overseeing such a place in particular, doth contribute to the good of the whole.

4. Their commission which they have from Christ, will suit as well in one congregation as in another, it being indefinite to preach the gospel without respect to this or that particular people; and it agree as in their office and his end. Seeing therefore their commission in the matter of it, is not bounded.

What warrant is there to bound their authority, as if as ambassadors they did treat with one people, and as private persons with another; whereas their commission in itself, is indefinite, and by accidental considerations but appropriated some way to one people more than another? For further clearing whereof, consider.

1. That the apostle had their bounds in Christian-policy assigned to them; yet notwithstanding might they authoritatively, as apostles, act any where in the church. Therefore will not the particular allotting of congregations for ministers in a special manner, confine their authority within the same. It is true they were apostles of the catholic church, and so might use apostolic power in any part thereof, which a minister cannot do, yet proportionally, he is a minister of that same church, as is said. And therefore as that peculiar delegation did not marr the apostles in use of their apostolic power when it was called for any other where, for although they did it in an extraordinary, yet Peter had still apostolic power in reference to the Gentiles and Paul to the Jews, when they exercised it; so may a minister have ministerial power, in ministerial acts, and may act by virtue thereof, when in an ordinary way he is called to it without the bounds of his own congregation.

If apostles might use apostolic power, and as apostles act without the bounds of the catholic church, then may ministers act as ministers, without the bounds of their particular churches. Because there is a proportionableness in respect of the extent of power between ministers in their particular congregations, and apostles in the catholic church. But it is certain that the apostles, as apostles did preach to heathens, and engage them to Christ, and enter them in the church, and that by virtue of their apostolic commission and authority. It will follow therefore that a minister is not so bounded by his relation to a particular church, but that he may exercise ministerial power, without the bounds thereof.

3. If a minister by that same authority, may preach and administer the sacraments to others without the congregation; as to these within, then is not his mi-
minsterial authority confined to one particular congregation: but the former is true. For the matter of preaching, it is not denied. Only it is said they preach not by ministerial authority, but as gifted private men. Unto which we oppose, 1. If a minister's warning, reproof, invitation, &c. have equal weight with it in every part of the church, as it hath in his own congregation, then he must preach everywhere as a minister; because it cannot be denied, but he hath in his own church a ministerial authority, beside that which a gifted brother would have. But the former is true, the word by him hath the same weight as preached by commission from, and in the name of Christ so that he may say, 'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled,' which another cannot do. And the guilt of refusing the word from him, will be found upon the account of his authority, no less inexcusable than if the refuser were a member of his own congregation. And I suppose a conscientious will not get a defence tabled for an excuse upon this exception. Besides the minister hath ministerial authority, as an ambassador to conclude with them, that receive his word; and by the power of the keys, to pronounce pardon upon the terms of the gospel in one church, as well as in another; and one may receive that word and rest on it as spoken by an ambassador, and expect the ratifying thereof. And if it were not so, their confutation were exceedingly lessen'd and the minister disabled from concluding the treaty as an ambassador, which doth not agree with Christ's end of sending ministers, which is the perfection of the saints, and edifying the body indefinitely, Eph. iv. 12. And therefore may he as an ambassador, act in these ministerial duties.

The considering of the second branch, will clear it more, viz. thus, if a minister may administrate the sacraments without his own congregation, then must his ministerial power go beyond that relation. Because there is a ministerial power requisite for these, which no gifted person whatsoever can assume; but the former is true. Ergo, &c.

This minor is denied by some as being an unwarrantable practice; yet being generally used by all, it is thus answered, that a minister may give the sacrament of the Lord's supper to one not of his congregation, because the body of the church thinks good to admit them. And therefore he may warrantably administrate it to them, it being still lawful for him in itself to consecrate the elements in his own congregation. But we reply, 1. That a minister may warrantably baptize one, who is no member of his congregation. And therefore neither of the former answers will weaken this argument. As suppose a minister did encounter some heathen, it cannot be denied, but he might preach the gospel to him, and upon his professed faith and conversion, baptize him. Otherwise it were now impossible to baptize and bring in a heathen; which were absurd. Yet could not that be done without authority, as is granted; nor could it be done to him as to a member of a particular church. Because even after his baptism, it were lawful for him to choose what particular church he would join unto; neither before that, were he in capacity thereof, nor could the minister act therein by the churches warrant. Because, 1. The church could not judge a person that is without, that were not within their reach. 2. Because a minister might do this upon occasion, where there could not be access to have any determination concerning the thing, as suppose it were abroad upon a journey, as Philip's encounter with the eunuch, Acts viii. Yet can it not be said that upon the heathen's proposing this question, What doth hinder me to be baptized? That it might be answered warrantably by the minister it hindereth, because thou art no church member, or my church is not here to authorize me, &c. Such answers would be uncomfortable to the man, and disproportionate to Christ's end. It followeth therefore that the minister, as a minister might baptize him, and seal the treaty, and so authoritatively treat and preach as a minister, seeing authoritatively he may seal it. The former answer is therefore weak. And 1. Doth speak nothing at all to the case of baptism. Nor, 2. To the administration of the Lord's supper, but of his own congregation, seeing it alloweth him power &c.
only to consecrate the elements there. Yet there can be no question, but authority to administrate the Lord's Supper, must be as broad in this respect as to administrate baptism, seeing they are both seals of the same covenant. 3. If a minister's power were peremptorily commensurable with his flock, even in that case of the plurality of the church, their admitting of such a member, the minister could not be warranted to administrate to him: because till notwithstanding that person continues to be no member of that particular church, nor subject to other ordinances of discipline. And therefore, according to the former grounds, no such determination of a people could communicate authority to a minister by such an act, as to make him use ministerial power in reference to a person not under his charge, if otherways he were not furnished therewith.

4. These principles seem to be repugnant both to the commission and practice generally of all the ministers of the gospel. For, 1. They have one commission for all places and persons where they shall be called. This maketh them act as ministers in one place and not in another. 2. Their commission is to treat for Christ indefinitely, and for the carrying on of his design, without respect to this or that particular charge, except in a subordinate manner, so that by their commission, they are constitut Christ's ambassadors, ministers and stewards simply for the preaching of the gospel and edifying of his body. This faileth they are but ambassadors in reference to such and such a people; and so consequently, could not by his warrant close a treaty in his name with any other. 3. A minister by his commission is absolutely set apart for the work of the ministry, so long as Christ hath work for him; if he continue faithful, yea by virtue of this his commission, he is to follow the same. Now by this suppose a particular congregation to be dissolved or destroyed, or suppose them to reject him that he hath no access to exercise his ministry amongst them, in such a case he ceaseth to be a minister, and his commission expires, according to these principles, so that he stands afterward in no other relation to Christ than any private person so qualified.

It doth also thwart with the practices, it being acknowledged and practiced almost by all ever since the days of the apostles, that ministers might and did administrate word and sacraments authoritatively beyond the bounds of any particular congregation. And although in the primitive times, there was strict interdiction, that no bishop should exercise jurisdiction at his own hand, within the bounds of another; which is necessary for preventing of confusion and keeping of order, yet was it never heard that a minister might not authoritatively preach, and administer the sacrament by the key of order in any part as he might be called; yea it is not to be thought that the ministers of particular churches in their voyages to the apostles, or scatterings and otherways whereby they were necessarily withdrawn from their own particular charges, that they did during that time abstain all ministerial exercises, because it should prejudge the church of their labours as ministers during that time. Which is not likely considering, that their help in the ministry of the gospel, is sometimes intimated, and acknowledged by Paul, and they counted his fellow-labourers, such as Arise, Epaphras, and others, companions and fellows, both in Paul's sufferings and labours. It is like therefore, that their ministerial acting, cannot be confined to any particular place or congregation.

Lastly, This opinion would infer many absurdities. As, 1. A minister could administrate no ordinance as a minister, and some not at all, but in his own congregation. 2. Nor in it, but to such as were of his own flock. And 3. If any other were present he should be the ambassador of Christ to one, and not to another, and that in the same meillage. 4. Suppose a congregation to want a minister, or that he be by sickness or otherways incapacitated from exercising of his office, by this ground they could have no ministerial act administrated amongst them; and so no baptism or sacrament, nor yet have any benefit of a ministry more than if there were no such ordinance. 5. By this, no particular church might have ministerial communion (to say so) in church ordinances.
together, but such as private persons; yea as heathens might have in the hearing of the word. 6. There could be no ministerial communion and help amongst ministers; for so, no minister could supply another, more than a private person, though ministers, as joint workers in one work, be called in a special manner to have communion together. 7. No member, however gracious, being withdrawn from his own congregation, could be under any ministerial charge, or have access to the preaching of the word, as it is a treaty by an ambassador; or to any sacrament for himself and his; which is hard, considering that it is the same matter, and the same house; and seeing often occasions may draw men abroad where the ordinances are, this would make them in a great part to be strangers even within the church whereas they are children. 8. No minister might authoritatively reprove any offending brother not of his own congregation, nor censure such as do not willingly join, howsoever scandalous; which is contrary to the practice of Ephesus, as already have been said. Neither would this bring in confusion, or the making of the particular privileges of a congregation common, more than is allowable; because this pleadeth not for an arbitrariness in the exercise of his power; but that there may be a power to be exercised for edification, when it shall be called for.

Neither will it hence follow, that a minister, elder, or deacon, may thrust himself in, to the exercise of jurisdiction in every place because they are officers of the catholick church. Because, 1. This only faith, he being called orderly by an opened door may exercise his power in one place and congregation, as well as in another. 2. Because ruling belongeth to the power of jurisdiction, which befiteth in all offices, doth require other things to concur with it, before it can be exercised. Preaching and administration of the sacraments are done by the power of order, and by virtue of the office as such. Hence a minister might preach to heathens without the church, and baptize in due order, because he doth that as a minister; yet could he not censure one such till he were a church member, and until there were some orderly way of trying, judging, cenuring, &c. by a church judicatoriy settled; because the exercise of this power doth require more than the being of an office. And therefore even the apostles did thus preach and administer the sacraments, yet neither judged these that were without at all, nor these that were within, when they acted by ordinary rules, except in the way orderly proceeding. Therefore Acts xv. Paul found it meet to go to Jerusalem to a synod for deciding of some things by this power of jurisdiction although all by his doctrine he was authoritatively condemning the error; which sheweth, that there is more required in the one than in the other. And in that practice, the apostles gave a precedent to ministers whereby to be directed in ordinary cases, because in it they did follow ordinary rules common with them to all ministers, and did not act as extraordinary apostles, for so one was equally sufficient for deciding of the matter as all were, but in this a copy is given how the church is to walk in such cases ordinarily.

The last thing which we are to enquire into, is, If this relation betwixt a minister and a particular congregation be such, as the church for a greater good to the whole body may not loose it, and call one, serving at one particular church, to fix and serve elsewhere upon supposition that it may more further the good of the whole church.

Anfw. What is already said, doth make way for the answering of this, which we shall comprehend in these three assertions.

After. 1. No minister ought to dispose of himself at his own private arbitrement, to the prejudice or dissolution of a tye betwixt him and a particular congregation that is orderly and legally settled. For first, no minister being free of such a relation, ought to dispose of himself arbitrarily, as was said in the close of the first chapter, much more being under a tye and particular relation. 2. It is a general call to all, 1 Cor. vii. 'Let every man abide in that calling wherein he is called,' but especially ministers are to walk by a singular call, even in reference to a particular charge. So as it may be the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath set them; which must at least in-
clude his being set there in the mediate way of church order; which is that the Holy Ghost owns, as by comparing, Acts xiii. 3. and 4. and Acts xiv. 23. with Acts xx. 28. is clear. This therefore cannot be left to any private way of transacting betwixt a minister and people. 3. If it were so, then this particular relation were of no value, neither could properly a minister be called the minister of such a church; or such a church be his in any more peculiar manner than other churches, if he might at his pleasure and of himself dissolve that union. 4. Ministers being servants of Christ's house and watchmen put to their posts by him, as being specially to count for that people committed to them, they ought not and cannot without his warrant remove. This would be found to be treachery, and unfaithfulness in any other servant or watchman, much more must it be here. 5. whereas Christ hath appointed these particular relations for the entertaining of order, and preventing of confusion and promoting of edification, this would destroy these ends and bring confusion into the church; which is contrary to the order that he hath established in it. Lastly, it would beget depredating of the ministry in the hearts of the people, and lay them open to snares, if a minister settling in a place, should upon his own election, especially after a former tye, as is usually in men who are of other professions. And there are many strict acts of of councils in all times against this, as a most wretched abuse if it should be admitted in the church.

After 2. Although this tye cannot be loosed by any private content, so that no minister can transport himself upon that account, yet may the church for her own greater good transport a man from one particular place to another, and that warrantably, notwithstanding the former particular tye and relation: yea sometimes it will be expedient for the good of the church so to do. The application of the former grounds and the laying down of some others, will make way for clearing and confirming of this. The first is, If there be an union and communion in the catholic visible church, and if ministers be especially given to the edifying of it, and in a subordination thereto, to the edification of particular churches, then supposing that a minister's transportation from one place to another may further more the good of the whole than where he is, in that case, it ought to be done. Because the whole is to be preferred to the part, the good of the body, to any particular member. And in that case it is not the prejudice of that particular church, that their minister be set where he may more profit the body, but as the learned Bowles in his treatise of a gospel ministry, lib. 3. cap. 7. saith. It is rather their preservation and safety, even as it is the good of any particular fort of a city, when a watchman is removed from it, to some other post, where he may be more useful, to the whole city. Because the benefit of the city, is the advantage of every person therein. But both the former are true, as hath been said, viz. that there is an union and communion in the catholic visible church; and that a minister's relation standeth principally to serve Christ in reference to the edification of the whole, therefore, &c. 2. The examples used already, hold this forth, the church being one city, and ministers appointed to be watchmen thereof, there can be no reason why one may not be removed from one corner to another, if so it may conduce for the good of the whole. This is allowed in all common-wealths, cities, and incorporations, &c. and is engraven by nature on the hearts of all men to preserve themselves into societies by such means. And can that be denied to the church of Christ, which maketh common to all incorporations? 3. If a minister's relation to a particular charge be less principal and subordinate to his relation to the whole body, then ought it not to stand in the way of his being useful to the whole, but rather it is, in such a case to cede and give place to the other; otherwise that particular relation would be principal, and would not be subordinate to the other, as a higher end. Because so, the church in general would be more frustrated and prejudged of the benefit of such a man's ministry, than if there had been no such relation at all. But the former is true, this particular relation is subordinate to the other as is said. Therefore, &c. These consequences do follow upon
the grounds formerly laid down. Moreover we may add these uncontrovertible conclusions.

Concluf. 1. There is a diversity in the cases of particular congregations, and there is a diversity also in the gifts of ministers. Some congregations are more weighty, and much more of the good or hurt of the church dependeth upon their plantation than others.

Again some are more intelligent, some are more unskillful and dangerous to deal withal, &c. as experience teacheth, whereby it is apparent that the planting of some places, is of great consequence for the gospel's advancement, above the planting of others; and also that comparatively, one place will require ministers otherwise, qualified than another. Again there are diversities of gifts among ministers, some are fit for one people, and not for another, as is clear from, 1 Cor. xii. 14, 15. &c. 'There are diversities of gifts but the same spirit, difference of administration.' &c.

Concluf. 2. Ministers ought to be distributed and placed in particular charges, as that there may be some proportionableness and suitableness between the minister and his charge, that is the ablest minister should have the weightiest charge; the weakest the easiest burden, and as their gift is more eminent in learning, teaching, prudence in government, &c. there likewise ought a proportion to be keepen in laying on their charge, so as there may be a fit object for such qualifications, and as the good of the body may be most advanced. This also we take for granted; for that is the end of all gifts which are given to every man that we may profit withall, 1 Cor. xii. 7. Whether it be the word of knowledge, or the word of wisdom, &c. they are 'all members of one body,' verse 12. and therefore are to concur for the good of the body, according to their several former qualifications, as different members of that one body. And in this respect, a disproportionalizing of a minister's charge to his gift, it is as if we would put the foot to do the hand's work, or the ear to supply the room of the eye, which were absurd; and would argue either such and such distinction and difference not to be necessary, and to all the members might be eye or head or any one member; or it will lay that we are not to walk as according to that which the Lord hath distributed to every one. Both which are absurd, and expressly contrary to that which is said, 1 Cor. xii. where expressly these three are held forth. 1. That the church is one body. 2. That there are different gifts, which are as different members of one body, some more eminently for one use, and some more eminently for another. 3. That the Lord's intent by that difference, is to have all the members concurring in their several places, for the good of the whole body; that so, as it is verie 25. by each member's concurring in its own place, there may be effect in the body, which cannot be chewed if this proportionating of public charges and gifts be not observed.

Concluf. 3. There cannot be ordinarily such a discerning of the proportionableness of men's gifts to a particular station at the first entry, as to fit every one sufficiently, and to place them in their right room. This we suppose, is also clear from experience wherein it is seen that many, at first are fit in congregations wherein afterward there proveth to be a disproportionalableness. And it cannot be otherwise, upon these considerations. 1. Because it cannot then be known fully what will prove to be the peculiar gift of every man, till trial and experience evidence the same. 2. Because this proportionableness it not only to be tried by comparing a man and a particular congregation simpliciter; but it is to be taken by trying him comparatively, and that both in reference to other gifts and other congregations. For a man absolutely considered, may be fit for such a congregation; yet when other congregations and gifts are considered, it may possibly be seen that he is more fit for another congregation, than many other ministers; and yet possibly some of these may be as fit for his congregation. In that case, it cannot be denied, but it looketh like the right proportionating of every member that men be put to serve in these congregations, for which according to their gifts they are best fitted. 3. Because at a minister's first entry there is no occasion to try a man's proportionableness to any other charge but one, or at most in reference to so many as shall
at the time be vacant and give him a call. Now suppose some other charge should thereafter take, it's hard to say that they should be simply excluded from having any access to that person, if his gifts, were more proportionable to them. Because as we said, this proportionablenefs is to be looked to in reference to what is most fit for the whole body. For although (if we may so compare it) it is not unfit that the foot should be guided by light; yet with respect to the whole body, it is more fit for the whole body that they should be placed in the head, than in the foot. Because it is not to give light to one member only but to the whole body; so is it here, a minister may suit a particular congregation giving light as it were to the foot, whereas if we consider his office, which is to be an eye to the whole body, he is di proportionably placed. For to the body is darker, when the foot hath more light, which is absurd.

Concl. 4. Christ hath furnished his church, with power in her judicatories and officers, to proportion ministers gifts suitably to the good of the body. Hence is the trial of spirits and gifts appointed. And in that respect, 'The spirit of the prophets, are to be subject to the prophets,' 1 Cor. xiv. otherwise the church in her government were defective in that order which is in other societies. And it would not be adequate and proportionate to its end, if that were not; for there might be an unconveniency and disproportionablenefs in the church, and no remedy to cure the same. From which grounds put together, we may thus argue, 1. If God hath given diversity of gifts to ministers, and they be to be improved for the good of the whole body, then supposing that a minister settled in some more private or lesser congregation be more proportionately qualified to fill such a place as is more large and eminent, than any other who can be had without a charge. Then in this case he is to be transported. Because otherwise that being denied and the charge put upon a man of no competent ability, there would be a disproportionablenefs between the gift and the charge. For that would join the able man and the light burden, and the weak man, and the heavy burden, which were absurd; but the first is clear from the former conclusions. Therefore &c. 2. If by a minister's first plantation in a particular charge there be a disproportionablenefs in the body which transporting him to another charge would remedie, then he is to be transported; and a transportation in that case must be allowable and expedient. Because by it that due proportionablenefs is preserved among ministers and members of the body, which otherwise would be defective, and so a schism is prevented. For if the end, viz. that proportionablenefs be necessary then transportation, which is a necessary mean whereby it is attained, cannot be but necessary also. But the first is true from the former grounds, Ergo &c. 3. If transportation were unlawful, then we behaved to say, that either no minister could be at first misplaced to the prejudice of the body; or that there were no remedy for such a case for the recovering thereof; both these are absurd, as the former grounds do clear. 4. If ministers were peremptorily fixt by their first tie to particular congregations, then could not their gift come under cognition in reference to any other charge, which would infer these absurdities. 1. That the church were bounded and limited in the use-making of her own members for her own good, which is contrary to the nature of a body, for so she might have members fit for such and such stations, and yet could not make use of them. 2. In proportionating gifts for places, there would be little place for Christian prudence and deliberation. Because so the case would be determined necessarily by providence that such vacant places behoved to call such men as were not under any former tie, and they behoved to accept these particular charges, or must both necessarily forbear; and so such churches be without ministers, it may be for a long time, before any did occur whom with confidence they might call. And it will be hard to fasten any of these necessities upon the way of Christ. 3. By this the church should have little or no access at all to know of men's gifts, so as to proportion them for her good, if she had no place for it after their first entry to the ministry. Because then often their dothly much of it upon the man's determinating
of himself, or at most a presbytery determining of him, and a particular congregation prefiring, who often are more swayed with respect to themselves, than to the church in common. Befide there is no access to judge thereof upon other grounds given; if then the church be in any ways allowed to judge or dilpate of members according to their gifts, and that be not left to particular inclinations, transportation must be allowed. And if it be singly done, we suppose there is no such access to judge of a man's gift, and to proportion it for the good of the body, as may be done in transportation. 5. We may argue this, if ministers be lights planted in the church for the good of the whole, then ought they so to be placed, as they may most extensively give light to the whole. Now there are certain, 1. That there are some congregations where a minister may more conspicuously hold forth the light of the gospel, than in others, some places being as tables or candlesticks from which light doth shine, other places again being as corners. 2. Sometimes a light may be set in a corner, or under a bushel comparatively, and not to be set on a place where the greatest light is called for. 3. When it is misplaced, it ought to be removed from the corner to be set on the candlestick. And although it may be, that the corner may become more dark; yet the house in general becomes more lightsome. And if these former grounds be true, then transportation when it proves the removing of a light from under a bed to the candlestick, for the greater good of the whole house, must be allowed and admitted. But these two considerations will make this appear, 1. Christ's express words, Matth. v. 14, 15. 'Ye are the light of the world;' &c. 'Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that all in the house may see light;' compared with Luke x. 16. which demonstrates there, that ministers are so to be placed as they may most lighten the whole house. And if any place conduct more for that than another, they are accordingly to be placed. 2. The apostles practice clears this. 'We will find them in their preaching especially, to frequent most populous places, because there was most occasion of spreading of the gospel in these. Paul is marked Acts xix. 10. to have stayed two full years in Ephesus, and that all in Asia upon that occasion heard the word. Which doth hold forth, 1. That there are some places particularly populous and public places of more concern for the spreading of the gospel, when they are well planted, than other places. And 2. That the apostles were in their abode and preaching exceedingly swayed by that consideration; so that although in some respect they had equal interest in all persons and churches, yet did the consideration of the good of the whole engage them to have particular respect to some places beyond others; and so as it were, to transport themselves from private places to more public, that they may give light to the more. 6. If the good of a particular congregation, and necessity of a particular minister, may warrant a transportation, much more may the public good of the church do the same; this cannot be denied, but both the first are true. 1. The good of a particular congregation may warrant it, as suppose they be utterly prejudged against a present minister, who yet elsewhere may have access to be profitable; either transportation must be allowed, or he must be rendered unprofitable, contrary to the end for which Christ hath given gifts, 1 Cor. xii. and they put in a worse condition by having, than by wanting. For the second, That a ministers particular necessity may constrain this as suppose there be no possibility to live and follow the ministry in such a place, because of outward straits; thus Nehemiah xiii. 10. the Levites by the withdrawing of their maintenance are made to fly every one to his field, and Nehemiah contends with the rulers, and removes that obstruction, and doth not challenge the Levites, as Mr. Bowlsdoth observe. We find also in the church-story (Socrates, lib. 7. chap. 36.) of one Sylvanus, who not being able to live in one place, because of his infirm health, which did disagree therewith, he was transported to another more wholesome and agreeable to his constitution. 7. If notwithstanding of that relation between a minister and people any particular member, or any other officer, upon weighty consideration, may remove themselves, or be
removed from that congregation. Then may the
minister be removed also upon supposition of the
public good; because there is that same tie between
the people and the minister, and other officers and
the people, that is between the minister and them;
for the relation is mutual. But that private members,
and elders or deacons may remove orderly, hath never
been questioned. Ergo, &c. 8. If a minister upon
particular occasion, for public good, may perform
ministerial acts, without his own congregation for a
time, then supposing these grounds to be urgent, and
authority to intervene, why may he not be fully re-
moved? For the same ground that calleth to act for a
time, viz. the good of the body whereof he is a
minister may call for it to be perpetual, and ought not
to be rejected. But if it be true, Ergo &c. 9. If
we will consider the word of God more nearly, we
will find this to be conform thereto.

And 1. If we consider the Old Testament, it is cer-
tain that the Levites had their own fixed des in the se-
veral cities beside Jerusalem, seeing that was their offi-
cice to teach the people: and no question it was done
orderly: hence, ‘Thou and the Levite within thy
gates,’ is so frequently mentioned: and Acts xvi. 21,
it is said that of old time Moses had them in every city
that did preach him. It is certain also that not with-
standing of that fixedness, Levites might be removed
to more public service at Jerusalem, as is gathered
from Deut. xviii. 6. and 7. ‘If a Levite come from
any of the gates, out of all Israel, where he sojour-
ned and shall come with all his desire to the place
which the Lord shall choose, then shall he be a mi-
nister,’ &c. where a Levite’s removing from minis-
tering in one place to another, is clearly approved.
Neither is it to be thought, that this removal was left
arbitrary to the Levite himself, because so confusion
could not have been excused; but when it so quali-
fied that he cometh with all his desire, it doth sup-
pone a trial thereof; and orderly way of disposing of
him, for the attaining of that end, to have proceeded
as the learned Junius doth observe on the place.

2. If we come to the New Testament, there we will
find our Lord Jesus himself going from city to city,
he sendeth his disciples to go through the cities,
preaching the gospel: the apostles follow the same
way in their practice. And we will find them send-
ing ministers sometime to one place, sometime to an-
other, sometimes keeping particular ministers with
themselves, as from the beginning and close of sever-
al epistles, may be gathered. And although these prac-
tices may be seen at first, to be extraordinary, yet con-
ceiving the end thereof, which is the spreading of the
gospel, and the ground upon which it is built, viz.
the unity of the church, the good whereof is to be
ought by all the ministers who are Christ’s servants
in reference thereto, considering also that the church
to the end of the world, is furnished with power for
protecting of moral ends in an ordinary way; and
that the churches propagation, is the end now as
then; seeing the removing of ministers sometimes
from one place to another, may conduct to that end
now as then; and the ground, viz. the good of the
church universal, is the same now as it was then, we
conceive the practice itself must be moral, as the
ground was although then the manner and power
was extraordinary, which is now to be performed in
an ordinary way.

3. If we will particularly consider, Acts xiii. 1, 2, 3.
we will find this, near almost, in an example, for.
1. There are several prophets and teachers in the
church of Antioch, as Barnabas, Lucius, Simeon, &c.
2. They are ministering there in a collegiate way,
and that for a long time. 3. Two of them are
pitched on, to be sent elsewhere for the spreading of
the gospel; it being in the wisdom of God thought fit
to call some from Antioch, where were many, that
others might be helped, who had nothing; although
others might be helped, who had nothing; although
no question, there was work for all of them in An-
tioch itself, and he might have thrust out more im-
mediately himself, if this way had not been pleasing
to him; yet there fundring was thought fitter for the
churches universal good. 4. This is executed in a
mediate way, by the laying on of the hands of the pref-
btery, and with fasting and prayer. Whence we
may argue, if for the greater good of the church,
some teachers were taken from Antioch and sent else-
where, then may a minister, by church authority, for the end foreaid, be removed from one place to another. But the former is true, Ergo, &c. There is nothing can be objected against this, save to say that this was extraordinary, in that it was particularly commended of God. And 2. That they were extraordinary officers that were sent. But this will not enervate the argument; for in these practices of extraordinary officers in the primitive times we must observe some rules to difference what is ordinary from what is extraordinary in them, and so know what is to be imitated, and what not. Otherwife we may reject all the practices of Christ, and the apostles upon that account, and so prejudice ourselves exceedingly of a great part of the word that is written for our direction. Let us therefore observe these rules.

1. Where the ground and reason of a practice, is moral, although the call thereto, and manner of discharging thereof, be extraordinary; yet must the practice itself be moral, although the manner in so far as is extraordinary be temporary. Thus that the kirk have teachers (supposing that there must be a church) it is moral, as also that her teachers have a call, this will follow from Christ's sending of apostles, disciples, and others. Because the same reason, sayeth that a minister who is Christ's ambassador, according to his station, as an apostle was in his, should have his commission as an apostle had; but that the church should always have apostles, or that her teachers should be immediately called of God that will not follow; because the reasons thereof are not moral. Now if we may falsely reason in the general, that a church must have officers with a lawful call, because Christ's apostles had such, though it was immediate, and also he that was called ought to obey; by proportion we may gather, that a church officer may be called from one place to another upon a moral ground, although there be no immediate call at his removal, more than at his first entry; because the ground whereupon this practice is founded, and which is the reason thereof, viz. the greater good of the church, is still binding now as then.

Rule 2. In these primitive practices, there is a proportionableness to be observed between the officers who act, and their call and manner of proceeding; viz. an extraordinary officer, must have an extraordinary call, as such; and he may act extraordinarily in the proceeding thereof, by extraordinary power, whereas an ordinary officer must act, by any ordinary call and power, the same things, suppose in preaching, discipline, ordaining of ministers, &c. and in so far that laying on of hands was extraordinary, as being done upon an immediate call. But ministers may follow in an ordinary way, that is, by a mediate call, they may ordain ministers to a particular congregation, or transport from one to another by proportion; because the apostles by an immediate call did send out extraordinary officers to any particular place.

Rule 3. We would in such practices difference such things as are temporary, that is, such as have especial relation to that time and state of the church, as extraordinary officers and gifts were, from such things as agree to the church as a church, and serve to the edification thereof at all times. And thus also transporting of a minister, must be allowable in such a case; because there can be no reason given why that practice should be peculiar or only agreeing to that time and case of the church, or during the apostles' lifetime, but the grounds that infer the inconvenience of it, are in a good measure common to us with them, viz. the furtherance of the churches good which cannot otherwise be so well done. And if it may be as well done without this, we acknowledge that this practice will not be binding. And certainly the Lord's putting of the church to this to send out some already called, when immediately he might have thrust out others, doth say, that he minded to teach what ordinarily should be done by the church in the like case; for his sending them mediately by the church, and not immediately by himself, as at other times, doth intinuate this.

Rule 4. We are to distinguish things wherein the apostles acted extraordinarily by reason of their infallible gifts, extraordinary power, &c. from such things Mm
as were common to them with other ministers, and wherein they acted in an ordinary way common to them with all ministers; of the first sort were their immediate deciding of controversies, appointing of censures, sending of ministers, &c. by virtue of their own power alone; this is not to be imitated, of the other sort are their admitting of ministers upon a mediate call to congregations, as Acts xiv. their debating and deciding of controversies, and making of laws in a synodical way, by reasoning from Scripture in an ordinary way, as Acts xv. these are imitable; and what they did in that manner may be followed; and their laying on of hands when the call was intimate, their praying and fasting which are mentioned in this place, were of the last kind; and so upon supposition of the imitation of a call, this their practice for the substance is to be followed.

Now, to resume a little further the application, that we may know what is ordinary, and what is extraordinary in this case; or, what is moral, and what perpetual, or what is temporary. 1. That there be a call of God, that is moral and perpetual; and it may be concluded from this, that no minister without God's call, is to be transported; but that that call is immediately revealed by God himself, is temporary, and not to be pleaded for in ordinary cases. 2. This is moral, that he who is called of God to edify his church, by leaving one place to serve him another should obey the same. 3. It's moral, that this removal should be at the man's own determination; but that be done by church guides, and church judicatories. 4. It's a moral ground upon which this proceeds, viz. the greater edification of the church, whether by engaging and grafting in of strangers, or building up of them that are brought in; this ground can no way be thought more peculiar to these times than to after time. And therefore it is laid down as the great end of pastors and teachers, as well as of apostles, as may be gathered from Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14. 1. This reason then must have weight to the end of the world. 5. It's an ordinary way by which they proceed, viz. fasting and prayer, shewing the necessity of a concurrence of God's orderly and external call with his inward, for warranting of this practice; and also shewing, that when the removing of a minister from one place to another, may contribute to the good of the body they are in that heartily to concur, who have most special interest. Now these things being moral, and of perpetual weight in the church, although it will not plead, that the church may send out apostles by an immediate call, or that they may send out indefinitely without respect to any place, or not knowing where; yet this will follow, upon the grounds laid down, that when God calleth a man for the edifying of the body of his church, from one place to another, there it ought to be obeyed: and that sometimes God may call, for the greater good of his church, to have men removed from one place to another. He is master of the harvest; and therefore may either thrust out labourers of new to his field to set up another. Only these things would be adverted here, according to the former rules.

1. That by God's call, is not to be understood any extraordinary thing, but his signifying of his mind in an ordinary way, that such a man's removal from such a place to another, is upon consideration of his gifts, upon comparing of the places, and the respect of the state of the church, a hopeful mean through God's blessing, for the further promoting of edification. 2. As an immediate and extraordinary call was necessary for such officers in such a case, so proportionally is an ordinary call, by ordinary officers, acting by ordinary power only necessary for ordinary cases, seeing in moral things ordinary officers are to do by their ordinary power what extraordinary officers did by their extraordinary power. And if we will consider this practice, we will find it thus far to be intended for imitation. For, 1. Although the Lord immediately reveal the call, yet doth he follow his design in an ordinary way. Not by thrusting out new officers, which he might have done, if he had walked altogether absolutely and extraordinarily in this, but he doth in a mediate way of providence, in the making use of some already called. 2. The circumstances seem to be recorded, as if the Lord were
giving the reason of calling some to Antioch, rather than from any other church, viz. because there was a considerable number in that place of fit qualified men, and that so in reason it were more agreeable for the good of the body, that some should be taken from them to supply the want of the other, rather than that others should be altogether destitute or some removed from such places, as might not so well spare. And there can be no reason of the mentioning of this, but to shew the moral equity of this practice, that ministers would be proportionated in the church, so as may be extensively for the good of the whole. And that where some places abound, and others have scarcity; the abundance of the one, should condescend to supply the other, and that not of the weakest or least able. 3. The Lord useth a mediate way of sending them by the churches interposing her authority and prayers, which he did not use in the sending of apostles, nay Matthias had no imposition of hands; and this was, because the election of apostles was no way to fall within the compass of ordinary church power, nor to be followed. It would seem therefore, that it is made use of in this practice, to signify that it is a thing to be continued in the church, and to be performed by ordinary church judicatories and imitated by them.

If we consider the times following, it hath ever been practised in the church. It is marked to have been the practice of the first two famous general councils, as a mean useful exceedingly for the good of the church. The Nicæan council did transfer Eustachius from Bernea to Antioch, Sozom. lib. 7. cap. 2. And it is observed particularly of Georgius Nazianzenus, that he was thrice transported. First he was bishop of Cappadocia, thereafter brought to Nazianzenus, and thereafter to Constantanople by the second famous general council, and it is marked to have been of great use to the church. Cent. 4. 15. 300. And to have been their common practice in this time. So- crates, ibid. 7. cap. 35. doth for this very end, give many instances of this in several persons. At the beginning of the reformation, it was one of the great means that was made use of by God for propagat-

ing the gospel in several places. The transporting or removing of ministers from one place to another, was exceedingly useful; and what cruelty had it been to have refused the desire of the people, seeking ministers from thence that had them? And how else could they have been supplied? And proportionably the same weight lieth herein all times.

After 3. Although in some cases this be for the good of the church, and is to be practised by church judicatories; yet it is to be done with great singlenefs, tenderness, prudence and caution, lest that which of itself, being rightly managed, is a benefit to the church, be turned to an abuse, and prove hurtful to her.

These cautions and rules must be regulated according to particular circumstances, which cannot be numbered. Yet these things may be said. 1. That no slight respect ought to have place here but the greater good of the church, and advantage of the gospel, is the great criterion whereby this is to be decided.

2. This general is to be found out, by comparing of places and qualifications with respect to the number of the hearers, their qualifications, as they are strong or infirm, tractable or stubborn, pure or corrupt: in respect of their stations, as they have influence on public things or not, as they may have places; as the word in his mouth may be more readily and freely received, without prejudice and such other considerations of this kind. Some whereof are hinted in the close of the former chapter, concerning a minister’s call at his first entry.

3. This comparison would not be considered between places, as if there was no tie standing between him and either of them. Certainly there is more disproportionable suits required to loose one from a charge, than would have cast the balance between places at his entry. All other means of a proportionable setting and providing of such a place, would be first seriously essayed and followed if they occur.

4. This would be endeavoured to be done by convincing reasons, so as if possibly they who have inter-
left may be satisfied if not in respect of their affection, yet in respect of the reason, viz. that it is the more public good of the church.

5. No people ought to oppose the removal of their most faithful and beloved ministers, when it is done upon convincing reasons. These people are content to yield to the removing even of Paul and Barnabas, who question, were most dear unto them. And certainly were their endeavours to convince on the one side, and an acquiescing to conviction on the other, it would look much more Christian-like and prove much more useful.

And if this be called for duty, viz. that a church judicatorie remove one from a settled congregation upon such grounds, it must be a sin and an oppressing of duty, wilfully to obstruct the same: and if it may be a call of God, there is more need of conscience and submission here, to try if it be so or not, than absolutely to resolve a peremptory and pertinacious opposition to the same, without any respect to the grounds thereof.

And we conceive that the keeping of a right mean in this practice, and efchewing of extremes might conduce exceedingly to the advantage of the church; and it would be exceeding suitable to the unity of the catholic church, and that communion that ought to be in her, and well becoming that authority and care that is committed to church judicatories, that the several particular ministers were upon just grounds proportioned with respect to the edification of the whole. And so we have done with this particular relation.

3. Concerning the nature and difference of saving and common Grace.

In this epistle there is a large commendation of this Angel's practice: which is not only given to him in respect of the matter of his actions, but in respect of the qualifications of them; as first, that he did not only suffer for, and have patience in, that which was materially right; but that he suffered for Christ's name sake; and that he did not only hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but did it with respect to Christ; which is here added, to difference the sincerity of these actions from others that is materially good also; for no question there may be much suffering, which is not commendable before Christ. And certainly many others, even among heathens, did hate these Nicolaitans, who yet cannot be thought to be alike comprehended under this commendation. This therefore that is added, 'For my name sake,' must be to shew the sincerity and graciouness thereof, as that which did put a difference between their sufferings and patience, and the sufferings of others. And it doth imply, that this qualification, was that mainly which made the Lord take notice thereof. It is therefore the same on the matter with that, Matth. v. 11. of being perfected for Christ's sake to which the promise is made, ver 12. and the same with that, 1 Pet. iv. 13. of being made partakers of Christ's sufferings, and of being reproached for his name: which being an evidence and part of blestness in these places, cannot be conceived but to imply sincerity; without which suffering itself even where the cause is good, would be of no weight as to that end. We do therefore conceive these words undoubtedly to be added, to point out that wherein their sincerity consisted, and wherewith the Lord was especially well pleased; from which we may gather these doctrines.

First, That there is a great difference between an action morally or materially good, and that which is gracious, and as such acceptable to God. It is not simply suffering and hatred, which the Lord commends here; but suffering and hatred of and for qualified. Hence we will find frequently in the scripture, difference made between these, to do that which is good upon the matter, and to do it with a perfect heart. In actions therefore there are these three to be distinctly considered, 1. The act itself, as it is natural, suppose an act of hatred, love, grief, &c. 2. As the act is moral, and is directed toward an object that is agreeable to the law, that is to love that which is good and to hate that which is evil, and so forth; both which in many respects many be in Hypocrites who may do that which is materially good. 3. We
are to consider an act as gracious, that is, when not only the thing for the matter is agreeable to the will of God, as suppose one was acting or suffering for a truth, but also when that is done in the manner that the law requireth, and with a suitableness thereunto; and so one suffers not only for a truth, but as a Christian he carrieth himself in his suffering for the same; it is this last which makes the difference and which the Lord doth especially take notice of, and commends by this qualification that is done, ‘For his name’s sake.’

Secondly, We gather that this difference, wherein the graciousness of the act doth consist, is not to be inquired for in any intense degree of the act itself, whether positive or comparative (at least only) but it is to be inquired for in the nature and kind thereof, viz. in respect of positive qualifications concurring therewith, and having influence thereon. For this commendation, is not given upon the degree; but from the nature of the acts: it is not commendable hatred, because it is in such an intense degree positively: nor comparatively, because it hateth these errors more than it doth hate truth; but because in their hatred of these errors, they conform themselves to Christ’s hatred of them. And likewise by that commendation, ‘For Christ’s name’s sake,’ is not holden forth any degree either of their labour, or patience simply, nor yet comparatively, that they laboured more, or did suffer more for that which is materially good, than they did for any other thing: or because their patience was for degree more than their patience; but that there was a peculiar respect to the Lord’s name both in their labour and patience.

If it be asked, What this is, which beside the moral rectitude of the act, must concur for the making of it to be accounted gracious?

It may be answered in these four. First, There is a different spiritual principle in the person acting, which must actually have influence upon the act; and from which the act, as gracious proceedeth. This in Scripture is called the spirit, inner-man, new-creature, &c. and is different in its acting from the old-man and flesh, yea and from the faculties of the soul, considered merely as natural: for, if we consider an act, suppose of love, submission under sufferings, or such like; it is the natural act of the soul as formerly elicited by it; but if we consider them as gracious acts, they do proceed from the spirit influencing them, to lay so, with a suitableness to itself, by the co-operation of the grace of God. 2dly, There is a difference in respect of the end, there is a gracious and spiritual end proposed in performing of such a lawful thing; this is implied here in this, that they had the glory of the name of Jesus before them in their suffering and patience, as seeking to pursue that and not to gain credit to themselves. 3dly, There concurreth to qualify a gracious action, a spiritual motive inclining the spiritual principle to follow this end, which can never be separated from the former, and here is clear in the two instances that are in the text, whereas respect to Christ’s name is the end, so love to Christ, and zeal to his glory moveth them, and swayeth them to pursue this end, by such means as labouring, patience, hating of the Nicolaitans, &c. and thus to have patience for Christ’s name sake, is out of respect to Christ’s glory to be swayeth thereunto. 4thly, There is a difference in respect of the formality of the act, when that not only the thing that is good is yielded unto upon a good motive; but as such, it is yielded unto or acted, that is, when the object as so considered is acted upon; and so not only is one swayeth to patience in suffering from respect to Christ’s name; but upon this formal consideration, they yield themselves to it, and do it as such. So that fill there is a reduplication in the act, suitable to the end and motive proposed: and as the person in the act hath another principle to act by, another end proposed to himself, and another motive: persuading him to it; so hath he a differentuptaking of the act or object in the act, not only as considered in itself as good, but as considered in reference to such an end, and as such he acts on it. As for instance, it is laudable and commendable to give to one that is miferly, and more laudable to love one that is gracious, and to supply his wants, yet both these are not sufficient to make the act to be accounted gracious, even though.
the love to them should be most intense; and the
benefitence large: but there must be a concurrence
of these four formerly mentioned, viz. 1. An in-
ward gracious principle acting, otherwise one may be
renewed, and carry love to one another that is gracious,
yet if it proceed not from this principle, it is not to
be accounted sincere and gracious love. 2. There must
be a spiritual single end in their loving of them, and
giving to them, viz. the honouring of Christ in them
and their good. 3. A spiritual motive, viz. the con-
idering of them not only as in strict, or as lovely in
themselves; but as gracious and beloved of Jesus
Christ whose command calls for love to them. And
lastly, this is done to them as such when the heart in
its affection, clothe with them upon this account
that they are beloved of Christ, and as being them-
elves called of God to that duty. Thus Matth. x. ‘To
give a disciple’ is one thing; but to give to him ‘In
the name of a disciple,’ is another, that is, to give him
upon that account that he is such; or as it is, Mark ix.
41. ‘Because they belong to Christ.’ The former
may be often in many natural men, and hath no such
promise; this cannot be in any but a believer, who
only may expect the promised reward. This is as to
be understood, as 1 Cor. viii. 7, where some men not
only did eat that which was sacrificed; but as such a
thing and under that formal consideration, that is,
with some confidence to the idol, as the words before
carry it, and this as maketh it quite another thing.
So is it to be understood here, when we lay the object
is to be considered as such. And in this redupli-
cation we conceive, that a main piece of singleness and
sincerity doth lie, when not only we do what is com-
manded to suffer for what is truth; but when we do it
as a thing commanded, and suffer for it as for his
name, fake; and in some respect, it may take in the
two former last differences: and so if any shall make
the number fewer, we shall not debate, providing that
under any name thefe be taken in.
Hence, Thirdly, We gather also, that whatever
act is so qualified, as in the former is expressed, it is
a sincere gracious act in whatsoever degree it be, so
that it be an act of patience, love, hatred, &c. proceed-
ing from an inward renewed principle, tending to a
spiritual end, sware by a supernatural motive; and
upon that account acting it cannot be but accounted
an act of sincere patience, love, hatred, &c. although
as to the degree of it, it be but like the grain of
multifird seed. For although the acts themselves even
ward toward such objects, may be distinguished from
gracious acts; yet they cannot be conceived to be so
and so qualified in any degree, but hocies, they must be
conceived to be gracious, because in so far they are
agreeable to the law, and that not only in the matter
but in the manner of them. And this agreeableness to
the law, being a proof that one is sanctified without
which no such act could be performed, it may be also
an evidence of justification, although it be not con-
idered as a condition thereof, which is accepted by
the covenant of grace. And although these acts be
imperfect with respect of degree; yet they cannot be
denied to be sincere, or perfect in respect of their
kind. Every act of the new nature in whatsoever de-
gree being like itself, and conform to the principle
from which it proceedeth, even as on the contrary the
leaff motion of the old man is sinful according to the
root from which it flows: for these two cannot be
separated which the Lord hath put together, a good
tree must have good fruit, and cannot bring forth evil
fruit, Matth. vii. 17, 18 &c. Now acts in the least
degree so qualified as before is said, are in so far, at
leaff fruit of a good tree, yea of a gracious principle
within; and therefore they cannot but be such also.
And if it were not thus, that this angel had patience
for Christ’s name’s fake, it could be no ground of
condemnation for differing his patience from
the patience of hypocrites if it did not sufficiently
prove his carriage to be sincere. And hence,
Fourthly, Arithet also this, that no natural man
or hypocrite, though coming the greatest length in the
state of hypocrisy, can in the least degree perform an
act so and so qualified, as is before said, more than
they can act from a principle which they have not for,
if they might in any measure have patience for Christ’s
names fake, in respect of the end, motive, and account
upon which the heart yieldeth to suffering, it could be
no ground of a peculiar commendation to this angel,
which is yet contrary to the Scope. And if the former
be true, that every act so and so qualified, is a sincere
act, this must necessarily then follow thereupon, and so
more particularly we say, that no hypocrite can thus
formally do any thing that is good, as, to give in-
fstances. 1. In the duty of love to God; an hypocrite
cannot love God as God, and to suffer for Christ's
Names sake, as is formerly expressed. Because, 1.
That is given here as the evidence of this angel's grave-
ous practice, that it was so qualified; and the
promises that are annexed to this of suffering for his names
fake, (whereat formerly we hinted) do confirm it.
2. This being true of all natural men, that they are
real haters of God; and it being true also, that natural
men and hypocrites may go a great length in loving
God, and in expressing the evidences thereof in some
respect. It must either be said then, that they hate
God in respect of the materiality of their actions
or in respect of the want of the qualifications formerly
mentioned, that is, because they love not him, and
what he loves as much, and upon such an account,
now it cannot be said that they love not God in the former respect; nay, not only in respect of
their being defective in the degree or inten-
lenes of the act, as may be shewed afterward. It
must be true therefore in the last respect. And so
it will follow, that no man in nature can be said to love
God, or perform any Act in things materially good,
according as it is formerly qualified. 3. This may be
added, that if respect to good, could sway the natural
man so as to make him act according to the former
qualifications in any one act, then might he perform
all other acts upon that same account also: for, a qua-
tenus ad omne, valet consequentia. Now, if it be absurd
to say, that one can be a hypocrite, and yet in all his
performances and actions be so sway'd (which is the
clear evidence of a sincere professor which needeth not
to be ashamed, Psal. cxix. 6.) Then it must also be
aburd to say, that a hypocrite may perform any com-
manded thing upon that account as such, and is for-
merly qualified. 4. The doing of acts so qualified,
act doth proceed, besides what is in itself sinful: for it cannot be conceived that a sinful principle, as such can hate itself; and in scripture, hating against the flesh, or fighting against the law in our members, which must be a warring against sin as sin, and as proceeding from such a root as the flesh or the old-man, is ever attributed to the spirit, Gal. v. 17, or the 'Inner-man, and law of the mind,' Rom. vii. which doth necessarily infer a change of the root in these who do hate sin as sin; and therefore this can be within the compass of a hypocrite. Neither will it infringe this, that by experience we find drunkards, swearers, and other unrenewed persons, hating not only these acts in themselves, but even in their children; or that we may find it to have been in ourselves before regeneration. This indeed will prove that a natural man, may hate that which is sin, but will not prove that he hates it as sin, but as that which is hurtful or shameful to him, or proves disquieting to the peace of his natural conscience, as from the same experience may be gathered, for these sins in others will never affect them, and there will be still many delightsome sins continued in, which it may be, they will know to be sins, and yet carry no such hatred to them. And though natural men in their judgment may be convinced that sin as sin is hateful and evil in itself, yet it will not follow that they will actually hate it as such upon that consideration; because there is no particular sin that from the word may be gathered to be sin, but a natural man's judgment may be convinced, that as such it is evil; and yet often times do they continue drunk with the love of many of them, because men do not consider and hate ill simply as ill, but as evil to them; even as they desire not that which is good simply, but that which they conceive good to them: and experience daily will make this appear, that the heart loveth not or hateth not things as they appear simply in themselves, but as it conceiveth them to be in reference to its present condition. Now considering sin as sin simply, without reference to any other thing, there is nothing upon that account can be conceived in it that can be hateful to a natural man, who is dead in his sinful condi-

dion. It must be therefore for some other respect that he hates any particular ill as these whom God afterward renews will find in their own experience.

Fifthly, This also will follow, that then there is a difference between the acts of faying grace, and the acts of common grace, beside any consideration of the degree thereof; for that this difference may well be said to be in kind, or ipso genere. We need not be curious in the terms of physical or moral differences, this must be a physical and real difference, as grace is a physical and real thing, and doth not only differ from common gifts in respect of the covenants accepting of such a degree, and not of another; but also in respect of concurring qualifications formerly mentioned; for an act performed with these qualifications multother be of the same kind that an act is without them, or it must differ from it because of these qualifications, and if it differ because of these, then is that difference real, flowing from the kind of the act and not from the consideration of the degree alone; and do not gradual only.

Lastly, It will follow, that one in the search and trial of the sincerity and savingness of his grace, is not only to consider it in the degree thereof, either positive or comparative but may also look to the nature and kind thereof, and cannot conclude the sincerity of it, except they consider the qualifications formerly mentioned; for that must be the only sure way to find out the sincerity of an act which our Lord Jesus propoeth as the ground of the commendation thereof; but here we see that the grounds upon which he commends both their patience for him, their respect to him, and their hating of what is evil; is not (only at least) because of any degree that is considered in these acts; but because of their kind, or qualifications wherewith they are qualified, as it is not patience (that is, patience as it is a grace) because it suffers too much, or suffers more for truth, than for any other cause considered upon the matter; but because their suffering in a good cause was so qualified, as is said; we will see this fame to be clear in all other instances, as it is true of saving repentence, not that which hath the deepest sorrow positively, nor that which
hath more sorrow for sin comparatively than pleasure in it, but it is according as the principle and motive are, from which the sorrow proceeds, and by, and according to which it acts: otherwise no question, Judas his sorrow might have been said to have been true repentance, which certainly was not only an intense grief, but also comparatively it affected him more than any worldly loss could affect him, or any pleasure or advantage, which by his sin accorded to him, as the glory of the gospel doth clear. The like may be said of fear, there is no positive or comparative degree can prove it to be faining, being certain that for degree some natural men may fear and tremble, and that with anxiety, so as the Lord may be more feared in this manner by them than any other thing else. Trial then must especially be, by considering the principle whereby the person is acted in this fear, the motive that sways him to it, and the account upon which he acts on God in it, whereby filial fear is differed from servile: and this can be no consideration of the degree however considered; but must be in respect of the qualifications of the act.

If it should be said, That it is single respect to God frowning one to sorrow for sin, or fear more than any other motive doth; and in that respect it may be said to content in the degree.

Ann. i. This supposeth the concurrence of positive qualifications. 2. It supplieth the concurrence of the same qualifications mentioned. 3. This placeth not the difference in the intenseness of the act only, but in the qualifications that have influence on it, and so doth it confirm what we said, viz. that more respect is to be had to the nature of the act, and the qualification thereof in our trial, than to the degree thereof.

Here it is to be adverted, 1. That in all this discourse of the positive qualifications of sincerity, they are to be considered with respect to Christ and the covenant of grace, so that singleness in the end, takest in the glorifying and worshipping of God in Christ, and in the motive, the consideration of God's worth and love, as considered in him, comes in as the worth.

out of the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, put in the definition of repentance, do import, and in the reduplication, it acts on him considered as such; that is, it loves God, fears him, and believes in him as considered in Christ: and this hath an universal approbation of the way of the dispensation of grace, and that as proceeding from a principal of life communicate to them by Christ Jesus: whereby they become not only obliged to God for it, but obliged to him in Christ Jesus. And thus we may see, that this single respect to God and his own goodness for himself, doth not shut out simply all respect to our own good: for, the considering him in Christ, cannot but include that; but it derives all our good from that fountain, and by that channel, Christ; and subordinate all the thoughts thereof to the praise of God's grace in him. And this is to be remembered throughout: because this doth fully difference true gospel sincerity from the moral flash of love, fear, faith, &c. which by some legal work may proceed from natural men, who yet can never act anything for kind, the same with these qualifications; because the considering of God, and acting on him by love, fear, faith, &c. is really to call him and count him father in whatsoever degree they be, which, hath the promise of acceptation, and is a fruit of the spirit of adoption: for, God's covenant runs not to him who believes at such a degree; but simply, to him, that doth believe, thus qualified whether his faith or unbelief be more or less: and so the marks run not on these that have grace or fruits at such a degree only; but these that have good fruits in any measure, have them from Christ; and may conclude that the tree is good and therefore cannot but be accounted living branches that will never be broken off: which of no hypocrite can be said, who do never bring forth their fruits in him. And it is hard to say that, fruit brought forth by virtue and communication of life from Christ, doth not differ but in degree from fruit brought forth from and to ourselves. Especially considering, that the scripture doth confound them on that account, without this respect to their degree, as we may gather from
Hof. xiv. 8. being compared with John xv. verse 2, 4, 5.

2. We would advert, that this reduplication consists not only in the proposing of such an end, or being acted by such a motive, viz. a command, &c., but it takes in a singleness in both, and gives such an end and motive the chief consideration in the act, whereby in the practice of duty the heart not only purposeth the pleasing of God in the giving of obedience to a command, but goes about it as a thing pleasing to God and honourable to him, and as such doth approve of it: for, a servant may desire to please his Master, and do what he hath commanded, and yet possibly not to be fingle in it, as it is pleasing to him: which, as we said, is the thing wherein the great pinch of discerning these differing qualifications will lie.

Learned Baxter, in his excellent treatise of the saints everlastling rest, part. 3, doth otherwise express the doctrine of the difference and trial of faving and common grace, than what hath been usually resifted, is among practical divines, which doth necessitate us some way to infist a little further in the clearing thereof. He hath these assertions, 1. That it is not the law but the covenant, that can clear the sincerety of grace as faving, viz. as it is accepted by the covenant as the fulfilling of the condition thereof, page 205: and 266. 2. He faith, that God hath not in the covenant promised justification upon any mere act, or acts considered without their degree and suitableness to their object, &c. page 210. 3. There is no act, considered in it’s mere nature and kind, which a true Christian may perform, but one that is unfound may perform it also, page 211. From which he draweth, that wicked men may really rely on Christ, have rememb人民医院 on him, love God, &c. page 211. and 231. and that they may hate sin as sin, and as displeasing to God, ibid. 4. He affirms, that the sincerety of faving grace as faving, lieth materially, not in the bare nature thereof, but in the degree; but in the degree considered absolutely in itself, but comparatively, as it is prevalent against its contrary; that is, when love adhereth more to God, than any other thing, and such like, page 222, which he endeavoureth to show both in the infused habits, and in the acts of saving grace: and page 235, doth assert, that in loving God and Christ as mediator, there is no more, than a gradual difference between the regenerate and unregenerate: and in the end, he doth load the common opinion with many dangerous consequents.

These affections do seem, at the first, to be expressly contradictory to what hath been said; yet if we will consider the explication thereof, we will not find so great difference in the matter itself, as to be the rise of a new debate and controversy in the church, wherein there are, alas too many already; nor any just cause to reject the former received opinion, for any prejudice that follows upon it; to which twowe shall speak a little.

1. We conceive that the difference will not be found so great, as the expressions at first seem to carry, and were it not that this opinion of his, is expressly laid down in opposition to what is commonly received, there might be not so great ground to suspect it for. 1. The infusing of habits as necessary and antecedent to gracious acts, is acknowledged by both: and expressly, part. 1. page. 158. and 159. he doth condemn the contrary in Grevenchovius, at least as an error. And part. 3. page 224, he hath somewhat to the same purpose. 2. It is not questioned whether true acts of saving grace have a rational and deliberate prevalency over the opposite lusts as he affirms, part. 3, page 212, 213, that will be also granted by all divines, that though where true grace is, it may be captivated, and not always actually prevail against the opposite suggestions of the flesh yet in a sober and deliberate frame, the interest of God and spiritual things will have more room in the heart of one that is renewed, as he is such at least, than sinful lusts unto which the flesh doth intice.

3. It is granted also, that beside the act, there is necessary for the constituting of it to be saving, a suitableness and adequateness to the object, which we will find in the explication thereof, to be almost the same with the positive qualifications, which formerly we did lay down, as page 211, and 212. he doth thus express it, the sincerety of the act, as saving, consisteth
in its being fuit to its adequate object, (considered in its respects, which are essential to it as such an object and so to believe in, and love God as God, and Christ as Christ, is the sincerity of these acts; but this lieth in believing, accepting and loving God, as the only supreme God, &c. where expressly the act is considered, as acting upon its object, under the reduplication formerly mentioned; and seems to be by him accounted the same, with accepting and loving God above all. And again, page 229, to will God and Christ above all, faith he this is to will savingly; which he explains thus, to will God as God, the chief good, and Christ as Christ, the only favour: And page 230, he faith, that a man may will God and Christ, who by the understanding are apprehended as chief good, as the devils do, and yet by not willing him as so considered, that willing is not saving, and therefore it must be, because it wants that reduplication: which reduplication in the term as, must be indeed extended to the will, as well as to the understanding, as he there affords; but is not to be restricted to the degree of its act, to speak so, but is to be extended also to the nature of it. Further, we will find the same learned author elsewhere, viz. in the appendix to his aporisms, m. lib. page 242. in answer to the 4th objection giving the difference between sincere covetousness God, and that which is not sincere, where he doth lay down six concerning qualifications, and so concludes thus, ye see that there is a great difference between coveting sincerely, and coveting in hypocrisy, and so between faith and faith, and yet the difference will be found no other thing, but what almost is usually affixed by divines in the like case.

4. We will find him also come near in expressions, as page 226. a specific difference is acknowledged: and although he call it a moral specific difference; yet doth he express the same thus, that it proceedeth from the agreement and conformity of our actions and dispositions to the law, which determineth of their dueeness or their disconformity thereunto: again, page 229. he instances love and delight, &c. as these things wherein sincerity may be tried, for certainly delighting in God, is a grace, and a commanded duty, as loving of him is compare it with page 213, and 214. he doth assert that hypocrites may have delight in the same objects, viz. the knowledge of God and his works which are objects also of the delight of the regenerate: but faith he in the sinner, these delights are nearest of the same nature with the former sensual delights: for it is not the excellency or goodness of God himself that delighteth them; but the novelty of the thing, &c. as receiving thereby some addition to its own perfection, and not as from God, &c. and tho' they delight in studying and knowing God, and heaven, and scripture; yet not in God as God, or the chief good, nor out of any saving love to God, this contradicting the former love to God, from knowing of God as God, and from hypocritical love, doth seem to place the difference in some other thing than the degree alone, but either because as some preachers they make a gainful trade of it by teaching others; or because it is an honour to know these things, or be able to discourse of them, or at best; Nota, if these be their best motives, or highest account upon: which they delight, then they cannot delight in God: as God, which sincere believers do; nor can they do an act for kind the same: and faith there must be a difference between their delight, and the delight that is gracious in respect of the kind, because they go on different accounts, so must it be in other graces as I said before, the delight to know God out of a delight in the novelty, &c. and natural elevation of the understanding thereby; it is one thing to delight in knowing, another in the thing known. And afterward near the foot of that page, faith, so it is the same kind of delight that such a man, viz. a hypocrite hath in knowing God, and knowing other things: Whereby it is clearly infinuated, that it is another kind of delight, which the believer hath in delighting in God, than any unregenerated man can have, seeing it is an other kind of delight than he hath in any other thing, And wherein this kind of difference consists, we may gather from what is said. 1. There is supposed to be a different principle, viz. an infused gracious habit which must proceed this act. 2. There is a different end, the one seeketh to please his own cu-
riosity, the other respecteth God and his own spiritual good. There is, 3. A different motive, the one delighting in it, because it is profitable or honourable, or pleasing to him to know such things; the other delighteth in God himself, as acted therein for the excellency that is in himself, and the love that he hath to himself, and the spiritual satisfaction that he hath in it. 4. There is a reduplication in the act, they not only delight in God, but in him as God, moved thereto out of true love to God, which saith he, the natural man doth not. Now these four being granted by the said reverend Author, and being the very same thing upon the matter with that which formerly we affirmed, we may see, before any consideration of the degree, there must be a concurrence of these qualifications, wherein ordinarily the difference in kind betwixt faving grace and common, is placed; and the thing that they call the physical and real difference being acknowledged by him, as by others; it is not of great moment to debate for the terms of physical or moral. Seeing then, upon the one side the supremacy of God's interest in the act is not denied, and that in respect to its eminent degree, if it be well understood: and upon the other, the concurrence of these qualifications is acknowledged, the difference cannot be great. For understanding of this difference, which must be less than appeared at first, we would consider these two. 1. That when the degree of grace is spoken of, it may be considered either more strictly, as contradistinguished from the former qualifications, which in this respect are said to be the kind of the act, or it may be considered more largely, as it comprehendeth the principle, motive, end, &c. and so it taketh in the former qualifications. It seemeth this learned author, when he speaketh of the degree, doth take it in this large sense; whereas usually it is taken in the first and strict sense, and this maketh the difference appear greater than it is. And if this distinction might reconcile these mistakes, it were desirable. 2. The supremacy, or precedence and prevalency of the interest of God in us above the interest of flesh, in which alone that reverend author doth place the sincerity of saving grace, page 211.

prop. 10. may be considered in respect of the degree of the act itself, being compared with the objects whereupon it acts: and so comparatively that act may be said to be prevalent, supposing of love, fear, sorrow, &c. that loves and fears God more than any other thing, and hath more sorrow for sin than delight in it, &c. or we may consider this supremacy and prevalency of God's interest in respect of the qualifications of the act: that is, of the end, motive, &c. and thus the interest of God may be said to be prevalent, when it is respect to God himself, and the souls' esteeming of him as he is God that maketh love to him and fear him, and sorrow for dishonouring of him; so that it is his interest, more than any other end or motive that hath influence on these acts. In this latter sense, there is also no difference from what was formerly said, and if that proposition could be so understood, there might be an accommodation. But the instances and explications added by the forenamed author, seem to limit this prevalency of God's interest to act itself, as being only compared with other objects, or as acting on God, or what is approved by him prevalently, beyond what it doth on other opposite objects. In a word, this when the good that is in God is considered on the one hand, and the good that is in creatures on the other hand, if the soul choose God and love him beyond any created good, that is accounted by him to be having sincere love, and the sincerity thereof to consist in this degree alone. From this the ordinary doctrine differeth especially in these, 1. That usually diverses consider the prevalency of God's interest to be especially in the motive faying to the act and other qualifications and the act to be sincere, supposing of love, fear, sorrow, &c. not only because it loves or fears God more than any other object, but because single respect to God and spiritual good maketh it love him, fear him, shew for the offending of him, in whatever degree the act itself be. In the former respect, supposing that an act could be prevalent, viz. loving or fearing God more than any other thing, such acts behoved to be accounted sincere and saving without any respect to the motive or other qualifications.
cations of them. And it fuppoleth that an act may have these qualifications and not be gracious. In the left respect, acts so qualified suppofing there may be such prevailed over by the violence of other subjects yet are to be accounted gracious, because so and fo qualified, without respect to the degree of the present act, and fo that no act of an hypocrite can be so qualified. 2. The difference is in this, that this reverend author doth only confitute the difference in that comparative prevalent degree alone. And therefore expressly aferteth, page 235, that there is no more but a gradual difference betwixt the grace that is in a regenerate man, and the love that he hath to God, and the common grace and love that may be in one unregenerate. Which would seem to fay, that one may love God on the same consideration and account, and from the fame motives, that the other may, especially considering that he doth extend this mere gradual difference, both to the habits and acts. And fo the queftion here cometh to this if there be any other difference than a gradual difference to be enquired for? And this is that which we affert, that there is before any gradual difference, a difference in kind; that is in respect of the former qualifications, betwixt common and saving grace, and that in our search the one is to be inquired for with the other; fo that no degree simpily can quiet the mind, except it be so qualified as aforesaid. And we conceive that the infances, reafons, similitudes, and scriptures that are adduced by that reverend author to illuftrate and confirm his opinion, will do no more but this, viz. shew that when a gracious person is acting rationally, God’s interest will be prevalent with him in degree; and that it ever should be so, and that it is most ufeful for a believer’s clearness that it be so in an high degree. All which are without question. But they will no ways exclude the qualification mentioned; but rather do presuppose them, as for ex- ample, page 231. 232. he fayeth, that sincere sorrow must be at such a degree that it prevail over our delight in fin and love to it, else it cannot be saving. Altho’ this be true, yet can any fay that this is enough except a principle motive, &c from which it proceedeth and by

which it is qualified be considered, as was formerly hinted, again page 234. he faith true love to the bretheren, confesseth in this degree, that it love them above our honour, wealth, &c. And layeth he, What did the love of Rome in Queen Mary’s days, want but a more intense degree to make it prevail over love to their houses, to their honour, safety, &c. that it might be sincere? Befide this intense degree, there might be wanting a right principle, for bringing forth of love, and a right account upon which to love them, without which the hazarding of lives and estates both for them, had never been accounted sincere love, before God; and with which, the giving unto them a cup of cold water as in the name of a disciple, Matth. x. would have been acceptable. And no question many who through fear and self-love, did keep down the flirings of sincere love within them, so that it prevailed not to make them publicly own these sufferers as they should have done, yet might still carry sincer love in their hearts to them, although sinfully they obscured it; which will indeed prove them to be guilty, and their love to be imperfect: but will not prove it altogether to be hypocritical and unfound in the kind thereof. And therefore seeing without these qualifications, no degree can be sufficient to prove the sincerity of an act. And where these are, the act in whatsoever degree cannot but be accounted sincere; it must rather be these that confitute the sincerity of the act, than any degree considered as distinct from them. That affection therefore which is, page 238. That a hypocrite may love a godly man for his godlinesses, or a Christian for Christ’s sake, seemeth to be unwarrantable and utterly to make void that mark of the grace of God, which confesseth in true love to the bretheren. For nothing can be conceived in the comparative degree without the kind, but may be in hypocrites. And often these that are sincere will be for a time so captivated with self-love that they will not evidence their love to others, but see for themselves as the disciples did, when Christ was betrayed. Yet it cannot be denied but that then they loved him sincerely, and that not in word only, but in deed also. And although it was exceedingly de-
fective, yet unfound it cannot be called; and so may be said of love to others. And considering, that where nature hath dominion, there is still enmity at the feed of God as such. How can it be that a natural man can love, and hate the same person, upon the same account at one time? It cannot be denied, but natural men may entirely love those that are gracious and that also their supposing them to be beloved of God may have some weight with them; yet is it not that respect had to them upon this account as they are beloved of God, or like to him; but at the most as thereby they may gain God's love, or have some benefit thereby loving of them, or the preventing of some evil, or confirming of themselves in their securitv and self-conceited opinion from this, that they love such an one, &c. And it appears further in this, that they love not all who are godly, and hate not, and shun not, all that are opposite to godliness; and so do not love God and godliness itself singly as such. Because then their own inclination and secret delight, would be hateful to themselves. And yet certainly all this would be if godly men were beloved upon this account, because they are such. Again, page 226. he illustrateth it by this comparison of eating much and little, to shew that the moral good of an action consisteth in the degree thereof. Now none will fay, that simple shunning of extremes of eating and drinking too much or too little, will constitute an act to be sincerely gracious and acceptable to God, except it be considered as qualified with its motive and end, viz. God's glory, &c. And elsewhere, god fayeth he, is to be tried by weight as by the touchstone. Now this is true that the quantity of gold is to be tried so, but gold simply is to be tried not only by the weight; and also grace is not only to be tried by the degree, yet certainly the reality and truth of it, is to be tried by the touchstone and it is here the sincerity and truth of grace that we are inquiring for. And fayeth he, Ibid. it is not the wrestling but the overcoming, that the promise is made to, which is true in respect of the promisses of full fruition. For these do presuppose a full and total victory; but can it be said that no wrestler may be said to have true grace, or may conclude that he hath it, till he have in this sense fully overcome; that would directly thwart the authors scope, which is to preclude the making of our election and calling sure, and by this debate to help therein. For upon this ground none in this life could attain assurance, because this victory that is mentioned in the scripture, Rev. ii. 3. 'He that overcometh,' &c. is the result of all. That therefore which he affirmt page 243, cannot be granted, viz. that fighting is the same action naturally in both, viz. in those who overcome, and those who are overcome. I John iv. 5, with 2 Pet. ii. 19. 20. For both fight, but the valiant strong, and constant do conquer, when the feeble faint, and cowardly and impatiently do turn their backs and are overcome.

It may be observed, that though fighting be the same possibly physically understood yet it is one thing to fight valiantly, and stoutly, another to do it cowardly and faintingly, or to fight for respect to their captain, or for love of wages, &c. and so there is a great difference morally between fighting and also in respect of the positive qualifications thereof. And thus the difference is admitted here beside, that word nonnulli in the present, sheweth that the Lord doth reckon a difference before this victory be obtained. And faith he the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and violence is no distinct action but a different degree of action. These things I say may serve clearly to illustrate what we asserted: for here fighting is contradistinguished from the victory that followed it. Now can it be said, that there is no true grace in the person that fights, or in fighting that he may overcome? And if there be then, the sincerity and truth of grace? consisteth not in this actual overcomyng only: nor can it be said, that the renewed fighter wrestleth in the same manner, or that his fighting is in the same kind, considering that he figheth by his faith, 1 Job v. 4. That he mortifieth the deeds of the flesh by the spirit, Rom. viii. 13. That he puteth on the whole armour of God, Ephes. vi. &c. And seeing an unrenewed man, neither hath such weapon or spiritual armour, nor hath a life or dexterity to use them, nor such arguments inducing him to fight or such an
end before him, or such a principle as is capable to be wrought upon, &c. cannot be said that his fighing is the same with the former and that other expressions offering violence to the kingdom of God, is but a borrowed expression: and therefore ought not so to be made use of here, as if there were stronger and weaker assaults made at heaven indeed, and as if there needed no more to the weak assault, but a further degree only, when, at least, there must be new conceived skill and strength, and a new way must be followed for attaining it. For the scope of that place, is to shew the necessity of taking hold of Christ by faith, notwithstanding whatever impediments and discouragements would scare one in the way: and so it proves, that the faith of a believer, is far different from the faith of a hypocrite; because the one steps over difficulties upon the consideration of God’s faithfulness, and by taking hold of Jesus Christ, doth prevail in the conquering of heaven, as if by violence and might they did carry it; whereas others, who never took hold on him, or by their faith improved his offices for the upmaking of their own needs, have no ground of expectation to be admitted to heaven; and nothing they can do can be of force to do violence to the kingdom of God without this, and so in this respect theighter prevails and overcomes and gaineth heaven: because, as the apostle faith he stirreth lawfully, 2 Tim. ii. 5. and because he fighteth in the right manner; and his fighting is not to be accounted sincere, till he overcome; but he overcometh, because it is sincere; and so it is sincere before that. Beside, the native exposition of that place, looketh to a violence peculiarly called for in that time. For, since the days of John baptist, faith the text, which will concern this nothing. For indeed then, there was a great difficulty to get the Messiah cloathed with as already incarnate, and to lay by all types, as now having their accomplishment, by all which, we think, it is more agreeable to truth, to continue the received doctrine of inquiring for the truth and sincerity of grace in the kind thereof, and not in the degree only. For further confirming whereof, besides what is said we shall first shew, that there is a real difference between the habits of faying grace in the regenerate, and the common dispositions that may be in hypocrites: 2. We shall, shew, that there is such a difference also in the acts of faving grace, in respect of these former qualifications, beside the consideration of the prevalence of the degree, and the acts that may be in hypocrites. And, 3. That this new opinion, hath no more advantage with it than the former; but that it hath the same inconveniences, if they be inconveniences which are alleged against the former, waiting upon it and others also besides these.

1. That the infused habits of grace which are called the new nature, seed of God, the union, and spirit, &c. do differ from the habits and dispositions that are in unrenewed men and hypocrites, and that by a real and physical difference, even in kind, may thus be made out. 1. If the flesh and spirit, &c. be different in kind, having different originals, and different effects, &c. then grace, thus considered in a renewed person, must be different in kind from what is, or can be in any hypocrite. Because the one is spirit, the other is still flesh. And there is no mids between a natural and a renewed man, and what proceedeth from them as such. For, what is born of the one, is spirit; and what is born of the other, at whatever length it be it is flesh. But the former is true; flesh and spirit are most opposite in all the former respects this, viz. the spirit is an immediate effect of a physical operation of the grace of God, working a change upon the heart, and so must have some suitable physical thing in the nature of it, different from any thing which is not produced by the same cause or by the same manner of causality; such as common dispositions are. And in the effects, there is a contrariety, the one left against the other, for the one is contrary to the other Gal. v. 17. and therefore there must be some real physical difference between these, whose causes and effects are so different. 2. If they do not differ in kind, then it is either because they are both fruits of the spirit, and that equally; or, because neither of them is so; or, because that which is of the spirit favingly, doth not differ from that which is not faying. Now, none of these can be affirmed. Concerning the last, this
only can be faid for answor, that altho' nature and
faving grace may differ fo, yet common grace cannot
be faid to make such a difference it being also a fruit
of the spirit. And to this we reply if there, common
gifts can be confident with a dominion of fin and
compleat deadene therein, and faving grace cannot
be confident with thefe, then there mutt be a real
difference, feeing faving grace not only importeth a
relative change of a man, viz. that he is justified, but
also a real and phyfical change, viz. that he is a new
or renewed creature, which by no common gifts or
gifts can be; but the former is true. And therefe
again, 3. If faving grace be some what phyfical, to
speak fo and confidurth a phyfical difference between
a man and that which formerly he himfelf was; and
if common grace cannot do that, but the man that
hath it and no more, is the old man fift, and in nature
then there mutt be a phyfical difference between them
but the former is true. Ergo. for this is ever cefain
a man is either renewed, or unrenewed, and in nature
there is no mifs : Now, if there be any difference that
is phyfical between thefe two, which mutt be, as there
is between a good tree and an evil, a new creature and
an old, and not as between a little creature, and one
that is more big : for, new and old repre the kind
then habitual grace must differ from all other common
works phyfically: becaufe it is that which confidurth
this difference. Add. 4. Thefe common dipositions
may evanifh, or never be fo thorough, but the perfon
which hath had them may perifh: which cannot be
faid of faving grace called the feu of God, immortal,
and incorruptible, that remaineth in them that once
had it, efc. efpecially, considering that it is called im-
 mortal, in repre of the nature of it: And that, that
continuance is one of the properties theroif. For al-
tho' nothing of itselt be eternal and immortal, but
God; yet it cannot be denied, but what the Lord
mindeth to make immortal, he doth otherwife fit and
qualify it for that end than other things, as we fee in
the difference that is between angels and other crea-
tures and the fouls and bodies of men, and of that
glorious conformity that shall be put on the glorified
members of Chrift unto their head. And tho' as he
faith that all, both Philosophers and divines do fay
more; yet this is enough: which also the forcenmen-
ed author acknowledgeth in the appendix to his ap-
chorisms, page 240. And faving grace being of the fame
nature with glory, it were hard to fay that a man in
nature, did for kind partake of the divine nature, and
of the frift fruits of the spirit and glory, who, yet may
be tormented in hell for ever. Lastly, the multiplying
of thefe common gifts could never alter the tree and
make it good; fo as if it were poifible, that they might
grow to the greateft height and bignefs, they would be
fift but common gifts, feeing they grow from that
root: therefore the tree muft first be good, ere the fru-
it be good. Now common gifts never being able to
alter the tree, as is faid, there must therefore be a dif-
ference between them and faving grace in some other
thing, than in the degree. And indeed, if thefe diposi-
tions be of the fame kind with gracious habits, then
the root of common and faving grace would be one,
which the scripture doth fift difference; and in this
repre, the habit hath not its sincerit from the acts,
as if it were gracious, becaufe the acts thereof are thus
comparatively prevalent; but the acts are gracious
and prevalent, and cannot but be fo, because they pro-
ceed from fuch an habit; and the habit is firt graci-
uous before the acts be sincere. And therefore, there
must be a real and phyfical difference in the habit it-
ft from common dipositions, as it is considered, at
least in order of nature, before the acts. And fo the
difference doth not only ly in the acts theroifs.
Neither can it be faid here, that habits and dipositions
do not differ in kind. Therefore that difference is
not to be fough here: for, beside that this afertion
will find opposition among philofophers, it can no
ways be acknowledged here where the habit is not
natural nor acquired. And certainly the names and
titles, whereby the scripture doth fett forth this habitu-
alter grace, as the new nature, spirit, new man, new
creature, God's workmanship, his feed the heart of
flefh, efc. whereby it is not only contradictory with
its kind from nature and flefh, taken in their moft
grofs acception; but from all common gifts of the
2. Concerning gracious acts, that are fruits of this spirit, and grow upon this tree of habitual grace, mainly the question is here, if that act of love, whereby a believer loveth God, doth differ any other way than gradually, from that act of love whereby an unregenerate person loveth him, or which he while unregenerate had unto him; that is, that the one loveth him above all and the other doth not, though both love him really, and in the same kind for the nature of the act? And so if this be not the only mark by which the sincerity of all graces are to be tried, whereof this is a particular instance.

To say somewhat to this, we conceive that the truth and reality of sincere faving grace in its acts is otherwise to be enquired for, than in such a degree only. For true love loveth God above all, because that is the nature of true grace as such, to have such acts. And so it is rather a consequent following on, or a concomitant of true grace where it is sincere, than that which constitutes the truth and sincerity thereof. Although it may well, being rightly understood, evidence that; even as a woman that loveth her husband chaffily, cannot but love him beyond any other, yet doth not that constitute the sincerity of her love, because an adulterer may do so to an adulterer; but especially it is in loving him as her husband, and according to that relation. Otherwise we suppose, it is not impossible for a wife to love her husband, beyond any other man, and yet not do it with true conjugal love, but possibly upon some worldly (and it may be sinful) principle, which if contrariety, would soon discover that love not to be found, as not loving him as her husband, but for some other advantage or satisfaction, as often experience doth clear. And must not that differ from the love of another who cleaveth to the husband out of confidence and affection, from that conjugal relation that they stand in, and because he is her head, even when many croises and discontentsments occur to her in adhering to him? So it may be in other cases, a servant may fear his master more than any man, as a son may do his father, yet that there is a difference in that fear, although both agree in the comparative degree, and neither of them dare offend him, none will deny. This difference then must be in the formality of it, to speak so, as the same person is distinctively or differently considered by the one, and the other, and as they are differently fayed, and acted in the same thing, as in the instance of filial and fervent fear, is ordinarily illustrated. Much more may this be conceived in the acting of grace on God, there being so many relations under which we may consider him, and act on him. And may it not be supposed, that a woman may at first love a man above all others, and yet not love him for himself conjugal, who after being married to him, may come to love him, on other principles, and from other grounds. And though there be no difference in the comparative degree, and the first possibly seemed to be most vehement; yet is there a difference really betwixt what it was, and what it is. And if this may be in moral and natural acts, may it not be much more in spiritual saving acts, when compared with those that are not so? it is upon this ground that the acute divine Cameron doth expressly assert that, the love whereby a wife loveth her husband, doth differ specie from that whereby she may warrantably love another; so that if she loved any other in the least degree with that kind of love whereby she loveth her husband, she were really an adulterer. And this is when he is speaking of that question nam Chriftus mediator fit adorandum? intending thereby to shew, that that kind of love, adoration, &c. which is due to God, can be given to none other in any degree, without manifest impiety. And will it look well to say, that warrantably we may give love and fear, &c. of the same kind to men and creatures, which we are called to give to God? And that only the degree to him, is comparatively to be supreme, yet upon the former assertion, this will necessarily follow. For if a believer's love, fear, &c. differ no otherwise from the love, fear, &c. of hypocrites; then that act of love which he hath to God, must be of the same kind with what he hath to wife, children, &c. except in the degree: which yet I sup-

Q q
pose he would be mightily affected within himself, to approve himself to do so in the least degree. We say then, that the sincerity of grace is not to be enquired alienarily in this prevalent and predominant comparative degree thereof, but there must be some other things concurring at least, that constitute the difference betwixt savage acts of spiritual grace, and those common acts which may be in hypocrites. For if these two may be separated, that is, if there may be in this comparative degree, in the common gifts or graces which an hypocrite may have. Then that which constitutes the difference or the sincerity of grace cannot consist in that only. For that must be proper to saving grace, quarto modo, which doth difference it from all other things: but we see in instances, that if we consider this degree without respect to any other thing, it may be found where saving grace or sincerity is not; and contrarily, saving grace may be, at least in respect of particular acts where that degree is not. Therefore it is not that alone wherein properly and essentially the difference doth consist.

Before we give any instances, we would permit some advertisement especially concerning the first, which may possibly look strange like to some, viz. that there may be such a comparative degree of love, fear, sorrow, &c. in hypocrites, who yet have nothing of sincere grace, and therefore sincerity is to be tried by that comparative degree alone. Concerning which it is to be adverted.

First, That when we say, there may be in an hypocrite such a degree of love, fear, &c. that may be comparatively prevalent, that is not to be understand, as if there were love, fear, &c. in sincerity in the least degree in any hypocrite, but only this, that seeing it is certain (and this learned author asserteth it) that hypocrites upon carnal consideration may love and fear God in some respects, which yet is out of no true respect to God. So it may be supposed that upon the same considerations they may come to love him, or fear him above any other object comparatively. Certainly upon this supposition, that it were at that degree upon these carnal considerations, it would fill be of the same kind of which it was, viz. carnal and hypocritical love, and servile fear. Neither can this supposition be thought strange, seeing, 1. No hypocrite can fear God sincerely more than love him, yet that such a one may upon apprehensions of God’s terror, fear his wrath more than all the world besides, cannot be denied. 2. Seeing also, it is but some carnal motive that leadeth natural men to love any thing more, why should it be thought impossible, that upon such motives and considerations, they may be swayed to love God most? especially considering, what flashes of joy may be in temporary believers although they continue not) and what may be supposed to have been in Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel iv. and Darius, chapter vi. and possibly in many hypocrites amongst the Jews, and others, upon some signal manifestations of God’s goodness to them: yet, even the supposition of the being of such a thing, although it actually had never been, even that were enough for confirming of what we say. 3. It cannot be denied but hypocrites may have a zeal of God, which may bear great sway with them, and more than any mere temporal thing, as in the instance of the Jews, Rom. x. Yet there cannot be zeal of any kind without love of that same kind, yea zeal previopsoeth love, and that in a high and intense degree. But we shall offer some instances afterward.

Secondly, It would be adverted, that we do not assert, that hypocrites may thus love or fear God habitually, and to lay so in their ordinary strain; nay we think it extraordinary to them, to attain even to this, and that it followeth even upon the back of some extraordinary manifestation, either of God’s love, wrath, terror, &c. If it be said, that this meeteth not the question. Aww. Indeed that reverend author, flateth it upon habitual and deliberate acting, yet considering that the thing enquired in here, is the sincerity of particular gracious acts. If there can be any particular act which hath that comparative degree and yet is not sincere, nor will prove the person to be gracious. Then it will follow, that the sincerity of particular gracious acts, is not alone, nor mainly to be enquired for in that

Thirdly, It would be remembered that when we
speak of this prevalency in the comparative degree, that we take not the phrase largely, as including the motive, end, &c. or God's interest lying to such an act, by such a spiritual motive, &c. but strictly according as we held it forth in two distinctions, mentioned before this. God's interest then in this act, is not to be considered, as it respecteth motives and compareth all these, amongst which respect to him doth lay; but it is to be understood, as it respects the act only, without respect to the motive, whatever inducement it be that persuadeth thereto. Otherwise as we said, the difference is but in expressions. And it is not our purpose to contend for words. And therefore in such an explanation we shall acquiesce, as to this, and we profess not to dispute against that.

If it be said, that the loving of God so comparatively above any thing, is not to love him above all; because that for which we love him, is more beloved by us, even though thereupon we should be induced to give our life for his sake, &c. Answ. 1. It is true this it proveth not to be sincere love, or to proceed from right principles and motives; as is said; and this is not intended. For even such a person hates God really, as was formerly asserted. Yet, Secondly, It is such love as hypocrites use to have to other things, viz. that love wherewith they love the world, their patrons and idols of any sort, which is certainly still from some selfish principle or motive, and therefore indeed still they love themselves best, yet are they said to have such things to be their idols, and comparatively to love them above all other things even above the Lord himself, although it be such a motive as prevaileth with them for that end. And may not the same be acknowledged here supposing that the Lord may for a time get that from a man upon carnal considerations, which some idol useth to have? Thirdly, We conceive it will be, in this case, argumentum ad hominem. For this reverend author instancest the prevalency of love to God and the brethren, not in the motives that wayeth to love them, most, but in the acts being compared with other objects: that is, if God be loved above his temporal good things, if the faints be loved more than our estate, place, &c. so as we can quite all these for them as the former instances doth clear. Now supposing it may be made out that as to the effects, hypocrites may so love God and the faints, as to abandon all their temporal satisfactions for them, and possibly even their life, which is the only thing, that the reverend author sayeth, was defederated in the love of some in Queen Mary's days, page 237, 238, 239, though still upon carnal principles and motives. Then it will follow, that the assertion as formerly understood will be sufficient to oppose that proposition, that the difference betwixt saving and common grace is only gradual, and in respect of such a degree as is explained. Now we come to instances.

1. We may find it in love; one that is an hypocrite may in some respect (as is qualified) love God above all. For, 1. May it not be said, from the zeal that many Jews had, that they loved God above all; and out of their blind zeal would have preferred him to their lives, or what else was dear to them? Yes. 2. Was not that in Paul, while yet a Pharisee before his conversion who in some respect had that testimony from his conscience, that zeal and love to God put him to all that he did so that it is like he could have suffered the loss of all things in that quarrel? Yet it cannot be said, but that his love to God after his conversion, was exceedingly different from what it was before, although in this comparative degree it might be some way the same, viz. he loved God above all before; and he continued to do so thereafter but with love far otherwise qualified than formerly he did. If it be said, that although the Jews, and Paul had a zeal of, and did love God above all, yet was it not according to knowledge, as is said, Rom. x, and so could not be received by the covenant as sincere love. Answ. This is truth, and doth confirm our assertion: for wherefore was it not accounted sincere, and as such accepted? It cannot be said simply, because they loved some other thing better. For the degree of their zeal and love is not controverted, but it is in respect of the qualifications thereof, it was not according to knowledge, that is in a word, not regulated and qualified in respect of the principle, end, mo-
tive, and account thereof, according to the rule where- 
by true love should vent, which in their ignorance 
they could not do: and therefore still there is some- 
thing befdide this degree necessary to the constituting 
of the sincerity of love, that it may be acceptable; 
and fo in other acts, this must ever presupposed, that 
they be according to knowledge, that is, 1. That 
the matter of it be right in itself. 2. That the man- 
ner be according to the rule prescribed, that is not 
only God's glory for the end, but the glorifying of 
him according as he requireth and prescribeth. 3. 
That both these be known to the person. And, 4. 
That as such he perform them: and upon that ac-
count act in them, as they agree to his will. Other- 
wise it can never be accounted to be an act accord-
ing to knowledge, as in the former instance is clear; 
whereby it appeareth, that the sincerity of an act, 
and this prevalent comparative degree thereof, may 
be separatc.

Thirdly, That men may love their idols above all 
cannot be denied, seeing men are naturally mad upon 
their Idols, fo Turks love their Mahomet, Baal's pro-
phets their Baal, even beyond their own lives. Now 
may not one love God and Christ, as one may love 
Mahomet or their idols? This argument is also 
made use of by the forecited author, to prove that a 
natural man may love Christ really for kind, page 
236. 237. And will not this same hold in respect of 
the degree also? Considering that is there as good 
ground, and more, even in a human respect, for his- 
orical faith, to believe the truth of the being and 
worth of God and Jesus Christ, and as much proof 
and experience of the advantages and benefits that 
come from him, as there are for any to be assured 
of the being and worth of Mahomet, Jupiter, Apollo, &c. 
Now suppose one that formerly loved Mahomet, or 
Jupiter, above all, should by the force of historical 
faith, or some extraordinary deliverance be brought 
to account of, and love 'the only true God, as he 
did formerly love Mahomet or his idols, could that be accounted to be sincere love because 
the object were changed? Supposing still no change 
to be in the man, nor intrinsickly in the act itself

In respect of its kind? And yet upon the supposi-
tion forefaid, this act would not be defective in re-
spect of the comparative degree supposing him 
to love God now, as formerly he did his idol: It must 
therefore be in kind. And may not such acts as have 
proceeded from Nebuchadnezzar and other hypocrites, 
upon special and singular appearances of God, be ac-
counted such, wherein there was some kind of rea-
11. 

Fourthly, Might not have one loved Christ above 
all while he was upon earth, from the convictions 
of the worth that was evidently seen in him, and from 
particular favours received from him, suppose of 
health, freedom from the rage of the devil, &c. as 
one man may love another, especially his benefactor, 
above all things, so that he may become his idol? Now 
suppose it had been so, which was not impossi-
ble that men had known and loved Christ thus after the 
Geh, as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. v. 17. could that 
have proven that love to be sincere? And yet the 
faulc is not in respect of that degree.

Again we may instance it in faith; for that one 
may truth to Christ in some respect above all is clear 
by the many examples of faith of miracles, and that 
both active and passive, yet it is also clear that sa-
ing faith is of another nature, and hath other quali-
fications concurring in its acting as such the first ac-
eth on him, as powerful to bring forth such an act, 
and in respect of some particular manifestation of his 
will for the bringing forth thereof. The other con-
sidereth him as a favour offered to us by God's faith-
fulness in the word, and for that end, viz. salvation, 
And upon that account, viz. as offered and as such, it receiveth him and resteth on him, being moved 
thereunto by its giving credit to the faithfulness of 
God in respect of his covenant and offer of special 
grace. So to be willing to have Christ, is a main act 
of faith, and that one in nature may in some respect
be willing to have Christ and heaven above all, cannot be denied, especially by this author. Neither can it be said, that this respect to God and Christ, is inferior to their love to earthly blessings which they prefer to him, as is intimated page 237, for certainly they may esteem him beyond temporal blessings. Therefore they will suffer the loss of these, and their life itself upon this presumptuous ground of gaining him by the abandoning of these; yet cannot that be accounted sincere willing, because they will him not as such, and according to the terms of his covenant.

Further it may be instance in fear, repentance, love to the brethren, &c. as was formerly hinted: wherein we will find that natural men may come to this comparative degree in respect of the external object, viz. to fear God more than to fear men, or any other thing; to sorrow for sin in such a degree, that it may prevail over delight in it, and love to it: wherein the comparative degree that constitutes the sincerity thereof, is intimated, page 231, 232. and they may love the brethren so as to relieve, clothe, visit them, &c. and for this end to part with their own ease and estate which, is the degree that is only marked as wanting to such as loved the saints; but yet could not part with temporal things for them, page 239. and upon this ground it is we conceive, that page 232. this necessary advertisement is given. That these graces which are exercised by the passion, as fear, love, joy, &c. are not so certainly to be tried by the passion that is in them as by the will that is contained in them or supposed to them: which must either be to them, that sometimes the vehemency of the passion may seem more towards one object, suppose in fear of men, or love to creatures: when yet the will rationally feareth and loveth God more: or it is added to show that something must be respected in the trial beside the degree simply; so that this degree is not to be accounted the alone mark of trial: otherwise this advertisement were needless. And what is spoken of the will its acting rationally in its act, as contradistinguished from the passion, or act, of the seditive part must infer some concurring qualifications to be necessary in the act, of the will which cannot be in the seditive part, which doth necessarily infer an tacit acknowledging of the necessity of observing something in the nature of the act, beside this degree alone, for the evidencing of the sincerity thereof.

On the other side, may not habits for a time be without acts, at least without acts prevalent in respect of this degree? Now then what shall be judged of such acts, suppose of love, fear, faith, &c. which for a time are prevailed over, and the heart is led captive by the opposites? They cannot be denied to be sincere acts of grace; nor can it be said that there are none such at all: for, in that one place, Rom, vii. we will find the apostle speaking of such motions of the spirit or inner man, which yet prevail not as to the effect, but the heart is led captive over them, so that what he would, that he doth not: and he is led captive to the law of sin, over the law of his mind; yet, even then doth he acknowledge these acts of the inner man to be sincere acts of grace: and therefore doth commit himself in them, and doth oppose them to the law of sin in his members, which otherwise he could not do, and this sincerity cannot flow from this degree, which is then not: it must therefore flow from the kind thereof, and so be contradistinguished in that respect from any common work of an hypocrite. If it be said here, that it is true love, faith, &c. than in its sober, composed and deliberate rational acting doth prefer God, although at times and times it may be overpowered; that in this respect Paul did in his deliberate acting, prevail over the law of his members, though by its survisals it did captivate him. Anfw. Although this be granted to be true, yet it will not infringe the argument; because we ask not only what Paul was in respect of his state, or of his deliberate acting, but what these motions and stirrings of the spirit in him were, that were overpowered, whether even there were gracious and sincere or not; for if these stirrings be acts, as is acknowledged, page 234. they must either be sincere or not; it cannot be said not, upon the grounds formerly given, they must be then sincere; and if sincere, then they must be sincere, not in respect of the prevalency of the de-
gree, but in respect of the nature of the act itself as is said. For although we say that such a person did in his natural acting of love, &c. prefer God above all; yet that would only prove that the person was habitually gracious and a true lover of God, or prove that once he had had acts truly sincere, but that could never be the ground upon which the sincerity of these present acts could be founded. And fo as the close of all, seeing this prevalent degree may be separated from sincere acts, and may be in acts that are not sincere in the manner, qualified et contra. Therefore the formal reason of sincerity, is not to be inquired in it alone. If it be said, that even in such acts wherein corruption prevaileth in the affection or passions, yet grace is still prevalent in the will. Answ. Then whether can it be said that there is no true grace in the affections, or whether the acts thereof in them be not sincere, although not prevalent? If they be gracious, even as such, then the argument doth still hold, that grace may be sincere where it prevaileth as to the effect. If it be denied, that they are sincere as such, then it will follow that true grace is not universal as to the subject thereof, or that it may be sincere in the will, and not in the affections, which yet are acts of the same grace and soul in so far as renewed, striving with itself in so far as unrenewed. Beside prevalency is in the will as renewed, so that it is only as such induced to dissent or content; whereas that same will, as unrenewed, yieldeth over to that dissent of the renewed will. Whereby it cometh to pafs that acts are elicited thereby, which the renewed part did oppose; and so indeed as to the effect, the renewed will is not prevalent. Because that is not acted which it would be at; yea acts are elicited by the will, as is said, which had the renewed part been prevalent, had not been at all, which sheweth that in such a case there is a prevalency even in the will.

If it be said further, that the love wherewith natural men love God, as it is formerly described is but still felt love. Because they love not God as God, but upon some other self-account. And therefore do still love themselves more, and so do not love God above all sovereignly. Because they love him not for the goodness that is in himself; whereas if God's interest were main and chief in that love it were to be accounted sincere. And this presupposing the habits to be infused, this sovereign interest of God in the act will take in the end, motive, and that which we called the reduplication of the act. Answ. That affection that sincerity doth by in the comparative prevalent degree, be thus explained, as to take in God's interest as sovereign in the end, motive, and formal consideration of the act, then it cometh indeed to be one. And if so then there were no reason to fall out with the doctrine that ordinarily is delivered concerning this, and for the expressions we will not contend as we formerly said. But when we consider the explication of the author, especially as it is opposed to the common doctrine, it seemeth he meaneth the sovereignty of God's interest in respect of objects, compared together, that is, God more sovereignly loved, feared, and trusted, than any other; and doth not take in this consideration of God in the motive, end, and formal consideration of the act, which hath influence on the person for bringing forth of such and act, and so on the act itself, that is brought forth. For the comparison runneth thus between the objects, Heh and Spirit, who do prevail most on the heart, but is not in comparing the motive and other qualifications of that act, which materially is spiritual. And therefore still in that respect, the former argument will hold, and the ordinary expressions will suit better to the thing.

It may be further argued against the placing of the nature of sincerity in the prevalent degree alone, thus if the acts of having grace be sincere, before they be in this degree prevalent, then this prevalency of the degree, cannot be the thing that constitutes the sincerity thereof, much less alone, be it. But the former is truth, that act of love, faith, &c. is having, which is wrestling against its opposite, so as to win the heart to love God more than all other objects, even before it attain it. For we are to suppose this method, 1. Gracious habits are supposed as infused, whereby the tree is made good. Then, 2. That these habits have
their inclinations and acts that lust against the flesh, and fight with the flesh, for winning of the heart to the following of its motions. And as fighting goes before the victory, so in this spiritual combat, do these lustings and actions go before the prevalent degree, and by these the heart is engaged to love God above all, whereupon followeth that prevalency as a degree of victory. And yet we suppose, that where the leaf sparkle of grace kindled in the heart, so that it was but smothering in desires of love to God and faith in him, it cannot be denied to be sincere; although it hath not broken out in a flame. For if this prevalent degree be some respect an effect of these stirrings, these stirrings must be sincere before they come this length, as to prevail. For they were acts before, and if not gracious acts, then how could acts that are of themselves unsearched, produce an effect that is sincere, seeing the cause must be of the same nature, and as noble as the effect? And so consequently, its sincerity doth not flow from this degree, but on the contrary rather, this degree is attained by these stirrings, because such stirrings, are acts of sincere love and grace. Whereas they are extinguished in another and come not up that length, at least in the former respects, because these stirrings were for their kind unsearched. And so natively the acts and stirrings of grace of any kind, must go before, either the prevalency or repulse thereof. For supposing creatures once to have the heart of man, there is first an effacing, as it were, by some inward motion to gain the heart from these, before actually it be gained. Now we say, that which maketh some motions gain the heart deliberately to prefer God above all, is because these motions are sincere and do suppose as antecedent to that degree, at least in order of nature. 1. An inward gracious principle fitting the heart so to conceive of God, and making it capable to be swayed by spiritual and supernatural motives, and in sincerity to act on them as such.

2. It presuppoeth an actual putting forth of this gracious principle in its considering God as such a good in himself, and for its happiness in himself, desirable and lovely in another kind, than any creature.

Whereupon, 3. The heart is actually inclined as being swayed by such a motive, viz. the goodness of God himself, and the spiritual happiness that is in enjoying of him, and as such, and upon that account to love him, desire union with him, and prefer him above all; whereby self, as it is properly self, sinful and corrupt is shut by, and a spiritual motive beareth sway in the act, and so must be supposed in order of nature at least to be before it. 4. When the heart is thus affected towards God, then the former three, viz. a spiritual end, the enjoying of God, a spiritual motive that is a respect to his worth, and a spiritual principle whereby he was enabled so to conceive him to concur for the eliciting of this act, and that in a new manner, upon that object so considered; whereupon it acts otherwise in the closing with God as God, than ever formerly it did. Upon which this prevalent degree and victory doth follow, as the result of the hearts so acting on God, which cannot but prevail. And thus it loveth God, above all and shutteth down all competitors, because considering him as such as he is, and to it in respect of the understandings uptaking of him, it doth for such an end, from such a motive, by such a principle, and in such a manner act on him as so considered, which others do not, though they may have a sort of striving in them; yet their fighting not being according to the former qualifications, can never prevail, as it cannot but in the end be a conqueror in them that thus fight.

Further supposing this sincerity to ly in that prevailing comparative degree, we ask what maketh the love which is in one to prevail, so as to love God above all, more than in another? Or what made Paul, after conversion, love God in that respect sincerely more than he did before? It must be said that it floweth from the interveening work of the spirit, both operating in the infusing of habits, and co-operating in the bringing forth of acts, whereby Paul is enabled to do that which could not be done, till the first tree was, made good. And if so, then there must be a real difference in the act itself, as being the fruit of another tree, or if a tree that is changed; and if the trees be different in kind, the fruits must be so also; for grapes
are not gathered from thistles; nor contra: and so must it be said of these acts either they proceed from different habits and so must differ in kind, or both must be from a gracious habit; which cannot be granted, seeing one of these acts in hypocrites evanish which of gracious habits cannot be affected, and to say that different infused habits are not requisite to either, will not be urged by any, as hath been said.

We add, that acts of love that flow from common dispositions in a natural man, may be considered as acts before they be thus prevalent: for, he loves, fears, &c. and so they be acts, although not gracious acts of the gracious habits of love, fear, faith, &c. as that a man, as renewed, doth love, fear, &c. but we must conceive them as such to be gracious and sincere: for, they are of the spirit and what is of it, is of that kind and is but like to a grain of mustard-seed, and cannot be considered as less is yet savoring and true grace, having the qualifications foresaid; the leaf blossom on that tree being good fruit: therefore there must be some difference in kind between common acts, and these of savouring grace, beside anything that can be conceived to be in the degree: because in the one, the qualifications may be and are separated from the act, but in the other, no act can be conceived as influenced by the spirit and proceeding from it, but it must be conceived as having these qualifications in it, viz. it hath a spiritual end, is swayed by a spiritual motive, and acteth from a spiritual principle, and as such, is swayed to such an act. If it be said, that it is the least degree of grace when it is sincere that it is so to be accounted, that is, when it is so prevalent: and that in that respect no act as such, is in the least degree prevalent, but it is sincere. Answ. That will not satisfy; for here it is asserted, that the act of love as proceeding from these habits cannot be conceived as an act; but also must be conceived as gracious, and arising from the root; but according to the other opinion, these may be separated, that is, although love act, yet is it not sincere love, till it act prevalingly, and so it may be considered as an act before it come to that prevalent degree of acting, which cannot be in the other. Beside if so, then were not savoring grace, grace, as having another original from common gifts, but as having different fruits or effects or different degrees of fruits. For clearing whereof, we may suppose gracious habits to be in one. And, 1. Do not the acts of love, faith, fear, &c. proceed from these infused habits, and are they not actions of the same new nature? And 2. Are not these acts gracious as such and because they are not such, they are savoring and sincere, that is, because acts of the new nature. 3. Do not their habits fit and qualify one to act otherwise than one can do, who hath not these habits, and that not only is respect of degree, but in respect of kind; otherwise these habits would not be a different principle from common dispositions, or as infusing a different life, but helping one to exercise the life which he had, which were absurd. 4. Do not men who are so fitted by these habits, act accordingly in the producing of their acts otherwise than any other who is not so qualified? And so, 5. Must not then the acts produced be differentiated, which are thus differently produced? And wherein can this difference consist but in the kind? For if it be said, they differ because these gracious habits bring forth acts in that prevalent degree, wherein the Lord's interest hath the chiefest room, then it may be enquired, 1. Is that alone the difference? or can it be said that the new life hath no influence even on the manner of acting? considering that the person is furnished with new qualifications, both in the understanding, will and affections, and these cannot but concur in the act, and yet must concur differently in respect of what one in mere nature can do. 2. It may be enquired, could that man have brought out these acts without these habits? And if not, they must then be different in kind from what formerly he did bring forth, seeing they could not be produced without a new and different cause. 3. Neither can any acts proceeding from these habits be accounted common acts; they must then, even the least of them be savoring. And, 4. If they be savoring, and that as acts simply, it must be because of something that is in their kind, without respect to their degree, as the least motions and actions of corruption are sin, because they are from flesh
even when by grace they are kept from victory. So is it on the contrary with the least motions of the spirit.

Yea if we were strictly considering this very difference, as it is proposed in respect of the prevalent comparative degree, we will find it to infer a real difference in the kind of the act, beside this comparative degree: for supposing in the act of sincere love by one the Lord is preferred, and all other objects are rejected; by another, he is loved but some other thing is preferred to him: now that act of love, which respects God as the chief good, and as such cloeth with him, must be different in kind from that which taketh him, but not as the chief good: and therefore loveth some other thing more. For, in this act there is not only a comparing of God with other things, but an act resulting from that comparison, whereby the heart of one faith, when this question is proposed, Is God thy chief Good? and therefore cloeth not with him as such: In the other when the heart compteth it faith, nay, God is not the chief good: and therefore cloeth not with him as such but refuseth him. Now the latter, nay and yea, to accept of him as such, or to refuse him, must differ oppositely and not in degree only. For the consideration of God here in the act of the heart, is not simply if he be, or if he for, that cannot come under consideration, butt good; be the chief good, and so to it, and if it will taketh him as such; and so that act of love to him must be such as determineth that question by yea or nay, and in that respect the one yieldeth, the other rejecteth. Therefore here it is not yielding in this or that degree, but yielding or refusing; which in that pinch are contradictory. 2. By the one act of love, God getteth the chief room, and other things are casten down: it is quite contrary in the other; and can these two be of one kind? or can that act of love which preferreth many things to him, act for its kind on God, as that act of love that taketh his, as infinitely preferable to all? Because the one considering him as the chief good accordingly loveth him and the other not doing so but otherwise, this difference must follow thereupon. 3. That act wherein is this prevalency, must either have somewhat peculiar in it which doth make it prevail over its opposites, as to love God above all, which another hath not, that loveth created things above him, or it, must have its prevalency from what is common to both. Now this last cannot be said; because so was mere man himself that made himself to differ, there must therefore be something peculiar in the other, as a cause producing that effect; and if there be a peculiar cause, and some peculiar thing in the one, which is not in the other, differing the rife of this from the rife of the other, then this prevalent act of love which is the effect of that particular cause, must besides this degree differ in kind also, as being peculiarly influenced by that cause which the other is not. And seeing this peculiar nature presupposed to precede the prevalency of the act, it must necessarily follow according to the same grounds, that there must be some positive qualifications concurring for the constituting of the sincerity of grace, beside the prevalent degree thereof, and that therefore sincerity doth not consist alone in it. And so, that hypocrites cannot do the same acts for kind, which the regenerate may do, without respect to this comparative degree.

To conclude then, we may illustrate all, thus supposing a dead body were by the power of God made to move or speak, as once Balaam's as did, there is motion and speech there supposeth it to be to itself object and in the same words, yet doth it differ from the motion and speech of a living man that acteth according to reason. 1. A dead man is moved only from some extrinsic power without the intervening principle of life from within. Although he may be moved more speedily and swiftly toward a certain object, than one that from an inward principle of life acts himself; yet doth the motion of the living man differ in kind, beside any comparative degree which can be in the act of moving, by a positive concurring of an inward principle of life and a locomotive faculty whereby he is immediately acted. So natural men being dead in sins, whatever acts are produced by them, are merely produced by the common work of God's spirit from without, without the interwining of any spiritual principle influencing.
these acts whereas the acts of a renewed man are indeed performed by the power of God's special grace, but mediatibus habitus by the interweaving of infused habits, whereby he not only acts, but acts himself in the bringing forth of these. As, 1. A tree in the spring-time doth send forth her buds, from the season of the year its having influence thereupon, yet also by the quickening of that natural sap and moisture wherewith it is furnished within itself. 2. A dead man hath no end, before him in his motions or actions, as a living man habitually concurring in his act; so an a renewed man hath no pure spiritual end in the best acts which the gracious man hath, the one eating, drinking, living, and bringing forth fruit to himself. Hos. x. 1. Zech. vii. 5, 6. and the other living, and thenceforth bringing forth fruits to God, 2 Cor. v. 16. Hence men in nature are laid to serve sin, and men in grace to become the servants of God, Rom. vi. in respect of their design in the same acts. 3. Dead men, as they have no end before them, so have they no reasonable motive, as a living man is supposed to have in its actions, so natural men have no spiritual motive, supposing it be of loving of God, it is some carnal selfish thing that swayeth them; for having no spiritual principle within, as matter to work upon, no spiritual motive can have influence upon them, more than fire can be kindled by any blowing, where no kindling or combustible matter is. A renewed man as such hath a spiritual motive concurring with, and having influence on his actions: and so not only loveth God because of some external benefit, but he loveth him as being provoked from that inward principle of divine nature that is in him, and respect to God's commands and goodnes, whereby as such he cannot but love him, and thee that bear his image and what is spiritually good; even as a natural parent or son, cannot but love his own child, or father, and that from another special principle than they love any other child or parent, so also he hath a pure spiritual motive, warning this principle, and kindling the sympathy; and thus he is sway'd to love God because of some spiritual good, as the subduing of sin, the conforming of him to God's image, the manifesting of himself to him, and such like. And he loves God's people, because he taketh them to be beloved of God, or to love him, or be like him, as supposeth a woman did carry affection to a man, it may be from some carnal principle, as his furnishing of her in her vanity, and his being subervient to the lust of vanity, pride, &c. in her; yet afterward, being matched with him, might love him because he was her husband, and had condescended to marry her, although he should not serve her vain humour as formerly: in this respect, her love doth differ from what it was, as having a conjugal motive added to it, which it had not formerly. 4. A living man, in his actions, is sway'd to them as good, and as good to him: and it is impossible for him to will any thing even tho' it be good, but as it is considered as such by him, yea, even things that are hurtful, are in his doing of them considered under this notion as good to him, but there is no such thing in the motion of a dead man; so a renewed man, not only acteth on that which is spiritually good, supponeth in the loving of God or his people, but also he is sway'd therein, and acteth therein upon this formal consideration as it is such, that is, he loveth God as he is good, in himself, and to him in what is spiritually good, and others as they are such and have a title to him, that is, Mat. x. 'To love them in the name of righteous men,' that is, upon the formal consideration as such to love them. And this is, that wherein mainly godly sincerity and singleness doth kyne, when we are not only moved to do what is good, and that from a spiritual motive upon the matter good; but are sway'd to that thing, by this motive, as they are such, and so considered by us; and thus, this as doth not only respect the object, and it is conceived by the understanding to be such; but it doth respect the act, as it is inclined to be undertaken and performed by the will, viz. it willeth it as such: although the act itself be not in respect of its degree every way adequate as such an object, that is, though God get not so much of the heart as it becometh him to have; yet the heart considering him as such a God, who doeth the heart, and ought to have no competitor with him, and sufficiently abe
of himself to make it happy doth so will him. And upon that account, doth love him, and delight in him, although it be exceedingly defective in the degree of both, and they be but conceived as such, to have a being. Now as a man is to try the truth of his life not only because he moveth and speaketh, but because he moveth and speaketh so, in respect of the kind formerly mentioned: so a renewed man is not simply to try his new life from his acts, but as they are so qualified, as is said.

If it be objected, That hitherto this seemeth to admit no motive that concerneth ourselves, as suppose one loved God, for being good to him, or heaven because they expected to be happy in it? And that as if no motive could be admitted in loving God but for himself, or how may this motive be differed in the love of a natural man, from one that is renewed?

Anfw. There is no such thing as the first intended; it will only say this, that as the natural man sware in the purifying of moral good as it is so considered by him: so a renewed man doth that which is spiritually good, and that as it is considered as such by him. Hence there is this difference that a natural man in his considering any act which in itself is spiritually good, and materially agreeable to the laws: yet in his yielding perform it, he doth still consider it as a natural good, or moral at the best, as suppose in loving of God, he is considered as such, as good to them, on a natural, or as to them a sinful account, as he loveth God, because he hath gotten temporal peace, deliverance from bodily hazards, an easy or honourable life, it may be because in providence he hath prospered him, in some sinful course, this the learned forementioned author, page 203. doth justly call one of the greatest of all sins, when the holy God is made a pander and servant to our flesh, and no question many do love God upon such account, or if they love God for the hope they have, of being brought to heaven by him which is one of their highest motives, it is because they hope to get to heaven from him, and access to their sinful lusts here also: thereby supposing, because of his goodness and mercy, that they may sin, and serve their lusts, and expect even heaven also afterward, or they love him under the hope of heaven, not because they do expect or desire spiritual or heavenly satisfaction in himself, in being satisfied with his likenesses, which they never delight in here, but because they have a suppoled opinion of a greater degree of that same happiness which now they hunt for: and so heaven is never considered by them as a spiritual good: or they may love God, as supposing him to love and esteem them, because of some loveliness and excellency that is in themselves; and upon that ground expect, even heaven from him, and love him because he doth esteem them; and this is to think God like themselves, and not to love him upon any spiritual account, as is said.

Again, the renewed man as such, is sware by spiritual motives in these things, that are but naturally and morally good: and under a spiritual consideration he acteth on them, viz. as they are commanded of God, tend to his honour, and are useful to help one in the worshipping of him and so forth: and thus he may be acted even in eating and drinking, and things that are spiritually good in themselves, as the loving of God, studying of holiness, etc. He acteth in them as such, that is, he loveth God, because he is an infinite spiritual good in himself, and because he hopeth to be made blessed and happy in him; thus to love God, and desire union and communion with him, that we may not simply be happy, but happy and blessed in the enjoying of him, and in being made conform to him, is no carnal, sinful or mercenary love: because, this the Lord himself doth warrant: and it supposeth a spiritual principle withdrawing one from common satisfactions and delights; and it loveth God as God, because thus God is considered as the chief good, sufficiently and only able to make happy in himself: and therefore he is desired, because no other thing is accounted sufficient or meet for happiness, but he. And so, love to God for himself, and love to him because we expect to be happy in him or have already gotten spiritual good, such as regeneration
Sanctification, repentance, &c. from him, are no way inconcluent together. And therefore, when we speak of loving God for himself, it is not to exclude all respect to ourselves, and our own good in him; but it excluseth all carnal respect to ourselves, or respect to ourselves as carnal, and delighted with things that are such, and to shew that the good which we expect from God, and for which we love him, is a spiritual and heavenly good, having the enjoying of himself joined with it; which doth commend all other good to us, so that it is respect to God, and our enjoying of him, that doth make these things lovely, and so we love God, because he is good, and because he heareth our prayers, and because he furnisheth us with what is needful, and so forth: not because any fleshly lust is pleased, or temporal end is gained; but because he confirmeth our faith, our spiritual joy in him, which we have obtained from him, and are also carnally cheerful in the use of them; yet are not joyful upon this account, but are delighted in the things themselves, or what pleaseth their natures in them, but not in God himself, and so in other things.

Before we close, it will be of concernment for the understanding of all this question, to take upon us truly the true difference between a moral specificiick difference which is acknowledged, and a physical difference which is denied. This physical difference doth flow from some positive qualifications concurring in the act itself, which are not in another act, that hath other, or contrary qualifications in the place of these; again, a moral difference, as it is expressed, doth not consider the act with respect to any qualifications in itself; but in respect of some extrinsic consideration; as a pound of gold, and an ounce of gold are of the same kind, in respect of their qualifications physically; yet, suppose one had hired a servant for a pound or, had conditioned so much for the rent of some lands by a subscribed contract and covenant; in this respect, the pound would differ from the ounce morally; because the pound by virtue of such covenants, would become the servants hire, and the landlord’s rent, which ounce would not be. This is a moral difference,

and floweth from the bargain, where in it was conditioned that so much and no less, should be accounted so faith the fore-named learned author, that is moral difference of grace, doth flow from the consideration of the covenant, whereby only it can be determined what is faving grace according to the tenor thereof, whereby justification or salvation are bestowed upon any act, page 205. And therefore, grace that is thus comparatively prevalent in degree is to be accounted true faving grace that is called for, and only accepted as the condition thereof, page 226. Where also he doth say, that the sincerity of grace doth lie in the degree not formally, but materially only because of the form of these gracious acts, confineth in their being the condition on which salvation is promised. Where, 1. To forbear the authors esteeming of all graces equally and gracious acts indifferently to be the condition of the covenant, (which yet necessarily this opinion doth presuppose,) and so is the more to be advarted unto there are two things to be observed, wherein the mistake lyeth here. 1. That it accounteth nothing what is called for, or accepted by the covenant as the condition thereof, whereas any thing that consequnently will prove one to be renewed, will also prove him to be justified; although it be not that to which his justification is covenanted, but it is something that doth necessarily presuppose it, and follow after in a justified person, and can be in no other else; for, if an act so and so qualified, will prove one to have the habits of grace without which he could not produce it; then must they prove him to be renewed, and so to be justified; because those acts are holy acts, and fruits of the spirit, as they are called, Gal. vi. and motions of the inner man, Rom. vii. and fruits of a good tree. And therefore, must prove that the tree is good. 2. There is a mistake in this, that it supponeth the covenant not to accept of graces whether as the condition or otherwise, presuppose of love, faith, &c. but at such a comparative degree only: and not simply to accept of them as sincere, although not as fully perfect. As suppose one by covenant had formed some portion of land, that doth for the time bear nothing but blemishes, upon this condition that he should have retur-
ned to him so many wine grapes, bigger than the brambles that grow thereon ; in this respect, one that really gave grapes, could not expect to have these accepted, as being the covenanted fruit of the vineyard or the rent of his leaf, if they were not bigger than the brambles which formerly did, or doth continue to grow therein: whereas the tenor or of the covenant in the condition that it prospeth, and in its acceptance of grace to speak so doth never propose and accept these grapes, simply considered as such, that is, it accepteth of faith: and the believer is to be accounted a believer, and in covenant not only because of the degree of his faith in Christ, but because he considering him the favour of sinners, as sent him of God for that end, is drawn out of respect to the faithfulness of God in his word, to receive Christ, as he is offered to him, and upon that account, according to the terms of the covenant, to submit to his righteousness, and rest on him for attaining of salvation.

Likewise in repentance, pardon and justification are not knit to any degree of sorrow, as was formerly hinted, that is, that God will account him a penitent whole sorrow for sin exceeds his delight in it; but unto true repentance, which is for its qualifications such is the promise made, whatsoever repenteth, &c. And in this respect, God’s covenant runneth not, that he will have grapes bigger than brambles, or gold of more weight than the person himself, but if they be true grapes growing upon a good tree, and no grapes of Sodom, or brambles, he doth accept of them, and saith, destroy not for there is a blemish in it, though it be like the smallest berry upon the uppermost tops of the boughs, and although hill he call for perfection in the degree of all as the covenanters duty. And if it be gold, and may abide the touch-stone and fire, and not be consumed, he rejects it not, of whatsoever weight it may be in the scales, as 1 Cor. iii. 13, 14, and 15, is clear. Now God abideth the fire, not as it is in quantity but as it is in kind, and for the quality upright. And no place is there which doth express God’s way of trial more plainly; and it hath the promise to the man whose works in any degree will abide the fire, though the dross that is with it which shall be consumed, be in the quantity far beyond what is solid. Hence we will find in scripture that such expressions are used as do ever lay the weight of the mercies of men acts, and place the difference of gracious and sinful acts in the kind thereof, as accounting all of such a kind to be gracious without such respect to its degree, as when it is said, ‘A tree is known by its fruit,’ Matth. vii. the meaning is not, that it is known by fruit of such a bigness, but by their kind: so it is not every tree, that bringeth not forth fruit of such a degree, but that bringeth not forth good fruit, that is, of such a kind; that is hewn down, Matth. iii. A vine is known to be a vine by its grapes of the smallest bigness; yea even by its blossoms.

Hence so frequently in the song, the Lord’s trees are differentiated by their buddings, and blossomings, and most tender grapes, or first buds: which could not be, if it were not the kind of fruit that evidenced the difference of trees: for, men gather not grapes even of the smallest bigness from thorns, nor figs from brambles. So all true believers, are laid to have the same spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13, and the like precious faith, 2 Pet. i. 1. Which doth hold forth this, that as all believers, who have faith, have the same for kind, though not for degree precious; so also, all them who partake of that faith that is true for its kind, must also necessarily be believers, and in covenant with God, of whatever degree it be, if it be the same for its qualifications and kind with the former, it is precious; otherwise, even believers have not the like faith in degree; the likenesses then and preciousnesses, otherwise even believers have not the like faith in degree; the likenesses then and preciousnesses thereof, must be in the kind, which no hypocrite can have, and it cannot but be accepted by God; so true repentance, and worldly sorrow, are differentiated, 2 Cor. viii. not in respect of any degree, but in respect of the kind; and the one is worldly, and the other is sorrow ver. 9. after a godly manner, and ver 11. after a godly sort: which must be because of positive qualifications concurring in it, which the other hath not. And the instances that are brought to prove their for-
rowing after a godly manner, in the words following do confirm this, viz. their carefulness, zeal, &c. So 1 Ptg. i. 22. there is unfeigned love; and elsewhere unfeigned faith, which are differed from counterfeits in hypocrites, as that which hath reality is from that which is only in appearance. For although they may have really historical faith, and a kind of natural love to God to let these go as supposed, yet can they never have justifying faith, or real spiritual love, or of that kind. Otherwise it were not feigned, and could not but be accepted, seeing what is unfeigned, is ever accepted. Now love and faith, cannot be called feigned closely in these, who have truly the same kind of acts of love and faith, or yet true acts of some kind. They must therefore be in this respect feigned, that though they be in their own kind, true acts of historical faith, and common love; yet in this they are feigned, that they seem to be of another kind, than they are of, viz. faving and gracious. And therefore common acts in an unrenewed man, and saving acts in him that is renewed must differ in kind, as that which hath reality and such a being doth differ from its counterfeit, and that which is but in feem.

The same might be followed in all such scriptures where some practices are differed from other in respect of positive concurring qualifications, as to do with a perfect heart is frequently in the history of the kings, to walk with godly simplicity, and sincerity, and that as in the sight of God, 2 Cor. i. 13. and ii. 17. to have zeal qualified according to knowledge, and so forth, and almost ever when a gracious act is described: yea we will find it even in outward duties, fuppose in the duty of praying or preaching: that is acceptable prayer to God, which is praying in the spirit, in the name of Christ, and so forth; otherwise the gift of prayer, may be where the grace thereof is not, and no intenleness of the exercize of the common gift can make it, without these qualifications, to be acceptable, &c. whereas the least sigh or groan rightly qualified and arising from the right root, cannot but be acceptable.

To come then to lay a word, on the third thing proposed, viz. that this enquiring for the truth of grace in its kind, and not in its degree only and simply, but at least in its degree and kind together, is no way prejudicial but helpful to the exact and safe search of ourselves. This seems to be the reason that moved that learned author, who is an eminent batterer down of prelumption and a preserver of holiness, to place the sincerity of grace in this comparative degree, that thereby presumptuous hypocrites be not strengthened in their self-delusions, who may abuse this maxim, which fayeth that the truth of grace lieth in the kind, and not and in the degree thereof. For readily do they think they are assured they love God, and believe him truly, &c. But there is no ground for fear of that here.

Therefore 1. We say, That this degree being well understood and expressed, is indeed necessarily knit with faving grace: so that if any man deliberately and habitually prefers the interest of flesh, or any carnal respect to the interest of God and his way, or love any thing more than God, or equally with him, that man can never warrantably conclude that he hath faving grace, this being inconsistent with it; and also one who loveth God sincerely, cannot when he abeth deliberately, and according to the former qualifications, but love him beyond all, because that is the nature of sincere love.

And, 2. We do not conclude this, but add the former qualifications of the kind thereof, and therefore this way must be both more convincing to discover a hypocrite, when he must not only look to the degree but to the kind also. And on the other side, be more satisfying to the poor believer, when he hath not only his mark to gather from the degree, which often may be exceeding dark and doubtful to him, when he considereth many idols that they may have great place in himself, and how far hypocrites may come in that respect; but when he may also reflect within himself upon his end, motive, and manner of acting, &c. he may be helped to discern the sincerity and honesty of his own acts and purpose, and have the help of his conscience and testimony in reference to these.
also; and so more confidently to conclude concerning himself.

It is true, it is a most hard task, though a most necessary task to discover the nature of sincerity and laying grace for the comfort of a tender believer so as to make the hypocrites not justly humble themselves in the truth of their grace, suppose of faith, love, &c. in respect of the kind thereof, than in respect of the comparative degree thereof. And are they not as confident and are persuaded of this, that they love God above all, and truth and lippen to him more than to any other thing for attaining to life? and will be ready to say, there is no other thing they can lippen to, and in this they are fixed so, as none shall be able to convince them of the contrary, because God’s sovereignty in that respect, is so naturally fixed in the confidence that they never debate it, but think themselves through in it, the conviction of its reasonableness is so strong on their judgments. And indeed upon what hath been said, if we will separate the degree from the kind and qualifications formerly mentioned, they will have much seeming reason for them. And yet even then, they will bewray that love, faith, &c. which they esteem to be in this degree to be unfound in its kind, as being but the fruit of nature, and somewhat ready which is of age equal to themselves, &c. and therefore cannot be found. Therefore we add, that this way will be more useful to convince natural men, than the other is, because generally they are persuaded of the truth and reality of their grace. And to say that their grace were but defective in its degree, would, 1. Keep them from thorough conviction of their gracelessness, and the right uptaking of their deceitful nature, which yet is mainly and principally necessary to the work of conversion. For it would make them suppose that they had already attained some beginnings, whereas this placing of the sincerity of true grace in the kind, doth at first point out to them the necessity of a change, and more easily discovereth the unfoundness of every thing that groweth from the natural root of an unrenewed condition.

2. This placing of it in the degree, doth put hypocrites only to amend or quicken their pace, and to be adding to their building; but not to take a new way, or lay a new foundation. Now this exceedingly suits with a presumptuous hypocrite’s humour, who will easily grant that their faith is weak, but not that it is unfound, and are ever devious to encrease what they have, which will prove but a building upon sand. And if this were the alone mark of trial, whether God had the chief room by this comparative degree in their acts, they would be exceedingly confirmed in their opinion that all is well. It is like when Nicodemus came to our Lord, he would not easily have been convinced, that he loved or trusted any thing more than God. Neither doth our Lord take that way of convincing of him, but doth shew the unfoundness of what he had in respect of the kind thereof, and that the tree behoved to be made good, and of another kind, before any fruit thereof could be approveable. And therefore he preached to him the doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of being born again, and doth not insist to shew any defect of degree, but of kind, as in that, John iii. 6. is clear: ‘That, fayeth he, which is born of the flesh is flesh.’ That is, whatever fruits may be in a natural man, they are of a corrupt kind as the root is: whereby he would obviate a secret objection that Nicodemus, or a formal hypocrite, might have from the degree or abundance of seeming good acts of zeal, love, prayer, &c. as may by Nicodemus, his words to Christ may be gathered to have been in him. Be it so fayeth he, let there be many fruits, and that in a great degree, that is not the thing that makes them acceptable, for they are still flesh; that is of a corrupt kind: and thus he rejecteth them all at once, and stoppeth his mouth without comparing them in reference to their objects, wherein Nicodemus had not been so easily convinced. And on the contrary fayeth the Lord, ‘What is born of the spirit, is spirit.’ Whereby he doth not only shew, that there must be fruits of another kind, viz. spiritual, and that nothing of whatsoever degree can be accounted sincere, except it proceed from this principle, viz. the spirit. But also it sheweth, that there is nothing, which doth come from that principle, if it
were but the least motion, but it is spirit, and acceptable according to the root that it cometh from without consideration of the degree thereof. And seeing our Lord took that way to discover and convince, it cannot but be false. This way also would be dangerous to many poor tender believers, if they were but to try the sincerity of their grace by this prevalent degree alone: for do they not often find their unbelief or leaning to creatures, at least in their sense to exceed their faith in God? And do they not find love to things of the world more frequently carry the heart to delight thereof than in God alone: and shall they cast all as unfound in such a case? What had Paul done if he had walked by this mark, when the motions of sin captivated him, Rom. vii. and yet is he still comforted in the sincerity of his grace, and in the actions of the inner man: which cannot be grounded upon this comparative degree, but upon the kind thereof. Now if this maxim were true, these things would follow it, 1. He could have no evidence of his sincerity except he had more grace, and that still in exercise nor corruption, and that to his sense; for every grace hath some opposite corruption. And if it were not prevalent over its opposite corruption, then could he not conclude that he was gracious, and so not except he were more gracious, than corrupt. 2. If any grace were prevalent over its opposite corruption, he could not conclude that he were in a gracious estate. Because this is certain, that where one grace is sincere, there all graces are, they being all members and parts of the new creature, which in regeneration is brought forth. And it being certain also, that for a time some graces will be exceedingly prevalent over their opposites more than others, as the fear of men will keep a believer under in a particular, more than the fear God. Then it will follow, that either he hath true fear of God at the same time and so the sincerity of this grace of fear, doth not consist in the prevalent degree thereof, or hath no grace sincere at all, because where one is unfound, all is unfound, et contra, or one grace must be found, and another unfound, which cannot be said simply, upon the ground formerly given. The believer then in such a case, must either conclude himself to be unfound, or he must try it by some other mark from the kind thereof. And though a believer ought to account himself greatly faulty, when any one corruption prevails; yet it will not follow, that he should reckon all to be unfound, which this would infer, and to contradict the saints practices in such cases.

From all this we conclude, that it is more safe to keep both the common doctrine and expressions: and although we have been longer upon this than possibly may be thought sufficient to our purpose; yet we have adventured upon it, if to be it may conduce anything to the clearing of that wherein the trial of mens states is so much concerned; or, it may occasion some more unanimous expressing of this matter, by who may more dextroufly perform it, that so this be not stated as a new controversy in the church, at such a time when she is almost overwhelmed with intestine debates already. For we are sure in the general, that these qualifications formerly mentioned, of the end motive reduplication, &c. are necessary to the constituting of any act to be sincere as hath been said. And if they be necessary, they must either be comprehended under the expression of this prevailing degree of the act, and so it is but logomaxia a striving for words, which are not to be contended for. And so both these are upon the matter one. Or, if they be not comprehended under that expression, then they must be somewhat different from it; and so there must be more requisite to constitute the sincerity of grace, and to difference it from common works in hypocrites than this degree foretold. Or, we must say that these qualifications must be accounted common to the acts of hypocrites, and these that are renewed: which is a thing that we cannot admit, upon the grounds formerly laid down: although we will acknowledge, that the prevailing at the most eminent degree of grace, even in that comparative respect, is exceedingly necessary, and useful for attaining to the clear discerning of the sincerity of grace: for often believers do make their own search exceedingly difficult, because of the want of this. And the agitation of this question, being somewhat new, we hope what is said, will be the more
favourably construed: especially this being our fear that by such expressions, or assertions, as this opinion hath with it, grace may come to be looked on as two common a thing, and it and nature, to be thought more fib than indeed they are.

LECTURE IV.

Verse 8. And unto the Angel of the church in Smyrna, write these things sayeth the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive. 9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. 10. Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The second epistle is directed to the church of Smyrna. And as her case doth differ from the case of Ephesus, and that both in respect of suffering and integrity, so both the Lord’s message to her differ, and is wholly comfortable.

There is no charge against this church as in many of the rest. This doth not imply an universal freedom from guiltiness of all sorts. But first, That this church hath been free of gross evils, and hath been in honest simplicity aiming at their duty. And secondly, it beareth out the Lord’s tenderness in passing over many infirmities in an honest church where there is much suffering.

It is not our purpose to insist in these epistles, the matter being clear, and ye having good opportunity of hearing them more fully opened, we shall only give a view of the scope, to keep the coherence of the whole book.

The epistle hath the division common with all the rest, in these three general parts, viz. First, A preface or inscription, comprehending the person from whom, and to whom this message is directed. The titles given to Christ the Saviour, were spoken to, chap. 1. They are two, 1. He is the ‘first and the last.’ This feteth out the eternity of his God-head, or his eternity as he is God. 2. He is named, ‘He that was dead and is alive.’ This feteth out his office with the efficacy of his death and the victory that he had obtained by overcoming death and the devil, and being now above death and suffering to love God and man in one person for ever. These titles are specially choisen here for the consolation of this suffering and dying commendeth him as pitiful and compassionate, and his God-head and victory, feteth him out as sufficiently able. Both which being put together, do exceedingly comfort his people, who cannot but live, seeing he liveth, and cannot but continue so for ever, Psal. xvii. 46. Job. xiv. 19.

Secondly, The body of the epistle is contained, verse 9, 10, 11. It especially runneth on these two, 1. To hold out Smyrna her case, and that both in respect of what was present, verse 9. and also in respect of what was to come, verse 10. 2. It holdeth out the consolations which are allowed to her, for her encouragement in reference to both; and these two are intermixed.

Her present case hath two things in it, 1. Her outward afflictions are mentioned. 2. Her honesty and integrity under them, is taken notice of and approved by Jesus Christ. And this last is a main ground of consolation against the first.

Her outward afflicted condition, is expressed in these three words. 1. They were under tribulation, that is, sad and great straitening pressures, as the word signifieth, and by this may be understood, the afflictions of body, name, and estate, and the sad consequence following thereupon, which the godly are put to by the persecution of wicked men. The 2. Word is poverty. ‘I know thy poverty,’ we take it literally to be

U
understood of such pinches and straits in their outward estates as plundering, sequestration, finings, and other means of that kind ute to bring upon men. Unto this sort of affliction the Christians in the time of the primitive persecutions were exceedingly liable. Who yet joyfully suffered the spoiling of their goods, Heb. x. 34. This is indeed no little part of trial, when parents and children are thrown loose of all temporal things, and have not the refreshing of themselves and their families. The 2. Part of their affliction is the reproach of wicked men, that wanted not altogether profession, 'I know how the Lord the blasphemy of these which say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.' Amongst all fainst crosses, there are none more bitter than cruel mockings as they are called, Heb. xi. 36. and mockings from the Jews that pretended to worship the God of Abraham, or Isaac, and of Jacob, would be more heavy, than the reproaches of heathens. There were none also more bitter revilers of the Son of God and of his followers than these hardened Jews; who having synagogues in considerable cities, did ever with all their might join themselves to reproach and persecute the Christians. It is like that they had a synagogue in this place, pretending to worship God according to the manner of his law, but because of their obstinate malice, they are by the Lord denied to be Jews, and are said to lie, and to be of the synagogue of Satan. Because indeed they looked like a combination for the devil, than a congregation for worshipping of God, who slew the Lord, forbade to speak in his name, and did persecute his ministers and people, as the word is, 1 Thess. ii. 14, 15.

From which which we may see, 1. That the most honest and tender, may be liable to most sharp afflictions. 2. That often rods and crosses of several kinds are joined together. 3. That reproach is not the least part of afflictions of the people of God, and the shame thereof being well endured, will be accounted honest suffering of a cross, as if it were a bodily affliction. 4. There is no person more bitter and invective against those that are sincere, than such as have had some engagements to God by profession, and have fallen from the same. 5. Pretended friends, as these Jews were may come to be most gross enemies, which is both their sin and their plague. Therefore 1 Thess. ii. 16. it is said, 'That wrath was come upon them to the uttermost.' 6. God's people may look to be met with, and entertained by man, as the Lord Jesus useth to be. If he be well entertained, so will he be with them; if he be despised, as he was by these Jews let them look to be blasphemed and despised also. For it is enough to the servant that he be like the mafter.

The conflation that is proposed against the fore-said affliction, is two ways set down, 1. More generally, 'I know thy works.' Which doth not only relate to his omniscience, as is usual in these epistles, but here it taketh in his approbation as the word after cleareth. Also it is opposed to his taking notice of their enemies malice, 'I know the blasphemy of them that call themselves Jews,' &c. Therefore his knowing of their works, must incline his respect to their honesty, as his knowing of their blasphemy pointeth out his detestation of the same. It is no little part of believers conflation in any strait; that the Lord Jesus knoweth how it is with them and can bear testimony to their integrity, when they are even almost overwhelmed with reproaches before men. It is no little encouragement also, that he doth take notice of enemies their malice, as here is observed.

The second way the conflation is expressed is more direct, by Christ's plain testimony in these words 'thou art rich,' that is, whatever men think of thee as being most despicable, or whatever thou be in thine own estate most poor and defolate, yet really in my estimation thou art rich, that is, thou art indeed strong in the grace of God, well furnished with promises and privileges, and abundantly rich in faith and good works, Jam. ii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 18. In which things true riches do confit. This seemeth to be a strange paradox unto the men of the world, Thou art poor, and yet thou art rich, yet often have the faints found this to be a truth, 'As having nothing, and yet possessing all things,' 2 Cor. vi. 10. And if this were
believed, it might allay the fervour that men hath in pursuining after temporal riches: for the having of them cannot make them rich, the greatest men in Smyrna get not this testimony from our Lord Jesus, that they are rich, and the want of them cannot make them poor, and therefore Smyrna even in her poverty, is rich: this also would make the heavenly riches to be esteemed of, if men believed that their life did not consist in the abundance of the things they enjoy, as it is Luke xii. 15.

The future cafe of Smyrna, which is set down, verse, 10. is also an afflicted condition; and hath its encouragements suitable thereto, laid down. It is, 1. Generally proposed to be suffering, ‘Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer.’ This church had been suffering; and though honest, was yet to suffer more.

Obs. 1. Sufferings when they begin oftentimes are not instantly at a close. Yea. 2. The Lord will sometimes exercise these that are most tender with one cross, upon the back of another. 3. He himself is notwithstanding still tender of them, even when they suffer, as may be gathered from this comfortable message to Smyrna.

2. These sufferings are more particularly described.

1. In the kind of the suffering, viz. imprisonment. This is not to be understood, as if they were to be tried by no other kind of suffering, but it setteth out a main part of their cross, viz. that some of them should be cast into prison, and liberty taken from their persons which it may be heretofore they enjoyed.

2. It is described in the principal agent and instrument of their sufferings. ‘The devil shall cast some of you into prison.’ Heathen Emperors, wicked governors and soldiers, were instrumental therein: yet it is ascribed to the devils, as if it were immediately acted by him for these reasons. 1. To shew what influence the devil hath in the acting of wicked men, so that in effect their deed, is his deed; they are subservient to him. 2. It is to shew from what author all persecutions do flow, viz. from the devil, who is a murderer and a liar from the beginning, and father thereof, John viii. 44. 3. It is to aggr[e]e the horridness of this sin of persecution, as being a main piece of the devil’s business, be instrumental therein who will. 4. It serveth also to comfort and encourage the suffering people to patience and constancy, seeing the devil is their special enemy, they ought therefore not to faint in opposing him, nor to humble in being opposed by him.

3. Their suffering is described by a designation of the persons, who were especially thus to suffer, he shall cast some of you into prison, &c. By you, we understand especially the ministers, some whereof layeth the Lord, were to be cast into prison, and yet but some; to shew that he was not altogether to extinguish their light. The reasons why we understand it especially of ministers, are 1. Because that doth especially prove a trial to the church, when her ministers are set upon. 2. Because the preserving of some of them, is a special comfort against affliction according to the promise, Isa. xxx. 20, 21. And were it not to be understood of ministers, it might have a fulfilling though they should all be cast unto prison. 3. The sensible altering of the number from you, in the singular, to you in the plural number, doth clear that the same party is to be understood by both. And seeing by the first, the angel collectively taken, is certainly to be understood; this sheweth that in this last place, such, viz. ministers are also to be understood. This form of changing the number, will be more clear in verse 24.

4. This future affliction is described in its end, that is trial, that ye may be tried. This is neither the end that the devils or persecutors have before them; but that which the Lord intends, who by this suffering, minded to discover some infirmities to themselves and bring forth the solidity and strength: of his grace, to his praise, and their comfort before others.

5. It is described in its height, and continuance. Its height is tribulation, that is very sore and great pressures; its continuance is ten days, a definite, for an indefinite time: and doth set out, 1. That their afflictions in general were determined by the Lord, to a day. 2. That it was not long; it was but for days. The faddest affliction of the people of God hav-
ing an end. Yet, 3. It is for ten days: To shew that it was for some continuance, and that the people of God ought not to look for freedom from their crosses in the first, second, or fifth day. Some apply it, to the perfection that followed in the days of Trajan, for the space of ten years; but we conceive the most general acceptation is safest.

The special encouragements that are expressed, are two: for, some are implied in the former words the first, is, fear none of these things, &c. This is a general comfort, frequently given by the Lord, fear not, &c. Isa. xli. 42. 43. And certainly though it be general; yet being spoken out of Christ's own mouth, must be very comprehensive and maily. By which we learn, that the saints consolations flow not from their freedom, or being preferred crossed, for that is not their comfort here but they flow from Christ's being engaged to susteem them under the same, and from his word, which ought to keep them from anxiety and fainting, in the greatest tribulations. The second encouragement, subjoined to an exhortation. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' The Lord subjoineth the promise to the exhortation. 1. To shew the necessity of steadfastness, even under suffering, seeing without it there is no promise of reward. 2. It is done to mollify and sweeten the the peremptoriness of that exhortation by such a sweet encouraging promise, annexed to it. The promise is, of a crown of life: which looketh to the eternal happiness, that believers are to enjoy after this; as 2 Tim. iv. 7. 8. It is called life; because of the cheerfulness of that condition, where morality is swallowed up of life: and the life that is here, is not worthy of that name. And it is a crown of life: to shew the dignity and excellency thereof; and also to intimate that it is a prize to be obtained as crowns usually were given after a fight. Also, the Lord faith, I will give it if thou be faithful unto death: to shew, that faithfulness and perseverance therein, is a necessary pre-requisite to the obtaining of this crown; yet that it hath no meritorious influence to alter the nature and fineness of it; it is still a gift of grace even to those that persever.

Obser. 1. That faithfulness and perseverance in holi-
else he may meet with in this world, though it were even the first death.

Concerning the influence that the devil hath on some wicked men’s actions: and how he doth carry on the same.

One thing may be further inquired here, viz. concerning the devil’s influence on men’s actions for, that this effect is attributed to the devil. The devil shall cast some of you into prison, it holdeth forth a special hand that he hath in acting men to do evil, so that their deed is, concerning which we may in general say, that the devil may have and often hath power on men, especially wicked men, in making them subservient to his designs: Thus he maketh men cast some faithful ministers in prison here: he reigneth, as having men at his command, in the next epistle: and leadeth them captive at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 26. he fighteth Michael, and stirreth up heresies as well as persecution, chap. xii. he deceived the nations, chap. xx. And often his power is spoken of in this prophecy: and it is certain that it is very great, 1. Having effects upon the bodies of men, to carry them from one place to another, as he did to the body of Christ, Math. iv. to afflict them by sickness, pain and fores as he did Job and the woman, Luke xiii. 16. whom, being a daughter of Abraham, Satan hath bound faith Christ, lo, thee eighteen years, &c. 2. Upon the external senses: he can delude ears, eyes, &c. either by misrepresenting external objects, or by inward disturbing of the faculties and organs, whereby men and women, may, and do often apprehend that they hear, see, &c. such and such things which indeed they do not. 3. Inwardly he may have influence to disturb the reason, and make the judgment, as he did in these men whom he possesseth, Mat. viii. 28. he hath influence on the understand and so he said to the blind men, 2 Cor. iv. 4. he may work on the memory and affections also as by stealing away the word, Mat. xiii. 19. and also weakening hatred, luft, envy, &c. yea, someway he may work on the will and so he is said to put resolutions in the heart, as it is said of Annanias

and Sapphira: to lie to the holy Ghost. Acts v. 3. and of Judas, to betray Christ, Job. xiii. 27. so, 1 Chr. 21. being compared with, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. it is said that he, that is Satan, did move and provoke David to number the people. All which in the effects are clear; therefore is he said both to reign in some at his pleasure, and to deceive or delude others by wiles and subtlety, 2 Cor. ii. 11. which are his devices. These are all certain, although we cannot fully shew how he effectueth them, yet this we may say, First, He hath not absolute independent power to do what he will, but it is limited, ordered, and bounded by the Lord. And secondly, he hath no infallible infallible way of acting by himself on men, but as through their fin yield unto him, for he is dependent, Job i. 7. 8. And can violent none to fin. Thirdly, he can have no immediate infallible acquaintance with what is in men’s hearts; for that is God’s property. Fourthly, he hath no immediate determining influence on the will of men, so that although he may persuade violently, yet he cannot determine men to follow; that is the Lord’s prerogative alone, to have hearts in his hands, Prov. xxvii. 1. to turn them wheresoever he will. And therefore whatsoever way the devil prevails, it is but a mediate way of alluring and deceiving, by making use of means for that end. Fifthly, he can infuse no new corruption, nor can he create any inward species or representations thereby to tempt, for that is a work of omnipotence; but he must work upon what is within the person that he affliceth upon, for producing of thee, yet being permitted of God, he may use most powerful persuasive means, by his skill and agility to draw men (being now corrupt) insensibly to gross sins, or at least to tempt them. Which temptation meeting corruption in us, and the Lord justly giving over some to it, Satan may prevail over them by such and such like means, as,

1. He may by signs know men’s particular inclination and predominants although he reach not to the understanding of the thoughts immediately; and he may gather what snare may most readily prevail with men for the time, according as evidences may appear in.

x x
In their way, either by their not praying to God, or by what kythos he words and other carriage, where in certainly he goeth beyond any man, viz. in taking up mens inclinations. 2. He may suit and fit external temptations to their distemper, and tryfe them so as there may be access to the venting of such lusts; thus he maketh Judas his inclination to covetousness and the Pharisees envy to tryfe together, David to behold Bathsheba in such a posture, when he is somewhat secure, &c. 3. He may jumble, confound and put through other the inward frame, by working upon what is natural in the humours of the body, for a waking of lust, passion, revenge, suffocation, fears, &c. whereby men are some way disposed to yield to the temptation offered, which he timeth with this. 4. He may cast in representations in the mind of such and such things, diverting the imaginations from objects which might mar his design, and so may he order what is within, as out of it, or by it, to form representations in the imagination of such and such things: whereby proposing them as it were objectively to the understanding, he may mediate offer them to the will; and for that end also, for a time keep such thoughts in the mind and in the memory. Thus often the fainst cannot be free of imaginations, by his abusing of the phantasia which they hate, and at which they have horror. And therefore, these cannot be thought naturally and naturally to arise from themselves which are strange and uncoutn to them. Thus some things come unexpectedly, by Satan's furnishing the thoughts with a sinful mind for attaining of an end that is desired, and it may be desirable. Thus also he may darken the scripture, offer divers sweet to it, furnish objections against the truth of it, or against the true meaning of it, obstruct their taking up of the weight of any reason against their errors, &c. as he is said, 2 Cor. iv. 4. 'To blind the minds of them that believe not,' &c. and 'To spue out a flood of error,' Rev. xii. 15. He may not only objectively thus present such a thing, but he may continue to bear it in, and to use motives drawn from seeming reason to engage the will to yield to it, as he did to Adam and Eve at the first. And thus, he stirreth not only na-
haft thou conceived this thing in thine heart? and verse 9. How is it that ye have agreed together? The seed as it were cometh from the devil who injected it: the conceiving is from our corruption which entertaineth the motions stirred up by him. And how can it be otherwise said that he blindeth men's eyes that they should not understand the gospel? For if it were only by a natural stirring of humors, it would dispirit them for every thing, but here lieth the temptation, that they are wise in all other things, but in spiritual things the devil blindeth them and maketh the gospel seem foolishness to them. Thus he seethed on Ahab by enticing him without by his Prophets, and swaying him within out of pride, and he prevailed with the false prophets, by stirring them up tolie, and that in reference to that particular design, which no more influence on the body could have done.

By all which we may see, that it is not without good reason said, that the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour; he is near the heart, and is often upon folks counsel when they are not aware. And this sheweth what need there is of watchfulness, and we give no place to the devil, and that he get not occasion to tempt, for with much subtlety can he make use of it, and act men in the executing of his orders when they know not what he is doing as likely it was with these persecutors whom he engaged thus to persecute these ministers; which way of his, being frequently mentioned in this book, we have once for all said this of it.

From this we may also gather, how little weight is to be laid upon the testimony of this devil, whose work it is to suppress the truth of Christ, and to traduce his servants; for which cause our Lord and his apostles, would not suffer him to speak; even when he pretended to confess him, because he was a liar from the beginning, and the father thereof. It is therefore not unworthy the observing, how contrary to our Lord's way the Jesuits are in this, who to supply the defect of other testimonies for their way against the Calvinists, as they call them, do carefully and ind thụously gather and heap up testimonies from the devil's mouth

and infult therein as a proof incontrovertible, for this end, Lorinus in cap. 5. Act, v. 16. having cited some pretended histories holding forth the little weight the Lutherans had with the devil, doth subjoin this as an infallible confirmation of their compliance with him, sed ex ore energumenæ laudumensis tota Gallia, ac in orbis Christianorum celebritatis, Calvinianos eximioris, nisi fulf ab illis tempore clamabat certus audientibus, anno 1560: quoniam amici efficit, et federati falso testantur atque, Galiae suum fidei scripta &c. It is in him this, that the devil out of the mouth of one that was famous for being possefled by him did mock the Calvinists, crying out, and that openly before all that there was nothing to be feared from them, for they were friends and confederates; and for confirmation of this he asserteth the thing to be with great faithfulness recorded, as if the weight did only lie in the matter of fact, and that there were no cause to question his faithfulness who gave the testimony. But of this enough, we have reason to thank God, that our faith in the truths of God, and our clearness of the errors of their way, are built upon a more sure foundation; and that our controversy with them, is not the devil's decision, from whom indeed the Calvinists might expect no favourable sentence. But the Lord is judge himself, to him be praise for ever.

Lecture V.

Verse 12. And to the Angel of the church of Pergamos, write these things sayeth be, which hath the sharp sword with two edges.

13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith even in these days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.

14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the chil-
we heard; Chapter 16. did proceed out of Christ's mouth. It sheweth, that Christ hath the command of the word, to make it effectual for the good of his elect; and for the convincing, fining, wounding and slaying of his enemies by spurious plagues. And it is chosen in this place, because he doth make use of this as his sovereign privilege in the threatening for charging up the Angel to his duty.

In the body of the epistle, besides the common Assent of God's omniscience we have, First, The commendation of this angel and church, verse 13. Secondly, the reproof, verse 14, 15. Thirdly, an exhortation to duty, with a sharp threatening added as a motive to press the same, verse 16.

In the commendation, we have, 1. the thing commended. 2. Some excellent aggravations, to call them for, or commanding qualifications of this commendation. The thing commended, is in the two expressions to one purpose, 'Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.' By name, we understand the doctrine of the gospel, whereby Christ's name, that is, himself, is manifested. For in the Gospel to preach Christ's name, and declare to the Gentiles, is all one with preaching himself or his gospel. By faith is understood the doctrine of faith in him, which is the same thing. The holding fast of his name, is a zealous adhering in the profession of his truth, as it were holding it by both hands, and not denying his faith is an open avowing of the same by a public profession, and honouring Christ by their avouching of their faith in him, without fainting, or shifting in the same, notwithstanding of any peril that might follow thereupon. For this negative 'Not denying his faith,' doth import more than is expressed.

The commendation, is amplified by two special circumstances, that serve to heighten the fame, 1. From the place where: And, 2. From the time when; they express this constancy. 1. For the place: it is where Satan's throne was. It is not much to avow a profession in some places; but to do it in such a place as Pergamos, where Satan had a seat or throne, as the word is much. Satan's having a throne, implieth not only a sinfulness in that place common with other
places; but it doth intimate such an avowed opposition to Christ and his followers, and such an adhering to Satan, that on the matter, it looked as if Satan had commanded expressly there in chief: for, not only was wickedness tolerated, but carried on, and established by a law: nor only had he a feat in hearts, as he hath in all men by nature; but in the magistracy and judicatures, whereby orders were given in public, in reference to persecution and profligacy; and men did so walk, as if directly orders had been given by Satan, and taken from him, in that place: he did so effectually without control as it were obtain his will, the Lord to permitting and ordering it in his wife and secret providence and justice.

From which, 1. We may see how tyrannously the devil would manage every thing if he had things at his disposal. 2. At what great height he may have his dominion, even beside the gospel, and in the place where it is. 3. How fully men naturally are slaves to the devil, he being "The prince of this world that worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2. And 4. We may see what need there is to pray that Christ's kingdom may come, and how thankful we ought to be, who are in any measure freed from this tyranny.

The second circumstance in this commendation is, the time; that is, it was even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. This is also an excellent part of the commendation, that it was not only in such a place, that was wicked and profane; but at such a time, when wickedness and profligacy was exercised in its height which is proven by the death of a faithful martyr, who was then violently slain amongst them: at such a time to hold fast his fame, was indeed commendable. Whereby we see how the Lord doth take notice of the commendable circumstances of his people duties, as he doth of the aggravations of their sins. What this Antipas was, there is no more mentioned in scripture concerning him: It is recorded in story, that he was a minister in Pergamos, and it is not improbable, seeing these are most ordinarily the object of persecutors malice and


dience. However, the Lord putteth three great titles upon him. 1. He is a martyr: this signifies a witness, and that not only such a witness, as witnesseth by word and profession, but as feareth with his blood: thus spoke of Stephen, Acts xxii. 20. when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed. And therefore in the primitive times, martyrs were distinguished from confessors, thus, martyrs, were such as suffered to death; confessors, were such as suffered imprisonment, mutilation of some member, whippings, or such like, for the faith of Christ. 2. He calls him a faithful martyr: To shew, that not only the cause was honest, for which he suffered: but also, that he was honest in his suffering for the same. 3. He is my faithful witness: Which setteth forth, 1. The end of Antipas suffering, which was to bear witness for Christ. 2. It setteth forth the Lord's owning of him in that testimony and now by this, as it were, from heaven writing this kindly and honourable epitaph upon him, he is my faithful martyr. It may be, he was stoned in some tumult as a seditious person, or one not worthy to live, because of some reproaches or other put upon him; yet thus doth the Lord own him, to wipe all there away, and to make his memory to be the more favour, and witness-bearing for Christ, to be the less feared at; that so others may be animated and encouraged to be followers of him. From all which we may gather, 1. That it is exceeding commendable to be zealous, and stedfast in such a place, and at such a time, as religion is hazardous and dangerous. 2. That the death of any of the Lord's people, especially when it is in witnessing for him, is exceeding precious in his sight. 3. That honest witnessing for Christ, is a most honourable thing, Antipas being particularly named with these titles, for setting forth the honourableness of his suffering. 4. We may see also, that there is an implied distinction of martyrs, some are faithful, and it may be, some dying the same death, and before men for the same cause, may yet not be accounted faithful before the Lord. If it be asked, What is necessary to make one to be accounted a faithful martyr before God? We suppose these four are necessary; 1. That the person suffer as a
well-doer; so it must be for the truth of Christ, or right-
controversies sake, Matth. v. 10, 11. *Non est mort, sed causa
mortis quia fact mortorem.* 2. Not only would suffering
be stated upon a particular account, wherein they have the
fide that is right comparatively, but they would be
rightly simple in the main truths of Christ; as for in-
stance, some times Arians and Jews, after Christ's com-
ing in the flesh, and other heretics did suffer by he-
thens, either because they would not worship their
idols, and disclaim the true God, or because they would not
simply deny themselves to be Christians. They
had indeed the better, if we look to the question as
stated between them and the heathens; yet they can-
not be called Christ's faithful witnesses, seeing they
did not faithfully give testimony to him in his person,
natures, and offices. 3. It is necessary that the per-
son be as to his state a believer, without which none
may be a faithful martyr, although possibly his testimony
may be a faithful testimony. For without faith it
is impossible to please God, especially in such a great
thing as suffering for him. 4. It would be gone about
in the right manner, so as thereby the testimony given
to Christ may be made the more to shine, viz. there
would be blameless in the man's conversation, sinless
ness in his end, deniessness, zeal, humility, and lovely
kithing and in exercise in his undertaking and under-
goings those sufferings, as we may see in Stephen,
Acts vii. 15. &c. And this is to suffer as a Christian,
and not as a heathen, and as a fool, and as a baby, 1 Pet iv. 25,16.
and according to the will of God, by which such may be
encouraged to commit the keeping of their souls
to him in well-doing, ibid. ver. 29. This is also con-
formed from 1 Cor. xii.

He durh again repeat 'Where Satan dwelleth.' 1. To
shew that the devil's dominion in that place was not
by flattery, that he had settled and as it were a con-
stant refuge there. 2. To commend their honesty
and steadfastness the more. 3. It is to shew the great
evidence of the devil's dominion, viz. that faithful men
were put to suffering for the cause of Christ.

The reproof followeth, verse 14, 15. First, gen-
ernally but 'I have a few things against thee.' This is
not to be understood as if the faults were little in

Hence Observe, 1. There may be corruption and
defects where there are very many things commendable.
2. Where there is honesty in the main, and suffer-
ing condition for Christ, there he has not rigid or fer-
se censor, but a most tender constructor of his
peoples inewnings.

Secondly, More particularly he setteth down by way
of similitude the ill reproved, verse 14. 'Because thou
haft there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam,' &c.
which he applieth verse 15. It is not to be thought
that there were any professed followers of Balaam in
that church, but the intent is, to shew that upon
the matter, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans did agree
there-with; and if Balaam's practice was hateful, theirs
must also be such. And so by proposing the hateful
way of Balaam, he discovereth the odisousness of the
doctrine of the Nicolaitans; which will be found upon
the matter to be the same. The history of Balaam
is recorded, Num. 22, 23, 24, and 31. chap. In sum
this, he was a greedy destitute of the wages of unrighteousness, and being restrained from cursing the people of Israel by the Lord he gave subtile advice to Balack, to draw the people of Israel into a snare, that thereby God might be pro-
uded against them: and so in the close, they might be
prevailed over. Josephus in the fourth book of the
antiquities of the Jews, expresseth it thus, That
he advised Balaack to send some of the beautifull
women of Midian, to wander about the camp of Is-
rael; who though they should entertain the Israelites
familiarly, yet that they should not yield any thing
to their lust, but that they should pretend to run from
them till they should partake of their idol-foats with
them. In reference to both which, they prevailed
with the Israelites, and drew them both into bodily
and spiritual fornication which were the two great
faults of the Nicolaitans, viz. liberty in fornication, as
it were not sinful, and indifference in eating in things

Y y 2
sacrificed to idols, without respect to offence, as was shown on ver. 6. Therefore the Lord here speaketh of the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, as being indeed the reviving of Balaam's old condemned error. And so they became guilty before God of his practices, as if they had expressly professed the maintaining of the fame. It is said that Balaam taught Balacl, to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, &c. His wicked advice getheh that name; because it proved an occasion of falling and stumbling to the Israelites, as if a stumbling block had been cast in the way of some men, to make him fall. Thus may sinful practices have not only the consideration of guiltiness in respect of the persons themselves, who commit the fame: but have also consideration of offence, as they are apt to prove occasions of falling and ruin to others. This also, viz. of laying a stumbling block before others, will agree well in application to the Nicolaitans; who as they were guilty in the sin of uncleanliness so were they careless in reference to offence, not regarding how offensive their way was unto others in the use of indifferent things, such as eating of things sacrificed, &c. which in these primitive times was to many the occasion of stumbling, when Christian liberty was not rightly bounded, as we may gather, 1 Cor. viii. 9, 10. And these also often go together, to be careless of guilt before God, and of offence before others.

From which we may gather, 1. That the most vile errors and delusions may increase exceedingly. This of the Nicolaitans had spread in Ephesus, Pergamos, and several other churches, even in the days of John the apostle. 2. That new upstart, grofs abominations are oftentimes indeed but the reviving of some old buried and condemned practices or doctrines. Thus the error of the Nicolaitans, is but indeed on the matter, the putting of Balaam's practice in a doctrine and maintaining the fame under another name. 3. We may see that it is an allowed way of confuting new start-up delusions, to shew their agreement on the matter, with former old acknowledged and condemned herefies. Thus the Lord doth here, and in the epistle following he compareth them to Jezebel. For often men will more impartially judge of by past errors, than what seemeth to be new, and therefore the devil useth most cunningly to disguise those things, and to endeavour, to have old errors vented under the notion of new lights, and depths when indeed they are but old rotten delusions.

If it be said here, that ordinarily the most grofs men use to brand the most orthodox with this, as being revivers of old heresies, whereof many instances may be given. For answer, we say, that a simple asserting of this, is not sufficient to bear it out, we would therefore propose these qualifications. 1. That the thing esteemed to be an error, or herefey be indeed incontrovertibly such, and that in some fundamental thing. Indeed sometimes, even the antients do put some things in the catalogue of heresies which will not be found to be of such weight. It is not those we speak of, nor is it such that are mentioned here. 2. The application also would be clear, and men would not charge others with heresies of an odious name or nature upon prejudice, or upon mistake of some expression: may not upon some seeming conformation which the authors do deny, and it way be, others cannot demonstrate the inference thereof. Here it is not so, the practice and doctrine of the Nicolaitans, is so clear, that they cannot deny it in particulars though it may be at first, they would relieve it to be the doctrine of Balaam. 3. Such an application would be in knowledge and from thorough acquaintance with the alleged old herefey upon the one side, and with particular tenets of others who are supposed to maintain that error, upon the other side. Oftentimes men speak in those things, what they know not, or with a too lightly passing view, or upon some probable resemblance or appearance, are ready to ground such an application. 4. This would be remembered, that the old condemned herefey, must be such as is condemned in scripture, and that still the word is to be acknowledged as the supreme rule. All which agree in this application, and where they agree, it is not a little prejudice to an opinion to say, it is on the matter, the fame with such and such and old herefey; that is to
mens conviction long since condemned upon grounds from the word of God.

This was a most error: and it is not to be thought that this angel, who is here commended, was guilty of any of these evils, by any positive action to them; but this is the fault charged upon him, that thou hadst them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans; that is, the angel had such in the church, who continued to be members, and were not by discipline cut off. This is his fault: for, it was not the churches fault that such lived in Pergamos, because they had no civil authority to impede that: yet it was their fault that they lived church-members there because they had church-authority to remedy that, which yet was not put in exercise against them, as by Ephesus had been done. From which we may gather; 1. That the church is invested with a power and authority for cutting off of corrupt members. 2. That it is a most horrible fault wherein is defect in this. Our Lord Jesus quarreled the want of this in Pergamos, where he commanded much honesty. And he commanded it in Ephesus, where there wanted not inward defects: because there is nothing that more occasioneth the name of Christ to be reproached, his ordinances to be despised, his people to be offended and stumbled, than the sufferings of corrupt members that are tainted with errors to continue in the church, therefore much of the churches commendations or reproofs in these epistles is founded on this, as it is rightly, or partially exercised. 3. By this it appeareth that our Lord Jesus is no friend to toleration; and that the tolerating of corrupt teachers can no way be approved of him. It is true, this is directly spoken against church-men their tolerating of corrupt teachers; but will any think, that that will be approved in civil powers, which is so hateful in the church-officers? Or, that Jesus Christ will account toleration in the one to be hateful, and in the other to be approvable. 4. There is diversity of tempers in church-officers, and diversity of conditions in churches, even where there may be real honesty in both: Ephesus had much coldness within, and yet much zeal against those Nicolaitans: Pergamos again, is much commended for their zeal and constancy in suffering;

and yet reproved for want of zeal against the corrupt members. 5. Men may be very strict in the work of God, and hold in reference to suffering; and yet faint and be defective in the prosecuting of church-centuries against erroneous men. This appears both from this epistle, and that which followeth, where their particular condition and publick carriage in other things, is exceedingly commended; yet is there a notwithstanding in both in reference to this.

If it be asked, what can be the reason that honest, tender and zealous men should be so often defective in this, who yet may be zealous and fervent against scandalous practices?

Answer. These reasons may be given; 1. It is more difficult to get the impression of the odiousness of corrupt doctrine on the heart, than of gross outward practices: because gross practices offend nature more directly, and are hateful even to natural men: and even some good men are ready to foster such an opinion, as if grace were more consistent with error than profanity. Upon this ground the Lord himself and the apostles do more frequently give people warning to mark and abate from them that cause offences contrary to the doctrine of the gospel, than they do in matters of gross practice. 2. Pursuing of the persons that are erroneous, hath often little fruit with it as to persons themselves, their being but few that are recovered out of that snare of the devil, and to whom God giveth repentance, who once deliberately oppose themselves to the truth; but on the contrary, they seem to be more bold and to make a greater stir, than if they had not been taken notice of, as we see in Corinth, and Galatia; the more that Paul praised them, the more they seemed to despise him, and they go on in their contradiction and blasphemy, as in the history of the Acts, and instances of Hymenaeus and Philetus, is clear. This maketh that even sometimes good men, out of fear of inconveniences that may follow, and the difficulties that accompany such a work, may be too prone to oversee and forbear them. 3. Sometimes respect to the persons of some who may be carried away may have influence on this, as suppose some persons for a name of piety, sometimes favour, should
be seduced; preposterous tenderness to those may make men cruelly to spare them to their prejudice. This fault the Lord ceneth to quarrel in Thyatira, that they suffered his servants to be seduced. 4. There may be also a design by more gentle means to restrain such an error, and recover such as are fallen, whereby they may come to exceed and turn to be defective in not using the means appointed, as if such censures had been needlessly appointed; or as if the Lord did not make use of mediate means for the restraining of error. 5. Such busineses also have often their own mistakes among many tender members of the church; some whereof, may be too favourable constructors of the most gross seducers, and to fear to offend them; and love to keep all in peace, oftentimes may steal in to have weight to the prejudice of the Lord's ordinance. It is written of the Schism in Phrygia, which arose for Montanus, that many did construct too well of him, as not thinking it impossible but he might be a good man, who therefore could not go along in the thoughts that others had of him. There is readily something of this amongst the weakest fort where deluders come, which getting way for a time doth rather increase than diminish; and so leaveth this duty in a greater none entry than at first.

We come now to the remedy, or duty exorted to, which is laid down and pressed, ver. 16. It is in short, repent; that fame which was proposed to Ephesus, ver. 5. The Lord hereby signifying, 1. That when sins are fallen into it is not enough to forbear them, but there must be an exercising of repentance for them. 2. That there is no expectation to be keepe

The threatening annexed, is in these words, Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. It hath two parts: The first respecteth the church or angel of Pergamos; I will come unto thee quickly; that is, if thou repent not, I will one way or another come in judgment against thee. We conceive, it relateth to the angel especially, it being in the singular number. Because this fault being a defect in discipline, is not so to be imputed to the people, as to him whose place it was to take order with such corruption, which will appear more clearly afterward. The second part, respecteth those gross members that were suffered to be in the church, viz. the Nicolaitans, I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth: that is, feeing ye are defec
t here if there be no repentance for it, I will come in an extraordinary way, and myself punish those whom ye have suffered. For clearing of this threatening, we may consider, 1. Wherein it consisteth. 2. How can it be a threatening to the angel. 3. Wherefore he is so peculiarly threatened.

To the first, It is clear here, that the party immediately threatened is the Nicolaitans, whom the Lord threaterneth to fight against with the sword of his mouth. Which looketh not to any external or corporal plague; for the sword of his mouth is not the weapon that infliceth such, but it looketh especially to thefe; 1. To a discovery of their wickedness, and of the hellenism of their way, by his word. 2. To a cursing, threatening, and sentenceing of them by the same. 3. To a fruitfulness of such discoveries, threatenings and senten
ces, as to any spiritual or faving work upon them, but that they should be by such clear convictions and sentences, in God's secret wisdom and justice, more hardened, convinced irritated and affected with spiritual plagues, than if they had not been to deal with. In this respect often in the scripture we have mention,
ed, 'Hewing by the prophets, and slaying by the words of the Lord's mouth,' as Hosea vi. 5. and 'Fighting with Antichrist, and destroying him by the spirit of his mouth,' 2Thes. ii. 8. and elsewhere, the like expressions to that purpose. This is a sad plague when the table of the gospel becometh a snare, and when through men's own corruption they become more drunk with their own delusions, even under convincing light, and when the word of God which is the only weapon whereby they may offend their enemies, is through their opposing the light thereof, turned to
fight against them, as they have turned themselves to fight against it. The event here as to them cannot but be desperate.

For the second, It may be questioned, how this can be a threatening to the church or angel, that the Lord would take such a course with these corrupt Niccolaitans? It may rather look like a favour to them? Anfw. If we consider it more particularly, we will find it a threatening in these respects, 1. That it implies Christ to be angry at their neglecting of their duty, and that this extraordinary way doth intimate his esteeming of them, not to be worthy to have this employment. Therefore he taketh their duty off their hand, and provideth himself of some others, for the performing thereof. Thus when Paul is threatening the Corinthians, first epistle, chapter iv. verse 21. 'What, shall I come unto you with a rod? &c. whereby he sheweth himself to be angry. In the beginning of the next chapter, he reproveth them, for suffering the inexcusable perdition, and commandeth him to be excommunicated, which bareth out this, that Paul's coming over them to pres such a duty was a stroke or note for their defect in the same. 2. It is a threatening in this respect; because the taking of some extraordinary way and mean, as in reference to these Nicolaitans, hath strange like and unseemly effects oftentimes following upon it. Thereby the church is put throughout, and revolutions follow, and often the wheat is trode upon when the tares are a weeding; which cannot but be hurtful to the church. 3. It supponeth laying by of this angel, and making use of some other, for the convincing, reproving, and confounding, &c. of these wicked men, which should be to his disgrace, when he should have no hand in so good a work. And so the meaning of the threatening, is to the angel. If thou spare these wicked men, and do not do thy duty, in reference to them, I myself will come in another way, and lay thee by, and follow my purpose in sentencing, and condemning them by some other mean. And this is to give another his crown, which is so commended to the angels in those epistles to be kept. Thus the threatening is not to remove a ministry or church-estate from Pergamos, as was in the case of Ephesus, but it is the Lord's threatening to lay aside such particular ministers, and notwithstanding thereof, to carry on his work.

Now for the third, viz. Wherefore this threatening respecteth the angel more particularly, than that of Ephesus did? Anfw. The reason was formerly hinted, viz. Ephesus's sin and defect was in the practice of the power of godliness, common to ministers and people, therefore doth that threatening extend almost equally to both. This sin again which is reproved here doth peculiarly respect upon the ministers; and therefore the weight of the threatening doth peculiarly respect them.

From which we may learn, 1. That fainting and unfaithfulness in the work of the ministry, may procure an interruption by one mean, or other in the exercising thereof, or a blustering of a man in gifts and parts who sometimes hath been useful. 2. It sheweth, that sometimes God may keep his word in a place, and exercise it in reference to some persons between whom and him there is a standing or stated fight, they fighting against him, and not receiving the love of the truth, and he fighting against them, by giving them up to hardening of heart and strong delusions, and in his secret and holy justice making his word and ordinances to promote the same. It followeth also, that it is a most dreadful thing, when the Lord and his word become our party, and when he fighteth against a people with that sword. It is here a more terrible threatening, to fight against those with the sword of his mouth, than if he had sent the sword, famine or pestilence upon them. 4. It implyeth that this is a plague, and a way of punishing, that the Lord in his justice often sendeth and exerciseth upon deluders and corrupt teachers, who have not received the love of the truth, and have perverted the word of God to their own destruction, viz. that it should be a weapon of God's indignation, for the inflicting of spiritual plagues upon them.

The conclusion followeth, verse 17. and hath two parts common with the rest, 1. All that are spiritually affected, and have the sense of right hearing, are exalted to hear what God sayeth by his spirit to the
churches, as if particularly it were spoken to them. This is so far from supposing that men naturally have ears to hear, that it doth imply the contrary, viz. that it is not every one that hath ears to hear, but that he is a rare man that hath them; for none can hear spiritually what the Lord saith unto the churches, but such as have gotten them as Moses word is, Deut. xxix. 4.

The second part of the conclusion contains some encouragements to the wrestling believer, as all the rest of the conclusions do. The party to whom the promise is made, is the same, viz. Him that overcometh: or, he that is overcoming, as it may be read. Which pointeth at the zealous, fingle, and constant wrestler, though he hath not yet obtained the victory. The encouragements given him, are on the matter, the same with the rest, viz. the happiness that may be expected in heaven, but are set down in three or four different expressions, for commending of the same. The first is, I will give him to eat of the hidden manna. Manna, is called Phal. cv. angels food; and Job vi. bread from heaven. It is, in a word, the most excellent and refreshing food, yea Christ himself, who is called the true bread of heaven Job vi. of whom whosoever eateth shall not die. It is hidden manna, possibly relating to that pot of manna that was kept within the ark of the testimony; and so pointeth at such food as is hid with Christ in God, and to be enjoyed with God in the heavens, which was typified by the most holy. However it importeth.

First, The excellency of this food, and the satisfaction which the overcomer may expect. It is inconceivable and inexpressible. ‘The eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard of it, nor hath it entered into man’s heart to conceive thereof.’ Isaiah, lxvi. Secondly, It importeth itsickenss. It is hid, it cannot but be sure to the overcomer, seeing it is kept in the secret place of the most high. Thirdly, It importeth the rarity and singularity of this excellency, being a thing altogether unknown to the world as if it were hidden. In which respect Col. iii. 3. our life is said to be hid with Christ in God. The second expression is, I will give him a white stone, white stones were used in those days, for two ends, as may be gathered from heathen writers. 1. In their wrestlings and games, he that overcame and was victor, got a white stone as a badge of honour put upon him. 2. It was used in civil courts, when men were accused and challenged of crimes, to be given as a sign of abolution. Thus a man that was found innocent and absolved, got a white stone, and he that was condemned got a black stone. Both answers well here, where Christ promiseth to give to the overcomer a crown, in pledge of his victory, and a full public abolution in the great day, before men and angels. 3. This white stone, hath a new name written upon it; a name is some honourable thing, a new name is something eminently honourable; it was the Lord’s way to change the name of some whom he eminently loved, and for confirmation of his favour to them, he gave them new names. So he did to Abraham, Jacob, &c. This fayeth that the believing overcomer shall be made by Jesus Christ quite another thing, where he shall have such glory and majesty bestowed upon him, as will need a new name to express the same, and make himself another thing than ever he thought to have been. We take it on the matter, to be that same which is expressed, chap. iii. v. 12. by having the Name of God, and Christ’s new name written upon them.’ 4. It is a name which no man knoweth having he that receiveth it. This must be an excellent motto that only the spiritual senses of the receiver is able to discern the excellency thereof, so that no onlooker can tell what the satisfaction and honour of such a person is, but he who is possesed with the same. And proportionally, these who are made joint heirs of the same glory. These promises may in some part be applicable to the first fruit of the spirit that the believers are partakers of there. Which in respect of carnal delights are unpeakeable and glorious, and such as pass all understanding; yet the proper fulfilling of them, and the main scope of the place is to be applied only to the enjoyments that believers have to expect in heaven, when they shall reap the full harvest, and be brought to the possession of the kingdom prepared for them: for all of them do presuppose a full accomplished victory before they be at-
Lecture VI.

Verse 18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write these things, sayeth the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire and his feet like unto fine brass.

19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last to be more than the first.

20. Nevertheless, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22. Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden.

25. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.

27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my father.

28. And I will give him the morning-star.

29. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.

This is the fourth epistle, directed to the church of Thyatira. The division is common with the epistles, viz., 1. An inscription, ver. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. The conclusion is in the rest.

In the inscription, Christ taketh three titles to himself; the first is, thus faith the Son of God. This is to say, his royal title, than which there can be none higher: for, 1. It beareth out his Godhead: for, Christ is not the Son of God by adoption, as believers are; but he is the Son of God by an eternal generation, being begotten of the Father in an inconceivable way; In which respect, he is frequently called the only begotten of the Father, John i. 18. and the brightness of his glory; and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. 2. It points out the unity of the essence of the Godhead, which is common to the Father and the Son; for, this name that is the Son of God here, as being a distinct person from the Father, is the first and the last, who is, who was, and is to come, the Almighty, Chap. i. 8. 11. which are essential attributes of the Godhead. 3. This title being compared with the vision in the former chapter, wherein Christ was spoken of as true man, doth point out the union of the two natures in one person: for, the son of man, is the Son of God; and the same person who is the son of God, is the Son of man. All which are considerations that bear forth excellency in him; and give ground of comfort to his people. The reason why he taketh this title to himself in this place, is because he is sovereign to reprove faults in and to give directions unto his church: and that with severer threatenings in reference to persons that were guilty: therefore, to make all the more weighty, he taketh this title.

The other two titles, are taken out of the vision, chap. i. 14. 15. viz., who hath eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet as fine brass. The first of them, fetteth forth his omniscience, that is able to reach the
secrets of hearts, and discover the hypocrisy of the most subtle hypocrite. Answerable to this title, (verse 23), he is said to search the heart and the reins: and his being manifested to be such, is his being known to have eyes like unto a flame of fire. The last title, and his feet like unto fine brass, shewed the incorruptible and justness of his way in managing the affairs of his house, and his sovereign irresistible manner in promoting his designs; as having both absolute authority to govern, and absolute power to execute what he intendeth. Answerable to this, (verse 25), he is said to render to every one according to their works. He taketh the first of these two titles: because he is to discover the hypocrisy of a counterfeit prophetess. And he taketh the last: because he is to threaten her and her followers.

In the body of the epistle beside the general ascerting of his omnipotence; there are four main things. 1. There is a commendation, verse 19. 2. There is a quarrel, with some aggravations thereof, verse 20, and 21. 3. There is a threatening including a duty, or comprehending the way how the thing threatened might be prevented, verse 22 and 23. This is in reference to them that were corrupted. 4. There is a mitigation of the threatening, or a consolation laid down in reference to those that were kept free from these corruptions, verse 24, 25. The commendation is great, both as to the extent of the matter commended, and as to the qualification thereof. Beside the general, 'I know thy works,' the things commended in them, are set down in five words exceeding comprehensive. The first is their charity, or, love; this lefthem forth the inward frame of their heart in reference to God and the saints: and is in effect, the sum and fulfilling of both the tables of the law. This was defective in Ephesus. The second is, their service: this looketh to their ministering to the saints of their substance, and otherwise; and is a fruit and proof of the former. The third is, their faith; which respecteth not only the purity of their profession, by their keeping themselves from error; but mainly it looketh to their exercising of faith in him and dependence on him: for it is faith, viz. the grace of faith that is commended here; as it is the grace of love, patience, &c. The fourth thing is, patience: which is a fruit of faith; and importeth their submitting to suffering for the gospel of Christ without fainting or shifting in respect of the outward profession before others, or fretting in respect of the inward frame of their spirit as to themselves, notwithstanding all these sufferings. The fifth word is, 'and thy works;' which generally looketh to the strain of their carriage, which by this the Lord holdeth forth as commendable. All these being put together, they shew an excellent frame this church once had, and withal, give a copy unto us. Yet there is a circumstance or qualification added, which doth exceedingly heighten the commendation, that is, and the last to be more than the first. The meaning whereof is, although thou hast been in a good condition for charity, patience, works, &c. since the beginning, yet thy last works are for extent in practice, for liveliness in the degree, and for spiritual manner of performing of them beyond what they were; so that her present condition is set forth to be a growing condition which doth confirm how they have been really sincere and in a most lively frame. The commendation was excellent; but this qualification putteth the crown upon it: for where a decay cometh upon the graciousness of a people's frame, as was in Ephesus, or, where there is an upsetting without progress, these become as a dead stake that maketh all the box of ointment to stink.

The challenge followeth, verse 20 and 21. 1. Generally proposed. 2. Particularly expressed. 3. It is agreed. Who could have thought that the next word to such an excellent commendation, should be a notwithstanding! But this sheweth. 1. The deceitfulnes and desperatenes of our corruption, that may have its influence beside much grace, as hath been frequently marked. 2. It sheweth the Lord's considering and graciousness, who giveth such a testimony, even where there are faults. The general expression is, I have a few things against thee; which is the same upon the matter: and so to be understood as was spoken to Pergamos, verse 14. we shall therefore say no more of it.

More particularly, the quarrel is, because thou suf-
If it be asked, why the devil seeketh thus to engage women and put them on the top of such designs?

Answ. These reasons may be given. 1. Because often women are most easily engaged and carried further on in the delusion; and it is not so easy to make a man give himself for a prophet, as a woman to take on her the name of a prophetess. This general we may gather from 2. Tim. iii. 6, 7.

2. Women are more eager, vehement, and diligent in pursuing what they are engaged into; even late times may teach how they may prevail and intrigue on many by their diligence, if we consider what is recorded of Mrs. Hutchinson, and some others, mentioned in that little story of the rife, reign, and ruin of shamaliffs, libertiners, &c. in new England.

3. Women are oftentimes less suspected than men, and any seeming parts or abilities, which in the Lord's secret justice they be furnished with is usually more admired and taking than in men, as if it looked like thing above nature. This fame consideration occasioned a schism in Phrygia, because some had more respect for Montanus his prophetess than was fit.

4. Women also have more secret, and private access to tempt and infect others, than men can have; for partly they are less suspected, partly more slighted and defiled by others, partly also, more forborne because of their sex than men would be. Whereupon often they arrogate to themselves a greater liberty and impudence in speaking when they are corruptly principled, than would be suffered in men.

And lastly, There is more access for them to converse with women, and to infuse their venom in them than there is for men.

Eufebius marketh this as a reason of such hereticks associating with women, that thereby there might be the greater facility to seduce the simple of both sexes.

Sometimes also they were helpful by their means and credit to further sect-matters in their designs, and to hold them on in them. Sometimes again, they were exceeding dexterous and diligent in venting and spreading false reports upon honest ministers, and to
beget a favourable opinion of these that were erroneous. All which tend exceedingly to the promoving of error, and to the hurting of the truth. And we will find Augustine often complaining of the malicious reports that this Lucilla used to spread upon them, whereby the calumnies of the Donatists were strengthened. Upon which grounds and the like, we may see what the devil's design is in seeking to engage such in the head of such a design. This then is the first fault charged on her, that contrary to truth, and without warrant from God, she did call herself a prophetess, even though she had not proposed any error. Her second fault is, that she teacheth. This was forbidden, 1 Cor. xvi. 34. and 1 Tim. ii. 12. And it appeareth that these prophetesses, who had an extra-gift from God, as Philip's daughters had, Acts xx. Yet were not publicly and authoritatively to preach; for Paul commands them silence, 1 Cor. xvi. even when he is speaking of extraordinary prophets. And we will not find in the new Testament at least any ground for a woman publicly to officiate in the ministry of the gospel, as an authorized office-bearer.

The third part of her challenge is, that by her teaching she did seduce, which is a challenge to her, though she had been guilty of none of the former two. This viz. seduction and leading of people out of the way of truth, doth ever almost follow upon persons uttering a calling to themselves, or upon persons stepping without their own bounds and station to teach: and we will seldom find persons to run unfert in any of the former respects, but itching after some new thing, hath had influence upon them to carry them without their bounds, as we may see in Jezebel here, and ordinarily through the scripture and church history. The particulars wherein she seduced her hearers are two. The first is, to commit fornication, that is, by her asserting fornication to be no sin, she occasioned and spirited them to take liberty therein, which possibly they would not have done. The second is, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, that is, by propounding different meats, and pretending to Christian liberty she induced them without all respect to scandal, to eat of these things, to the stumbling, grieving and wounding of others that were weak and tender; which two are the very doctrine and practices of the Nicolaitans, as was shown in the epistles to Ephesus and Pergamos.

But it is a different quarrel from this which the Lord hath with the angel. It is expressed, Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, &c. That is, not that they countenanced her in her errors, or did hear her in her teaching, but that they suffered her, and did not impede her. If it be asked, How can they be quarrelled for suffering her, seeing they were not magistrates, nor had civil authority to restrain her? Ans. That is not the quarrel, but this, that they being invested by Christ Jesus with church power, to censure corrupt ministers, and cut off rotten members, did not exercise the same in censuring and excommunicating of this false prophetess, and these that adhered to her, as Ephesus had censured the false apostles, verse 2. So on the matter, it is the same fault which is condemned in Pergamos, verse 15. who had such corrupt members in their society, and did not by excommunication cut them off. Which sheweth that the church is invested with such a power, for no civil power can be alleged here, and that the neglecting of the exercise thereof, is exceedingly displeasing to Christ Jesus.

If it be asked, 1. How church censure, when backed with no civil authority; can impede one to teach? 2. Why the Lord is so displeased with church rulers, their suffering of corrupt teachers? 3. If this relate any way to civil powers as well to Ecclesiastic? To the first, we answer, although church-censure have no civil compulsion with them, or bodily violence or strength to restrain any from corrupt teaching yet they have a threefold weight, when rightly gone about; they have an authority and weight as to the confidence of the gain-fayer: because censures being the ordinance of Jesus Christ, and as it were a seal put by his authority to a conditional threatening, they have a stamp of his Majesty upon them; and so they serve to humble men, or to revenge their disobedience: And therefore these who seemingly profess to despise fen-
tences, want not an inward apprehension of the terror of excommunication and would gladly not have that sentence passed upon them. 2. If men obstinately suppress the weight of the sentence upon the conscience, as well as the word; yet being a mean appointed of God for the restraining of such evil, it is oftentimes countenanced by him, if not to the humbling, yet to the blustering of such persons in their designs. Whereby in his secret providence and justice it often cometh to pass, that sentences against such persons are eminently owned and countenanced by him, with some concurrence of disposition, evidencing his ratifying of the same, as sometimes, such are in justice given up to more vile delusions, sometimes to gross outbreaks in practice, sometimes their very natural judgment and sentences are blotted, their credit and reputation evanished, and it may be some way he doth signally follow them with his own immediate hand by some stroke upon their estates, persons, or families, even when they seem to be countenanced by civil power; as, it is written in church-story he did to Simon Magus, and Aries after he was excommunicated, by taking him away in the very height of his insolency who having again recovered court, and being in a solemn manner with many attendants coming to appear for his pretended vindication, was driven as he thought, with a desire to come himself, and for that end withdrawing to a retiring place in one of the streets of Constantinople, he did instantly expire; and being waited for long by his attendants, was at last found dead in the street, his intestines being dissolved and voided. That little book formerly cited of the rise and reign of the families, &c. hath some dreadful instances of this. Thus the Lord hath often made such a way to flink, by limiting the head thereof in some extraordinary manner. And though this be not the proper end of excommunication; yet when it meeteth with mens corruptions it is often a just consequent thereof. And therefore, such like ways of disappointment, cannot be so warrantably expected, where this ordinance is not improved; because it hath the promiss, and is a mean appointed for this end, 'That men may learn not to blaspheme,' as the apostle speaketh, 1 Tim. i. 20.

3. It hath weight as to others, to scare them from countenancing of such, and is as it were, a mark or beacon set upon them, thereby to give warning to others for eluding of their company, as it is Rom. vi. 17, 18, and in many other places; and if it have his fruit, it cannot but in a great part blash their design. Now the neglect of this sentence, made all the more restraint void, as if no weight had been in Christ's ordinance. This was the angels fault.

As to the second, viz. Wherefore is Christ so displeased with the sufferings of corrupt teachers, we may gather the reason thereof from what is said. For 1. It sheweth little zeal to his glory, when his name is suffered to be blasphemed. 2. It sheweth little love to his people, when they are suffered to be seduced. 3. It sheweth little respect to his ordinances, when they are not made use of for the end appointed, and when corrupt men are suffered to invent the order appointed by him. In a word, error and falle teachers have brought more reproach upon the name of Christ and profession of the gospel, and have made religion more despisible to profane men, than any gross outbreaks have done. Also more souls have been destroyed thereby and that speedily with swift destruction. 2. Pet. ii. and as it were carrying them away with a flood, as it is Chap. xii. lastly, other sins are fallen into by some more pretex at least of temptation and corruptions prevailing but this done with a high hand, whereby men not only break the command themselves, but teach others so to do, Matth. v. 19. And therefore it is called a teaching of rebellion against the Lord, Jer. xxviii. 16, and is fallen into, with more deliberation than other sins; for which cause a here-tick is laid to be condemned of himself, Titus iii. 11, which being put together, with many other aggravations of this sin of corrupt teaching; and ills that follow thereupon, it is no marvel, that the Lord Jesus, who is jealous of his glory, and affected with the hazard of his people, be exceedingly displeased at the neglect of such a duty, as in using the authority which he hath given to his church-officers for edification, and particularly for the curbing of corrupt teachers, and the taking of the Foxes that spoil the vines, Song ii. 15.
We suppose now it is not difficult to answer to the third question, viz. if the sufferings of corrupt teachers be reprovable in men, who have civil authority to restrain the same? for the fame grounds that ought to awaken zeal in ministers against this ill, ought also to stir up magistrates zealously in their places to use their authority for vindicating the name of Christ and preventing of the hurt of his church and people, seeing the word is not delivered to them in vain, but for the terror of them that do evil, Rom. xiii. 3. sure we are, in the old testament, magistrates were included within the command of restraining and punishing such as did intice to false worship, as well as the priests were, Deut. xiii. 1. And, in the new testament, we find no repeal of the same, and though there be no instance thereof in the gospel, or acts of the apostles, because magistrates were not then Christian yet in in the progress of this book of the Revelation, we will find that when magistrates became Christian, it is looked upon as reprovable in them that contemnanced Antichrist; and it is highly commended in them, that out of zeal to God should withdraw from the whore, and burn her with fire, Chap. xvii. ver. 16, 17. And seeing in the scripture, all seductions are accounted Antichrist's, as Matth. xxiv. 1. John ii. 18. second Epistle, ver. 7, and can there be any better rule to try what is duty in reference to them, than by what is approved of God in reference to him who is the prime Antichrist? And this is clear that the Lord hath not more clearly engaged himself to fight against any error by his word than this; yet, he will not have that a pretext to magistrates, for using their civil power against him. We see also in church-history, that the most tender magistrates, when they were in the best frame, have ever been most zealous in this, as by the examples of Constantine, Gratianus, Theodorus, &c. is clear: and the most tender friends, or, greatest enemies of the truth, have striven to have all sorts of religions be mutually tolerated; or at least to have a sort of harmony amongst them by the removing or burying of all laws civil and ecclesiastic, that did strike against some errors. In reference to the first it is observed by Ammianus, an heathen writer, and a great friend to Julian, that amongst other devices that Julian used to root out Christianity, this was one that he gave toleration openly to all the different professions that were amongst Christians, which then after the council of Venice were very many and required no more of them but that they should abstain from civil discords, and so without fear follow any religion they pleased. The words are, as they cited by Ludovicus Molinus, page 590. ut confopitis civibus discordiis fuerint quique religiones fore revocet intrepidus. And certainly, it can be no acceptable service to Jesus Christ, to follow that way which this expert child of the devil made use against him. And Anastius also is condemned for this that he endeavoured such an oblivion American in the church as tended to suppress all the former Cannons, decrees, or confessions, which had been enacted in the former famous general councils against gross errors, as may be in the beginning of the sixth century of the church-history. Lastly, This is also sure, that the asserting that magistrates ought not de jure or might not de facto, meddle with restraining of heretics was even in the primitive times accounted a gross error. Augustine professed himself sometime to have been of that opinion; yet often in his writings doth he profess himself to have been convinced with the reasons of his brethren and with the experience that he had both of the necessity and advantage of the magistrates interposing in such a thing, so that he became a most vehement preserver of this, as in his epistles is clear, and he feareth not to account the opposers of this, viz. such as pleaded for toleration from magistrates amongst heretics; and often nameth them under the title of Rogatiani, from one who it seemeth was some eminent pleader for this forbearance and one of the Donatists party. It is not intended that magistrates, or ministers, should account alike of all errors or heretics, much less that indifferently the highest degrees of civil punishments or church censures, should be executed against them, but that according to spiritual prudence, both civil and church
authority should be exercised, for the restraining of such evil workers from, and punishing of them for hurting of the church of Christ, and dishonouring of his name. In which Christian prudence will make difference, 1. Between errors that destroy the foundation, and are called damnable, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2 &c. and other errors, which are conformable with the foundation, although they be as hay or stubble built thereon. 2. Difference is to be made between errors that are plainly doctrinal, such as those that are about the object of predestination, order of God's decrees, or such like. Wherein certainly there is a right and a wrong, yet are they not so intolerable as errors that imply a schism in practice, to the retarding of the union of the church, as the errors of the Novatians and Donatists were. 3. Difference is also to be made, between a man who entertaineth an erroneous opinion, and another who is an heretic; that is, who not only after admonition, doth continue in the same opinion; but also doth perfidy to vent and propagate the same to the hurt and offence of others. 4. Although he that is seduced is guilty, as the seducer is, yet reason would put a difference between him that is out of weakness seduced, and is but a follower of such a leader. There may be a cenfuring in some degree either by civil or church authority, when yet there is procedure to any high degree in either. And thus the cenfuring in some cases, may be distinguished not only from forbearance and negligence, but also from such cenfures as may appear rigid or unfeinonable; thus Paul sometimes reproveth and threateneth in the epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians, when yet he will neither altogether forbear them, nor pass the highest sentences upon them. Christian prudence is to lay weight upon such and such consideracions, in the managing of such an authority, but still so as nothing extinguish that zeal which magistrates and church officers ought to have for exercing of their respective authorities in restraining of such an evil. But we will infift no more on this.

Followeth now that we should consider the aggravations of the Lord's quarrel, both in respect of Jezebel, and to the angel. They are two relating to both

1. She seduced Christ's Servants: and this is the greater guilt both in reference to their practice, and also to their suffering of her. 2. It is agreed from this verse 21, 'I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she continued not.' Whereby it appeareth, that she had continued for a time in her practice, and notwithstanding God's forbearance, had not amended: therefore her sinful practice, and their neglative forbearance became the more inexcusable.

Concerning the first aggravation, we are to consider. 1. Who are to be understood by this title Christ's Servants. 2. Why they get this title in this place. To the first we say, By Christ's servants are not understood men indifferently. For heathens and heathens that are without the church get not this name, but it is peculiarly applied to the whole house of Israel, Lev. xxv. 55. And so here it is to be applied these two ways. 1. To Christians and church members: for Jezebel aimed not to seduce Pagans, and infect them with her errors, but Christians and church members. 2. It may respect some more eminent in the church nor others for parts or profession. And so among church members, the aimed most to seduce the same that were found in the matter of doctrine, and infected with no error, and those that were clean in their conversation, and free of gross scandals, rather than such as were gross and offensive in their carriage. Both these are clear in matter of fact by experience: and by proportion it will follow, that as heretics, upon their own consideracions seek to infect church members, rather than those that are without; so among church members, they will seek rather to engage those who are eminent for parts, blameless in their carriage, or appearing to be gracious than others, who are not of such esteem. For the second, viz. why Christ giveth them this title in this place who were seduced? We may give these reasons for it. 1. It is to aggrage the guilt of both, as hath been said: 2. It is to give the alarm and warning unto them that are his own people, seeing even his servants may be seduced. 3. It is to shew his own resentment of the success of error in his church, the more, that it draweth away the same that stand in such a relation to him, and as it
were diminisheth the number of his family and servants.

For further opening this aggravation these things may be enquired into, 1. If any truly gracious may be engaged by false teachers and seduced to error? 2. What may be the reasons that maketh the devil aim at the seduction of Christ's servants, rather than others? 3. Why Christ doth so expressly aggravate this guiltiness upon this account?

In Answer to the first question, we say, First, That those that are truly gracious, are not so readily and frequently seduced to error, at least to be leaders therein and promoters thereof, as they are unto gross practical offences. For, 1. We will not find in scripture so many examples of the one, as of the other. 2. It is a most rare thing for an opposer to get repentance. 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. and therefore the believers, yea even the elect before their conversion, cannot be said frequently to fall into this evil. 3. It is an ill that is followed with more deliberation and cometh not from the surprising of some particular temptation, as other gross evils do. Therefore cannot be so consistent with gracious principles, and a spiritual walk, as particular outbreaking, wherein a person is captivated. 4. To be a teacher of error, is to be a teacher of rebellion against the Lord, Jer. xxxvi. and to be a minister and a promoter of Satan's kingdom, 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15. which at first appeared to be abominable unto any of a gracious principle, and more than a sin of infirmity. 5. Also the promises seem especially to relate to God's guiding of his people in the way of truth, and keeping them from being seduced by false teachers; which though it be not to be extended simply to all, yet it appeareth it is to be extended further than in reference to practical scandals.

Yet, Secondly, We say, that it is possible even for those that are truly gracious to be seduced to error. For, 1. There are promises indeed that they shall be kept from the sin against the Holy Ghost, and from total and final apostasy and impenitency in respect of any ill, but there is no promise that a believer otherwise shall be kept from any ill incident to one that is unrenewed. 2. Even believers have corruption and to have much darkness and ignorance in their judgment, and much perverseness in their inclination and affections. It cannot be thought strange then, that they be capable to be carried away by a temptation to error, there being no ill but it hath a party in them to take part with it. 3. The many warnings that are given in scripture even to believers, to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees to beware of false prophets that come in sheeps clothing &c. shew that they are not without the reach of the hurt of such a temptation. 4. Experience also doth confirm this, for it seemeth that in some measure that Solomon wanted not his accession to this evil, if we consider what is recorded, not only of his suffering of corrupt worship to be within his dominion, but also of his countenance of the same by building altars and otherways, although we cannot particularly determine. Neither cannot it be denied but that some of these that were seduced by false teachers in Corinth and Galatia might be gracious; and in after-times also it hath been out of question.

To the second, viz. wherefore Satan aimeth to seduce Christ's servants unto error rather than others? We may answer in these reasons: 1. He doth it because his hatred is most at such and it is their ruin, which especially he hunteth for. 2. Because men that are in error and profaneness already are his own and it is no gain for him to take pains to seduce them unto such delusions, so long at least, as they continue such. 3. He hath other more suitable baits for other men that are given to gross ills: Therefore he referreth this for others. 4. In some respect, these who have a firm of religion, or some inclination towards it, especially if weak in knowledge are in some respect more obnoxious to this temptation than grossly profane men are: for they like Gallio, care not what be truth, and what be error: but one who hath some tenderness, and withal weak, is more ready to debate and enquire for truth; and so not being strong enough to rid himself of difficulties he is the more easily entangled.

5. Gross temptations to profaneness are not so taking with them, therefore the devil affayeth them by this, that under the colour of some new discovery of truth
or some more perfect way of Christiannity or such like, he may draw them to error. And by this more subtle temptation whereby he transfometh himself to an angel of light, he doth often prevail when other temptations would not. 6. It is most advantageous to his way, to have some eminent for piety and parts engaged for it; for by this he gaineth credit to it, and maketh it the better digest with others, who often respect an opinion, as they respect those who own the fame. Thus he aimeth at this as a main engine whereby he may prevail with many, whereas the engaging of profane men bringeth no credit to such a way, neither is it his advantage to divert them from their profanitie. It was a great stumbling of old, especially in the case of the Novatians, that many confessors and eminent men were drawn away with that error. And this was often cast up to the Orthodox as a matter of great weight, whereupon Cyprian, in his book de unitate Ecclesiae takes occasion particularly to answer his objection, that people be not prejudged at truth because of forcemen's name; especially considering that there were many more eminent of the contrary mind. And by the way this slight of the devil may be observed, that men will make more work, and greater noise in commending error by the name of one or two that favoureth the fame as if that were of great weight, than they will allow to truth, though it have many more eminent names standing for it. 7. When men are aiming to be seriose in religion, the devil causteth this stumbling in their way, that if he prevail not to draw them to error, he may at least mar them or divert them, by putting them through other, in making them debate such and such need les questions, and to keep them from the more serious and profitable exercice of repentance, self-examination, making of their calling and election sure, &c. Hence it is, that while men lie in security or profanitie, they are not much troubled with this temptation; but being once awakened, then he feteth upon them, if so be he may extinguish that waking, or give them a wrong fat before they be fully formed and settled. And this is one reason why errors and delusions do often accompany the first rise of the gospel among people. 8. By seducing of
proceed to pronounce sentence; thereby shewing their readines to undergo whatever trouble might follow upon that same account and withal their zeal and tender care of the churches edification.

We come now to the second aggravation, which is in ver. 21, and it is made up of these two. 1. There is a forbearance upon the Lord's side, I gave her space to repent, that is, I did not suddenly and at first execute judgment upon her, but did for a time forbear her, thereby giving her an opportunity to repent: and indeed his long suffering and forbearance, doth of itself lead to repentance, according to what is said, Rom. ii. 4.

The second part, is, But she repented not: which holdeth forth the abuse of this mercy, upon her side, viz. that notwithstanding of the Lord's forbearance she continued in her former practice without repenting of, or turning from the same: therefore she is the more inexcusable, and they also in suffering of her. This aggravation doth import these four, First, That the Lord's forbearing of a sinner ought to be an inducement to them to repent, as is clear from that place, Rom. ii. 4. Secondly, It importeth that sometimes God will give time and opportunity to repent, by his forbearance, unto most gross sinners: and suffer with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, Rom. ix. 22. Thirdly, It importeth also, that such opportunities are often abused; and particularly that it is a rare thing for an oppressor of the truth to repent. The apostle putteth a peradventure in it, 2. Tim. ii. 25. in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance, &c. we find also chap. ix. and 16. of this book, that on the back almost of every plague upon Antichrist's kingdom it is marked that yet they repented not for all that.

If any should ask the reason, why repentance is so rare in reference to this sin?

We answer, 1. It is a sin of high nature, being deliberate and against sufficient grounds of conviction and therefore in God's justice, is plagued with impetuosity beyond other sins: and as in some respect, it cometh nearer to the sin against the holy-Ghost than than 'other sins in its nature so also in God's justice it cometh nearer to it in its punishment. 2. The nature of this sin is such that men tainted with it, are thereby in a greater incapacity to repent than those who are guilty of gross ills in practice: because, 1. Nature doth not so challenge and convince for sins against the truths of the gospel, as for sins against the moral law. 2. Because men in errors and delusions have their judgment so engaged, blinded and prejudged that they think often such errors are no errors, and therefore there is the greater difficulty to bring them to the acknowledge-ment of the truth and of their being wrong, and yet this precede their repentance. 3. The Lord also by this doth set a mark upon this sin, to scare all from the same; men oftentimes think little of this ill, he hath therefore put this mark of displeasure thereupon the more expressly. Hence it is, that his threatenings are more clearly and expressly annexed to the second and third commandments that any other, that he may make men know he is jealous of his truth and ordinances, and will by no means acquit such as take his name in vain, whatever men think of these sins. In the fourth place, this aggravation importeth, that when times and good opportunities are abused, guilt cometh the greater and the more inexcusable, and the Lord's controversy cometh the more sharp.

There are two conclusions aimed to be drawn from these words, by some which no way they will bear, 1. Some say, that Jezebel had an ability and power to repent seeing the hath time allotted her for it, and God expected it of her. For answer, To say nothing of this general, which is found to be an untruth from other clear scriptures which hold out men to be dead in sins, Ephes. ii. 1. &c. and unable for any spiritual good. These things will vindicate this place.

If we consider who this party is, viz. a most vile seducer and adulterer. And even such patrons of nature, will grant that such high and gross sins do unjustly deprive persons of any ability to repent, and do incapacitate them for the exerting of the same. 2. If we compare this with 2 Tim. ii. 25. We will find that patient waiting upon opposers, and thereby giving them opportunity to repent, is one thing; and
have repentance given them is another. For many have time allowed them, when yet it is a peradventure if God shall give them repentance. Which fetheth that grace to exercise repentance, when an opportunity is, must be given as well as the opportunity itself, otherwise no opportunity can be rightly improved. Which fetheth again, that men in such a case have not this ability of themselves to repent. 3. The words do not speak out her ability, but what was her duty under such a long suffering dispensation, as the opening of the words cleareth.

If it be said then, How can she be more inexcusable?

Anfw. 1. Because this inability is of her own bringing. 2. Because it was not inability that swayed her to continue in her sin, and reject repentance; but it was her positive inclination to these errors, and her adverfenes from the truths of God. And whatever men may dispute for the patronizing of nature against the justice of God, now yet when he cometh to judge, and when the conscience beareth witness of the vehement affection and delight which men had to, and in their wickednes. There will be none who shall dare to enter a defence upon their inability, seeing in conscience they will be convinced that that was not the thing which made them willingly choose such and such evils, and made them reject all means tending to recover them. 3. This also will make her, and such as she, inexcusable, that they did not improve such opportunities as they might, and did not abstain from the following and committing of such gross evils, which even many unrenewed men have done, who yet had not ability to repent of themselves more than they. And thus, none in such a case will be able to say in judgment, that they did make such use of the word and other means as they might have made, even in such a condition, or that they have come that length in outward reformation, that they might have done.

The second conclusion pretended to be drawn from this, is, that the Lord hath an universal will to have all men saved, seeing he giveth her time to repent. This we say, doth not allow hence. For, 1. Suppose it might be said in some respect that he willed the repentance of such a particular person, who lived under his ordinances, it will not follow thereupon, that he willeth the salvation of all, even of such as never heard of repentance. 2. It will not follow, God giveth some time which ought to be improved to repentance, and doth not instantly execute his judgment, therefore he willeth such a person's salvation. For, God for a time forbore Pharaoh, even after he had evidenced his purpose in to doing, to be exacting of his own glory in his destruction. 3. If it were so, what might be said of such as the Lord doth not forbear, not giving time to repent, but taketh them away in their sin, as he did Zimri and Cozbi? It cannot be said on this ground, that he willeth their salvation; and so not the salvation of all. 4. It will not follow, Christ willeth persons to repent, therefore he willeth their salvation: because he may be said to will them to repent when he requireth it of them as their duty, and thus the duty of repenting is the immediate object of his revealed and preceptive will. But a person's salvation is the proper object of his will of good pleasure, or of his decreeing and purposing will. And no otherways can he be said to will such person's salvation (because he commandeth them to repent) than this, viz. that in his word he hath signified repentance to be such a person's duty, and that he hath appointed a connexion between repentance and salvation, which still relateth to his revealed will. Even when God made the first covenant with Adam, it might be said that he willed Adam to be holy, and that by that covenant he had made a connexion between holiness and life; yet it is not improper to say, that the Lord willed life to Adam upon that condition. Because that looketh to the event and respecteth the Lord's will and purpoze, which cannot but be effectual. And if the Lord's willing of men, at least such as are under his ordinances to be saved, be thus understood, as including only the duty which God layeth upon men, and the connexion he hath made between it and salvation in his word, it may be admitted; but if it be extended to any antecedent will in God himself, distinct from that which is called his revealed will, this place and such like will give no ground for such an affirmation. If it be asked
then why did he give her space to repent, if he intended not her salvation? Answ. To forbear deciding of what might be his purpose to this particular person, (who happily may be an elect,) because nothing is decided of her final condition in the word, these reasons may be given. 1. Thereby the Lord commendeth his grace that doth so condescend to such a person. 2. The aggravation of her guilt and inexcusableness are the more clear as hath been said, and thereupon he hath the more access to manifest the spotlessness of his justice as is in the threatening, ver 23. 3. It doth the more comfort and encourage a penitent sinner, to step forward in the hope of mercy, seeing even such a person as Jezebel hath had such an office, and that she if penitent and believing would have been accepted.

The third thing in the body of the epistle is, the threatening, ver 22. and 23. whereby he again wonderfully preffeth her, and these who are seduced by her, to the exercise of that much slighted duty of repentance. The threatening hath three parts. 1. Something is threatened. 2. An exception is put in leaving a door open to mercy. 3. The scope or effect of the Lord executing this threatening is set down. The thing threatened is threefold, according to the several parties that he threateneth. 1. For Jezebel, behold I will cast her upon a bed;' which pointeth out some remarkable stroke or plague threatened to be inflicted upon her, whereby she should become a spectacle to others, and yet not be instantly removed. 2. 'For them that commit adultery with her, I will cast them into great tribulation;' that is, I will bring upon them that partake of her sin, whether in respect of spiritual or bodily adultery, for the guilt of both grievous and public temporal strokes. And 3. 'I will kill her children with death.' For her children it is like were children begotten in their unclean converting together, them the Lord threateneth to remove; and thereby to give an evidence of his displeasure at their way, as he did David's child for his adultery. For we conceive the children of her spiritual whoredom, are underfoot under that expression, 'theye that commit adultery with her.' From which we may see,
The thing they had already. Secondly it sheweth, that by having of such duties (to speak so) is not only understood the having of them prescribed unto them but their being a great length in the obedience thereof, as may be gathered from the like phrase, Chap iii. 11. Where 'hold that fast which thou haft,' doth signify their endeavour to keep what they had attained to. And thus the meaning of this mitigation here, is, I have prescribed to you that are pure in Thyatira, no other duty or direction; but that with all sincerity and zeal ye keep the directions prescribed unto you, and continue to walk in the way which hitherto ye have followed, unto the end. This is pressed by Christ’s second coming. 1. To let them know he was to come again. 2. To let them know, that at his second coming, he will reckon with his churches according as they obey or disobey his directions. 3. To teach all to walk so in making use of the word, especially in corrupt times, as they may with confidence appear and reckon for the same before Jesus Christ at his second coming. 4. To shew, that believers ought to let no other term to their persevering in duty, but Christ’s second coming.

From what is past we may observe, 1. That in these epistles, express difference is made between ministers and people. To you I say, relateth to the ministers, and to the rest relateth to the members of that church. And therefore in the application of things contained in them, we would distinguish them also.

2. That by Angel, in the inscription, is understood ministers collectively: To you, is in the plural number; and yet it is to those that the epistle was directed under the name of Angel, in the singular: and therefore are they contradistinguished from the rest, which looketh to the members of that church, you an: the rest being the same thing hereupon the matter, that Angel and Church were in the Inscription, save, that the rest, even as many, &c. distinguished the pure members from the impure, the church comprehending both.

3. That a minister’s guilt, or the guilt of officers in not excluding scandalous persons from church communion, doth not lie on the people, as upon the mini-
fathers and people, is commended to both, whereas that
reproof was peculiar to the ministers. And the rest
are taken only in the mitigation or consolation, but
it was, Thou sufferrst in the reproof.

4. Christ thinketh much of zealously executing of
discipline, and would not have ministers sparing it
against heretics or corrupt teachers, more than other
scandalous persons. Yea the reasons from the hazard
of infecting the flock, and the examples of it in scrip-
ture, are most pressing in reference to them.

5. Here also we may see, that there is a church
power and authority, distinct from what is civil; and
censures to be inflicted by church officers on scandalous
persons, even where magistrates are heathen.

6. That delusion may come to a great height. As,
1. That a woman preacheth. 2. That the calleth
herself a prophetess. 3. That she seducest Christ’s
servants and they are seduced by her. 4. That this
is immediately after Christ, while John the beloved
disciple liveth. 5. That all these errors and abomina-
tions are covered with the title of mysteries and
depths. What may we expect in our times, when such
was the lot of those who lived at that time.

7. The writings even of the apostle John, could
not prevail so far as to make them renounce and
abandon them.

8. See here, how Christ accounteth of members
of a visible church: he slayeth such as were seduced
to adultery and error, His servants; and they were
servants still, who were seduced, and are afterward
threatened as Jezebel is. Whereby it appeareth that
these titles go more upon the relation, that church
members stand in, and the obligation that lieth on
them, than upon the qualifications that are always to
found in them.

9. Our Lord Jesus is no approver nor censurist
rejection from a true church, for the faults of
some members in it. Neither do faults in some mem-
bers, and defects in ministers and officers in executing
discipline, pollute the ordinances in themselves, or to
others, who are free of that guilt, and do not necessi-
tate a separation from such a church, or any ordi-
nance thereof. For this and the former epistle being

compared together, these things are clear, 1. That
there were gross members in the church, adulterers;
Nicolaitans, fudgers, &c. 2. That they were con-
vinced in church-communion; Thou haft them, and
sufferest them, clearly import this; for that angel no
otherways had them, but as church members under
his charge. 3. That this angel unfaithfully permitted
them to continue church members. And therefore
is reproved.

Yet we conceive also, it is clear in matter of fact;
1. That many who were free, continued in church-
fellowship with this angel, in that church, notwith-
standing thereof, so the words to you, and to the rest
as of that same membership, import it: being but one
church. And 2. That our Lord did not reproveth
them for their so continuing, even when he reproveth
the angel for his fault of being defective as to his cen-
suring of Jezebel. Yea, 3. That he approveth their
not separating, in his approving the general strain of
their carriage which could not otherways be approveth;
this being so obvious to view, if it had been a fault,
or if they had by it partaken with them in their li-
4. That our Lord warrandeth them to continue fo,
and layeth no burthen of separation from them, on
these who were honest. Only saith he, Hold fast
that which ye have already, till I come; that is, keep
yourselves according to the rule given unto you, and
according to your present practice.

Hence may be argued, 1. If where church mem-
ers are polluted, and suffereth notwithstanding by
church officers to remain in church communion, Christ
doeth not only, not condemn the clean for keeping
fellowship with them; but expressly requireth them
to continue as they did, then he alloweth not separa-
tion on that account, but the first is truth; he con-
demneth them not, but requireth them to hold fast
till he come, Erro, &c. 2. If Christ lay upon mem-
ers no other burden, but to keep themselves from
personal pollution, then he layeth not on them separa-
tion. And it must be a burden not of his laying
on. But the former is true; Hold fast that which ye
have already, Ergo, &c. 3. If separation thwart with
Christ’s direction to a church in that condition; then

394
395
it is not a duty. But if the honest members in Thyatira had separated, they had not held fast what they had already, but would have grieved to some new thing, and so have thwarted with the direction laid on them. Ego, &c. 4. If this direction containeth all their duty in reference to that defection, or these polluted members, then separation is not a duty in such a case, for it is inconsistent with it. But this containeth all. Otherways it would not befit their case; which to do, is Christ's scope. 2. It is not only negative, not condemning them for not separating, nor positive, giving them other directions inconsistent with it; but it is exclusive, I lay on you no other burden: this and no other. And though other particular duties may be alleged to be comprehended under this general, yet separation cannot be comprehended: because it is inconsistent with it, as appears: for if the thing that Christ calleth for from these who were honest in Thyatira, be such a thing as was consistent with their former practice of keeping church fellowship with such, then separation must be inconsistent with it. But the former is truth and appears thus. If Christ's direction to them be, to hold as they were and not to alter, then certainly it is consistent with their own former practice; but the words are plain, I lay on you, viz. that are clean, no other burden, but abstain from their way, and Hold fast. And certainly it would look very strange to say, that separation from them were commanded under that word, Hold fast, &c. And so that hold fast, were not be expounded, separate from that society, and yet that must be comprehended under this, or it is not a duty for such a case.

Befide, this duty which Christ commends to them is a duty which every one of them ought personally to go about though others did not. And if separation were included here, according to that ground; it would infuse many absurdities, as first, supposeth the minister to continue defective in his duty, are all the pure members to separate from him? Or, secondly, supposeth none but two or three to separate from all fellowship with the rest, and quit all publick ordinances yet no question, in such a case they were to hold fast what they had already. Thirdly, supposeth the pure members to continue in fellowship with their officers that were thus defective as formerly they have done; yet keeping themselves clean in their own stations, can it be thought that they disobey this direction of Christ, That which thou hast already, hold fast till I come? Or, is it not rather to be thought that they did more nearly conform to Christ's direction by so doing, than if they had withdrawn, and separated?

We may also argue against separation in such a case from this scripture, that if separation be another burden to Christ's Church than what he laid upon Thyatira, Pergamos, &c. In such a case when their officers were defective in executing discipline, Then it is not to be allowed in the church of Christ afterward in such like cases, but the former is true. Therefore, &c. If these two things be clear, this argument will be clear, 1. That though these churches were in such a case, yet there was no separation from the ordinances; for if they were, then there was no separation from the ordinances in practice or exercise amongst them upon that account; this we suppose, is clear from what is said. 2. If this also be clear that the pressing of separation upon such a ground, will prove a burden unto the people of God: then it will follow, that Christ doth not lay it on upon these churches, seeing he expressly signifieth that he intends to lay no other burden upon them, but to hold fast what they had already. It must therefore be an undebated thing to burden honest souls with the apprehension of being polluted from the personal faults of joint worshippers or communicants: for, first this putteh them to try all that they so keep fellowship with: and they cannot have peace except they have some confidence that others by their joynt communicat-
cator with them; in that case, the ordinance is polluted unto them, because they are polluted even to that believer that is in such a case. And can any have confidence that no natural person, or indisposed believer hath communicated with them? Neither will it remove this difficulty, to say, that men may have peace, if the offences or indispositions of others be not known unto them; for, 1. What if it be said, if trial had been made they might have been known? 2. Suppose it were not possible to know them; yet if the communicating of corrupt men did not only pollute the ordinance to themselves, but also pollute it in itself, that is make it want the nature of such an ordinance, as to others; then, whether it were known or not, the ordinance were no ordinance, because of its being polluted in something essential to the being thereof; otherwise, the same ordinance might be an ordinance to one who knew not of such scandals; and not be an ordinance of Christ to another who knew such things, though it may be, in his own particular case, no less gracious and lively than the other; for it cannot be our knowing that such a person is scandalous that communicates with us, except upon supposition that the being of such a thing did pollute the ordinance in itself before we knew the same.

3. If this ground were laid, it might be a scruple to a tender believer to communicate with himself; to say so: for he hath corruption in him; and it will be hard to say, that the corruption of others, will have more influence to pollute an ordinance to him, than his own can have; especially considering, that he is most thoroughly acquainted therewith: and it will be as hard to say, that Christ's call doth warrant a believer to communicate with peace, notwithstanding of his own seen corruptions; and yet that that same call will not warrant him to communicate with peace, if he be in his own duty and frame approveable, notwithstanding the corruptions of others. All which, being grievous burdens, cannot be supposed to agree with our Lord's scope in this place.

Hence also we may see that Christ doth not rigidly cast off churches for defects in discipline, and grossness of particular members, when in the main, the foundation is kept; and though the Lord never look on these but as faults, and as reprovable where they are, as we may see in many of these epistles; yet, to allow separation from a church, because of these, and to account it no church, is with him all one, as when he calleth his people from Babel, Chap. xviii.

We come now to the conclusion of the epistle which is contained in the 26, 27. 28. and 29. verses. Wherein 1. Some promises are laid down, in the first three verses and the common advertisement, is repeated in the last verse, as is usual in the rest of the epistles. The object of the promises, is the same, viz. the overcomer; only here; he is described by another property, which interpretheth that general, viz. he keepeth my works unto the end, that is one who in the sincere practice of religion hath ceased from his own works (as it is Heb. iv. 10.) and hath given up himself to live to me, as it is, 2 Cor. v. 15. that is to have my glory for his end, and my will for his rule: and doth continue to prosecute that end according to that rule, notwithstanding all difficulties to the end. This is the overcomer, and the person to whom all these promises of being admitted to heaven are made, and who may expect the same.

There are two excellent promises made to such a person in these words; 1. To him will I give power over the nations; which doth indeed speak out an excellent dominion, but no earthly dominion. For, 1. This promise is to be performed after the full victory. 2. All overcomers are not capable of temporal power over the nations. It imports then these two. First, An excellent dominion that the believer may expect. Secondly, A joint sharing in Christ's conquests over the nations. In which respect it is said, 1 Cor. vi. 7. 'They shall judge angels, and all the wicked in the day of judgment.' This dominion is two ways amplified, ver. 27. First, In respect of the absolute throne of over all the wicked. 'They shall be bruised with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.' This is a figurative expression, tending to set forth this, that though often believers are now oppressed by the wicked of the world; yet the day is coming when it shall be otherwise: believers shall not
only be free from their oppressions, but shall be as absolute kings, having dominion over them in the morning, as it is Psal. xix. 14. When the condition of the wicked in God's justice shall be most miserable. The second way how it is amplified, is, 'Even as I received of my father,' which respecteth 1. The thing given, they are made joint partakers of that which Christ receiveth. 2. It respecteth the security whereby it is given; and so I will give him power, even as I received of my father, imports that the believers dominion shall be no lesse unto him by Christ's gift, than Christ's dominion is sure unto him by his fathers conferring the same upon him.

The second promise is, 'And I will give him the morning star.' By the morning star, is understood Christ himself, as he himself expounds it, chap. xxii. verse 16. 'I am the bright and morning star,' saith it, I will give him myself. The first promise was much, but this is more. And though heaven be much when it is promised, yet this promise containeth more; for he that built the house is of more worth than the house.

Christ is called the morning star, for these reasons, 1. Because the morning star is most eminent among the stars, so is Christ among the sons, Cant. ii. 3. He hath an eminency beyond all other conations whatsoever. 2. He is called the morning star, because when he is bestowed upon any, the dark night of their former miserable and disconsolate condition is put to an end, as the day star putteth an end to the preceding night. 3. Christ brings in the day spring from on high unto the soul who receiveth him; and never was the day star so refreshful to a traveller wearied with the darknes of the night, as Christ will be to the wrestler, who is longing to have the day star arising in his heart, 2 Pet. i. 19. And although these be hints, to shadow out the excellency of Christ, yet the truth is, neither day star, nor sun, nor moon, nor all the stars put together, can sufficiently resemble his worth and lovely beauty, and refreshful seasonableness to a soul, when he manifests himself to it.

If it be asked, why Christ promiseth to give himself to the overcomer, and under that name? Answ. It is for these reasons, 1. Because there is no other thing that can be absolutely satisfying to the believer, but Christ himself. And seeing Christ aimeth at the satisfaction of the believer, this glorifieth his grace and love, that he will for that end bestow himself upon them. 2. It is to teach them where to expect their happiness when this life is ended, and so where to seek it while they are here. This not to be had in, and amongst creatures, but is to be sought and looked for in Christ Jesus himself. 3. It is done to comfort and encourage the believer. For when Christ bestoweth himself upon him, what will he not else communicate to him that may be for his good? As the apostle reasoneth to this purpose, Rom. viii. 32. Believers may be encouraged to wrestle a while; this night will have an end, and the day star will arise, after which there shall be no more night, nor darkness, nor fun to give light, but the Lord God shall enlighten them, and the lamb himself shall be a light unto them, for holding forth of this consolation, is Christ expressed by this name in this promise.

In the 29. verse, the epistle cloeth with the common advertisement, He that hath an ear, to hear, &c. Which is not done for the fashion, but is the Lord's commending of what hath been said unto the consciences of the hearers, because what is said, is said by the spirit to the churches, and it becometh well these who have ears to hear, what was said by him.

---

**LECTURE I.**

**CHAP. III.**

Ver. 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write these things, saying that he hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; 1 I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. For I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent: if therefore thou shalt not
watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The fifth epistle, directed to the church in Sardis. It Hath the division that is common to the rest, viz. there is, First, An inscription, verse 1. Secondly, The body of the epistle, verses 2, 3, and 4. And Thirdly, A conclusion, verses 5 and 6.

The party unto whom it is directed, is the angel of the church of Sardis; this was spoken of, chap. i. 11. It was once the seat of the rich king Ceresus, abounding in much wealth, and also in much sin and profanity, yet Christ by his gospel begetteth a church in this place. Although it be directed in common to ministers and people, and for that end doth contain what respecteth the church in common, yet we conceive it doth especially and principally relate to the case of the minister, and to the people as joined and agreeing with him in that dead condition, as the exposition thereof will clear.

The person from whom the epistle is sent, is set forth by two titles, First, He hath the seven spirits of God. This was expounded, chap. i. 4. and it is repeated, chap. iv. v. and vi. By these seven spirits are understood the Holy Ghost in his several gifts, graces and operations. Christ is said to have the, because he hath committed unto him the dispensing of these gifts and graces of the Spirit to the church, and doth jointly with the Father, send the Holy Ghost the comforter for the good of his people, as is clear from John xiv. xvi. xvii. and chap. xvi. 7, 8, &c. and many other places. He taketh this title in this place, because having to do with a dead minister and people, he would both make them know what must quicken them, viz.

the spirit, and how they may attain to the same, viz. by him. It is no little part of Christ's glory, nor of the believers consolation, that Christ hath the dispensing of life and sin and life and sin unto his people. The second title is, Which hath the seven stars. This is in part taken out of chap. i. verse 16, where Christ is described as having in his hand seven stars.

By stars here are under flood ministers, as chap. i. verse 20, is clear. Christ is laid here to have them, as he hath the seven spirits. Which doth import, 1. His special interest in, and title to ministers; he hath a peculiar right to the church, beside what he hath to the world; yet hath he a more peculiar right to the ministers, as having their commission from him and dependance on him, in a more special manner. Therefore Psal. lxviii. 18. He is said after his ascension peculiarly to have received gifts for men, or in the man, and yet these gifts are no other but the gifts of apostles, pastors and teachers, &c. which he again giveth to his church, as is clear from Ephes. iv. 8 and 11. Secondly, This title importeth Christ's absolute sovereignty over his ministers in a special manner, for he hath them. And so they being his, he may dispose of them at his pleasure, for furthering of them in his work if they be faithful, and for blasting of them if they be otherwise. Thirdly, It points at Christ's care of his ministers, who doth in a special manner keep and preserve these stars, as something that is much esteemed of by him. Christ taketh this title unto himself in this epistle, 1. That he may provoke this lifeless angel, to seek life in him, seeing he who had the seven stars, had also the seven spirits, and so especially they, viz. his ministers might expect to be made lively by him, if he were improved by them, and so this title doth back the directions that follow. 2. It is also to let them know that are ministers, that though they be in an eminent place, yet they are subject to Christ who is their sovereign, and so ought to be dependent on him, otherwise they are liable to his trial and censure, who can dispose of them as he will. And so this title addeth weight to the threatening that is contained, verse 3.
The body of the epistle followeth in the close of the first verse, with the 2, 3, and 4. We may take it up in these: four, First, The Lord discovereth the hypocrisy and deadness of this minister and church, verse 1. Secondly he propoeth many directions as remedies fit for their recovery. Thirdly, He preseth the practice of these directions by several weighty reaons and threatenings; and these two are intermixed; verse 2, 3. Fourthly, There is a qualification of this charge, and consolation in reference to some members that were free from this challenge, and this is held forth, verse 4.

The case of this minister and church, is in two expressions, 1. Setting out what they were thought of by others. 2. Expressing what indeed they were before God. Before others they had a name that were living, that is, they were thought to be in some good and lively condition more than ordinary, and were thought by others about them to be a church, in better condition than other churches. For to have a name, doth import the estate of some certain in her which was not ordinary, yet fayeth the Lord, notwithstanding of that name they were dead, that is, very unsusutable to that they were esteemed to be, and in respect thereof indeed but spiritually dead. By this deadness we understand, First, A simple deadness in hypocrisy, and to it is to be understood, there are but many of you mere hypocrites, although you have a fair name. Secondly, Deadness may be understood comparatively that is, either in respect of what they seemed to be, and were thought to be on others, or what they ought to have been, or, in respect of what sometimes they had been. And so even believers may be thus charged, who having some life, yet in these respects were defective. And by considering what is said, verse 2, where somethings ready to die, are spoken of, it will appear that this charge is so to be applied in reference to declining believers in part, as to others who were altogether hypocrites. It is like this church hath been free of gross errors, for there is no mention of the Nicolaitans in the fame as in other churches. It is like also there hath been no inward division amongst themselves, or gross profanity of practice or

such like. For there is no mention of such in the re-proof, nor would such have stood with an eminent name; but on the contrary, it is like they had ordinances in frequency in purity, the minister had gifts in some eminency, external subjection was given to the ordinances, and they were waited upon; and it may be, there was zeal in outward reformation, as was in Ephesus. Upon these and the like grounds they came to be esteemed of by others as being in an excellent frame, the preachers were thought excellent preachers and no church thought more happy than the church of Sardis, and it is like it was counted a blessed thing to live in such a place; and it may that the minister and people had their own too great estate of themselves, as being privileged beyond others, because they were free both of the errors in doctrine, defects in discipline, and also the crosses and trials which we find other churches lying under. Whereupon they are said to have a name, and yet they were indeed and before the Lord, in the respects formerly mentioned, dead and unanswerable to that name: which indeed is a sad charge and a most dangerous condition. Whence we may observe that a church or minister, or a particular person, may have a great estate from others, and also have much estate of themselves, and have some seeming grounds for the fame; and yet either totally or in part, and comparatively, be but dead and lifeless, and in no such estimation before God. This may make all, both ministers and people to tremble, and to beware of being pleased with frothy and empty names, which oftentimes are found to be exceeding light before God.

It may be enquired on this occasion, 1. As to a private person, what ground one may have to account himself living, when yet indeed he may be dead? For Answer, We conceive that the Lord in his wisdom hath made a peremptory deiction of this question to be impossible, viz. how great a length an hypocrite may go, and yet be still in the state of hypocrisy: as also of that other, viz. how far a believer may decline in the estate of grace and yet continue to be a believer? because the deciding of these, as to the max}
num or minimum quod fier, doth not tend to edification.

And he would have his people keeping a distance even from the borders and marches of these things in their practices. Yet we conceive, that it is clear from scripture, that a hypocrite may have very many things that may be the occasion of a name to him, and yet really he may be still unfound. We may for example, instance them in these particulars. 1. If we look to negatives, they may be justly chargeable with nothing before men, either as to omissions or commissions; and in this respect Paul was blameless, even while a Pharisee, Phil. iii. 6. If we look to the common gifts of the spirit, which come under that name of gratia gratia data, they may come a great length here, as to speak with tongues to understand all mysteries, to have all knowledge, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. And in this respect they may preach well, write well, dispute well; yea even to the edification of others; and as to the exercising of a gift pray well also. And no question, Judas and others whom the Lord will not own for his in the day of judgment, were eminent in all these, as they were for casting out devils and the working of miracles. 2. If we will look to the performance of external duties, it will be found they come a great length in this respect. That Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. 12. prayed and fasted often, and gave tithes of all; and that man, Matth. xix. 20. said 'All these things did I keep from my youth.' Which might be true, as to the outward performance of duties, and so as they understood them, which is also confirmed from the example of Paul. 3. If we look into the spiritual meaning of the law, as it doth oblige the inward man to a conformity thereto, we will find that hypocrites may go a great length even in that. Thus we find a discreet scribe, Mark xii. 32, 33. acknowledging that to love the Lord with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, with all the strength, and love his neighbour as himself, is more than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices. This is indeed much, to prefer internal moral duties, to external ceremonial performances, and is more than usually was acknowledged amongst them; for which saith the Lord layeth in the next word, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God,' yet he intimateth he was not in the kingdom of God, and to not really found notwithstanding. 4. They will sometimes have seeming fruits, even as to suffering, although no hypocrite can have a sincere end therein, yet it is clear that many of them may suffer many things materially for the truth of Christ. The apostle 1 Cor. xiii. supposeth that one may give his body to be burnt and yet want love, and Gal. iii. 4. he supposeth that there may be much suffering in vain. And certainly experience in all ages of the church, hath made this appear to be truth. If we look further in reference to gospel duties, there may be fair flourishing in this respect also, as first convictions of sin, may be carried on a great length; Saul was often brought to say, I have sinned; Felix trembled while Paul preacheth to him, Acts xxv. 25. And even Simon Magus is brought to deliberate the help of Peter's prayers, as being convinced of his hazard, Acts viii. 24. Secondly, This conviction may be followed with something like repentance, and sorrow for the committing of sin, thus even Ahab humblyth himself, 1 Kings xxi. 27. 29. and those that are mentioned, Psal. lxxviii. 34 &c. did seek and enquire after him who flew them. And certainly there wants not sorrow and bitterness in Judas his repentance, Matth. xxvi. 3. &c. when he did really rue what he had done. Thirdly, There may be also something like faith, whereby one may in part be brought to believe the general truths of the gospel concerning Christ, &c. and to his own apprehension be persuade him self, that he hath received him; and so carry within himself as if indeed there were ground to expect what is promised in him. This is clear also, from the many instances of historical and temporal faith, that are recorded in scripture. And in this respect it is laid of the temporary believer, That anone he received the word with joy, and goeth forth as if all were well. Thus Agrippa is by the force of the word almost persuaded to be a Christian, Acts xxvi. 28. and I Tim. v. 8. 1. and 2. some are laid to call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves on the Lord God of Israel, which suppofeth an exercise faith, at least in their account and yet, it was not done in
truth and righteousness. In the seventh place we may infallite it in the common operations of the spirit on the affections within; we have already hinted something of convictions of sin, of fear, of wrath, and destruction for the soul, which certainly must affect many hypocrites, also of grief and worldly sorrow, which may seize upon such, and in an high degree, who yet may have nothing of God in them. Upon the other side, there may be much of it also in respect of the flashes of joy, tenderer of meltings of heart which hypocrites may have at one time, either in some public ordinances, or possibly in secret or otherwise more than at other times, and yet there be nothing but the common operations of the spirit, such as was in many of John’s hearers, who for a season rejoiced in his light, Job v. 35. And in the temporary believer, as formerly cited; for the Lord that displeneth the common gifts of the spirit as he pleaseth, doth also displace of these common effects of the spirit’s operation, such as liberty, fear, joy, sorrow, and the like, according to his sovereign pleasure, without respect to the eternal state, good or bad of the person on whom he bestoweth them. Now seeing these things and such like may be where yet sincerity is not, what wonder is there that a person be said to have a name by others, or be thought to have reality by himself, when yet indeed there is nothing but deadness? Often times men that are ordinarily admirers of themselves and what is in themselves, are brought to think highly of themselves, and of the sincerity of their own state, and with great persuasion, upon less grounds than these that are laid down, as we will find in the epistle to Laodicea.

If it be asked, supposing such things to be, What can further be defective to reality?

Answ. To say no more, all these things may be and yet there may be defect in these three, which are simply necessary for the differencing of a sincere person from a hypocrite. First, There may be a want of the new nature, and the person yet not be born, again as it is, Job iii. 3. Secondly, All these may be and yet the person not be brought really to deny his own righteousness, and positively to receive Christ offered in the gospel, and rest upon him for the attaining of life through his righteousness and satisfaction although they may be convinced that it is good to do it, and although they may think they have done it, being blinded by their own pride, and although they may somehow comfort themselves as if they had done it in this presumptuous dream, yet really it is never done. For so they could not only but be saved, because of the immutable terms of God’s covenant, which say, ‘Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.’ Thirdly, All these things may be, when yet there is a defect in the nature of the inward duties to say so, and in the manner of performing what is outward, that is, they may be both without the qualifications required to the constituting of sincerity and sincere acts spoken to, chap. ii. So that till these fruits are but fruits of the old tree and flesh, and are not brought forth by faith in Jesus Christ without which nothing can be pleasing to God, neither is his glory singly aimed at in them, &c. without which the most glaring fruits, will be but rotten before the Lord.

Again secondly, considering this, Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead with respect to the minister; it may be enquired, 1. What kind of minister this is, who may be said to have a name that he liveth, and is dead. 2. What may be the reasons that make even ministers to rest satisfied in the applause of others, and in such things as may gain an approbation before men without that which may make him approvable before God?

To the first, we say, that in the describing of such a minister, we must, 1. Look to some things which he hath, that give the ground of his having a name. And 2. To something which he hath not the want thereof, proveth him to have no more but a name. First then, A minister may be in his particular condition such an one as was formerly described with many commendable things in his outward carriage. Secondly, He may have some good measure of gifts, and a pleasing quickness and dexterity in preaching and managing other duties that belong to his calling. This gift seemed was in many church officers at Corinth, made
them appear exceeding eminent. Thirdly, He may
have a frequency, and accurate formality in the dis-
charge of all duties as bearing forth much diligence
and faithfulness in the discharge of them with a seem-
ing fervor and earnestness. It is like that those who
reached Christ out of envy, Philip. i. 15. wanted
not a good measure of this. Fourthly, He may have
a great plentifulness and a familiar kind of humanity
and deference to speak in his conversation with oth-
ers; which often tendeth to gain applause from them
as if it were a special sign of humanity, and an evi-
dence of love and respect, whereby men, oftentimes
are engaged to esteem of such a minister, more upon
such an account, viz. as being particularly friendly
to them than for their works fake, as the word is, 1 Thess.
v. 13. It is like that these false teachers that got such
a name, as who but they in Corinth and Galatia, had
much of this way of insinuation. And also these men-
tioned, Philip. i. cannot well be thought to be free
in this respect, seeing they preached Christ out of en-
vy and strife, verse 15. as minding to gain a name
thereby beyond Paul. Fifthly, Such a minister may
also have seeming countenance in his ministry with
authority and respect amongst his people, and seem-
ing countenance and fruit in outward things, as in
the bearing down of error, the suppressing of gross
scandals and outbursts, and the bringing of his people
to some conformity in public and private duties. In
which respect his congregation may be more formal
than many others. Upon these and such like considera-
tions a minister may have a name of a very em-
inent and excellent minister, and yet there may be
much unobservance in two respects. 1. As to his own
personal condition, he may be without life, or at the
best without liveliness in any suitable degree. 2. As
to his public ministry, he may be in many things
defective, as to the sincerity of his practice before God
even when he appeareth to be found and diligent be-
fore men, as it is here, verse 2. 'I have not found
thy works perfect before God.' Where we shall con-
der this more particularly. And do therefore now
leave this first question.

The second question is, What may make a minister

Rev. III. 2-4 (411.)

be ready to please himself in the having of gifts, and
a name before others, when yet he may be so faulty
before God?

Answ. The deceits of men's hearts are very deep:
And although it be exceedingly to be regretted, that
ministers should fall in this evil of resting in the ap-
plause of others, when in the mean time they want
God's approbation in a great part at least; yet it can-
not be denied to be a truth: and what is written to
the angels of Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea, both
abundantly confirm the same: and these reasons may
be given thereof; 1. Because oftentimes ministers, es-
specially such ministers as aim two much at the pleasing
of men, and at the gaining of respect and applause
amongst them; this may be a temptation to the most
fancier, but it is really that which unfaithful men are
swayed with, as it is clear, Philip. ii. 21. And there-
fore when what they principally design, is attained
it is no wonder that they rest therein. 2. Of all men in
the world, ministers are most obnoxious to this tem-
ination of vanity and seeking approbation from others
because most, of their appearances are in publick be-
fore others, and that in the exercise of some gift of the
mind, which is supposed to hold forth the inward
worth of a person more than any other thing. Now,
when this meeteth with applause, it holdeth out a
peoples esteemitation of such a person's worth, which
hath a great subtility in its pleasing and tickling of him,
and so is ready to incline him to rest satisfied therein.
3. Many ministers are not travelling in birth to beget
fouls, and to have success so to the salvation of many,
as well as outward fruits; but are at set studing to
exoner themselves as having been diligent in their
duty. Now when such meet with applause from others
it is interpreted by them, as some confirmation of
their diligence, and seal of their exoneration in their
ministry: for men being naturally willing to absolve
themselves are easily induced to admit of any testi-
mony which may seem to confirm their own integrity.
4. Oftentimes ministers take more pains in external
duties of their ministry that are obvious to the view
of others, than they do in the inward secret duties
of Christianity upon their own hearts, such as fell.
examination, the making of their own calling and election sure, the keeping of themselves in the love of God, the exercising of faith, repentance, &c. whereby it cometh to pass, that often that may be their regret which is spoken. Song i. 6. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept. And from this it is, that though their condition be exceeding defective before God; yet, they being unacquainted therewith, cannot be affected with the same. And no question, many ministers have much carnal quietness in their ministry, who could not entertain the same, if they knew how things were with them before God. 5. This evil also is incident to ministers and hath great influence upon the other, that their having such gifts, seeming fruits and approbation before others, is oftentimes made use of to counterbalance, and bear down any challenge that may arise concerning their own unfoundness, as if all these were testimonies to the contrary: and so as oftentimes outward posterity doth, through mens corruption, bear down challenges in some private persons, which adversary doth waken up in others, so an outward prosperous ministry, to say so, doth often another many challenges of a man's inward unfoundness, which readily had been more taken notice of, had there not been such gifts, outward countenance in external duties, and approbation from others. Hence we see, that as often the most tender christian is under the cross, so it is the most lively minister who laboureth most under the sense of his own insufficiency and short-comings in gifts; who hath most grofs out-breakings in errors, and profanitie weighing him amongst his people; who meeteth with most disrepect, and manifest disappointments among the people, and fuch like; these are often blessed of God; to keep such a person lively, when others without thee, do fit up and forget themselves: O but ministers that have a name, and some seeming countenance in the exercise of their gifts, great applause and approbation amongst the people, had need to be humble and watchful, lest they be liable to this charge. Thou haft a name that thou livest but art dead, and no question many inadvertently are slain by such things themselves, when they preach to others.

We come now to the second thing in the body of the epistle, which is the directions that the Lord giveth both to ministers and people, for the recovering of them out of that condition, verse 2, 3. And because the reasons whereby he preserveth these directions, are intermixed, we shall speak to both in order as they lie. The directions are of two sorts. The first respecteth their present duty, and their carriage for the time to come, in reference to what might occur; the other respecteth what was past, and their carriage in reference to that. The first is in the 2. verse, comprehended in two directions; both which imply their former guiltiness. The first is, be watchful: which looketh both to watchfulness in the private duties of Christianitie, and also to a more watchful sympathizing manner of going about the duties of the ministry: Which implieth that whatever name they had before others, that yet really there was much deadness and untendereness in both these respects before God. The second direction is, And strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die: by things that remain, and are ready to die, may be understood, 1. Some remainders of the work of God in some that were honest, which being through carelessness and security exceedingly weakened and brought very low, were in hazard to die out, if not prevented: this respecteth especially these members who had declined from some what which once they had been at. And although, no question, there were many in that church who never had any thing; yet it is no marvel that the Lord mould his directions with a special reference to such as had some honesty in them. 2. These words may be understood as peculiarly spoken to the minister; and so the things that remain, &c. are some little stirrings amongst the people as the fruits of his ministry, which now are like to die out, because of his formal way of carrying of himself in his duty: or, it may look to the few honest ones, which were among them who were not fed and nourished by him in their spiritual conditions, and so were like to starve, even when he was flourishing in the exercise of his gifts to the admiration of others. The direction, And strengthen the things that remain, must be expounded.
with respect to both these: and so with respect to
the first, it is faith of the that ever had anything of
God, and now have taken a hand, had need warmly
and tenderly to nourish and confirm that which is be-
hind; that by the exercise of tenderness, prayer, re-
pentance, and other things that belong to the life of
religion, that spunk may be kept from dying out.
With respect to the second, viz. The minister, it put-
teth him to a more careful, painful, and sympathizing
way of looking to the flock, and feeding them ac-
ccording to their several tempers, with what might be
solid, and nourishing to them, left the blossoms of fruits
which he had in his ministrance should even, and be
blasted. And thus he is reproved for taking pains
possibly in fitting his sermons to the taintleness of
some curious and vain hearers, by the bringing forth
of high notions and great words, whereby he himself
might be accounted a great man; and that yet in the
mean time there was no care had to provide food or
physick for hungry and sick souls.

This part of the directions is backed by two argu-
ments. The first is implied in these words, That are
ready to die: which is in sum, yet that are Chris-
tians be not diligent and serious; and ye that are minis-
ters, be not watchful and faithful; ye that are private
Christians, are in hazard to have any beginnings that
are in you extinguished which may be understood
respectively, both of saving and common firings;
and ye that are ministers may have your ministrity
blasted, if these directions be not followed. This
do not imply any uncertainty of the preferring of
the truly Godly; but doth set out, first, The connexion
which God hath made between lives and diligence.
And secondly it showeth how God sometimes useth
to stir up insecure believers, viz. by giving and bles-
ting them some sharp warnings.

The second way by which he presseth these direc-
tions is more expressly set down in the end of verse
2. For I have not found thy works perfect before
God: which is, in a word, whatever men think of
them as before them; yet I having tried them accord-
ing as they are before God, and in his sight, who
feeth further than men, have not found them to be
perfect before him. This word in the Greek is
peitieron, a word that is most ordinarily used in
reference to ministers and seteth forth integrity and
sincerity in their ministrty, when they fulfill or make
full proof of their ministrty, as it is, 2 Tim. iv. 5,
or when they fully preach the gospel of Christ, as it
is rendered, Rom. xv. 19, and in other places. There-
fore here it would seem especially to relate to the
defects of the minister even when he went about his
ministerial duties. And it importeth, 1. That minister's
ministerial duties ought to be perfect before God. 2.
That the Lord Jesus will especially take notice of
them and their ministerial duties. 3. It importeth
this, that there are many ministers, who are very fair in their outward ministerial carriage before
others, and cannot be liable to any charge before men,
that yet, when Christ cometh to try them, and reckon
with them, will be found exceeding defective before
God. And on this occasion it is fit to consider; 1.
what is necessarily requisite, according to this form of
speech, that a minister's works may be perfect before
God. 2. What maketh a minister, that may be abounding
in external labours, yet to be liable to this charge
that his works are not perfect before God. And this
will clear a question, which we left imperfect in the
first verse, and not so particularly answere-

To the first, that a minister's works may be perfect
before God: beside the frequency of them, and what
may also be in his other personal carriage, these things
will be found to be required by virtue of this ex-
pression; 1. That in publick ministerial duties, a man
be actuated out of zeal to the glory of God, and affec-
tion to the souls of those he preacheth to: This was Paul's
practice in his fulfilling of his ministry, Col. i. 25, where
the same word is compared with what goeth im-
mediately before, and what followeth after. And this
is the great commendation of Timothy beyond others,
Philip. ii. 20, that he naturally cared for the state
of the people; that is, he purposed their edification, as
a mother will seek the safety and good of her own child;
this is a qualification of an high price before God, with
out which, no diligence will be esteemed of. 2. That a
minister's ministerial duties be thus perfect, it is requisite that in them he extend himself according to his ability to the utmost for the people's edification: That is to make full proof of the ministry, 2 Tim. iv. 7: when nothing is left unsaid, which may put a man's gifts, time, ability, &c. to the utmost, for the people's good; so that his design is seriously to improve all for that end. 3. There must not only be diligence and faithfulnefs in external duties; but there must also be a suitableness to God's mind, in the end, motives, and manner of performing these duties and also tenderness and faithfulnefs in the performing of such duties as are not obvious to men; viz. praying for the people, sympathizing with them in straits, grieving when they are wounded, and the like, which we will find frequent in the practice of Paul. Now, when a minister contenteth himself with the performing of such duties as are before men, and maketh no confidence of these, it looketh as if he aimed rather to be approved of men, than of God; and therefore his works cannot be said to be perfect before him. And to this belongeth a minister's carrying off himself in preaching, admonition and every duty as in the sight of God, 2 Cor. ii. 17: for we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. 4. This perfection taketh in an earnestness and universality in all the duties of the ministry, and that in reference to all times and persons; so the minister must reprove, threaten, and carry displeasing messages, as well as instruct, comfort, and preach that which may be more pleasing. He must do this also in reference to great men, as well as to these who are mean, as well to these whom he loveth, and who loveth him, as to others: and so he must be searching the secret faults of professors, viz. their security, pride, hypocrisy, &c. as well as the gross outbreakings of others. It is like that this angel was defective in this respect, and searched not in his doctrine so as to make discovery of the hidden hypocrisy and corruption of hearts; and that he did not faithfully rip up their wounds, possibly fearing to displease them: for oftentimes, he that seeketh to heal the wounds most smoothly, gaineth most applause from others. Now where there is defect in these, no ministerial duties can ever be accounted perfect before God. When Paul is putting Timothy to make perfect, or, full proof of his ministry, 2 Tim. iv. he thus proceedeth, verfe 2: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering, and doctrine. And so he describeth himself to the same purpose, Col. i. 28, 29. Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

From this now it will be easy to answer to the second, viz. what defects in ministerial duties may make them not to be accounted perfect before God; for, if the former four be necessary to make such works then when there is defect in these or any of these, a minister's works cannot but be found imperfect: and therefore we shall say not more of it.

The second sort of directions that come way relate to their former carriage, as well as to their present duties, are set down, verfe 3. In them the Lord draweth them back to consider the time of their espousals, as it were, and the terms upon which they contracted together what he promised to them, and what they received off his hand, when the word came amongst them; that now themselves may see if they have been answerable to such engagements and resolutions; and if there be not reason to repent of their declinings. In general, this direction putteth them to a back-search of themselves: which is an excellent mean of recovery, either, of minister, or of people, who have declined, as was of minister, or of people, who have declined, as was

Rejo...
eing in that light for a seafon; but afterward becoming carnal and secure. And if there was any honesty it was then more lively in exercise, than it continued to be thereafter: therefore saith the Lord, consider what is become of that now, and if the present deadness be answerable to that tenderness; and so upon that consideration, be provoked to study more liveliness. The second word, How thou hast heard, this is almost the same with the former, and looketh to the terms which God propounded to them, when he took them to be a church, and what was their purpose when they submitted thereunto. As if the Lord had said, Did I propose to you only to take on a name without reality? Or did ye engage only to be professors in shew, and not to be throughly sincere? See then how this condition of yours answereth my proposal, and your engagement. The third word is, And hold fast, which is not to be understood, as if he were well pleased with their condition, as in the epistles to Thyatira and Philadelphia, because here he giveth them many directions and burdens to lay so, besides this which he doth not in the other two epistles. But it doth imply these two, 1. A necessity of holding fast the little thing that was, lest they should run to the extremity of declining ere long. 2. It respecteth what they had received and heard. And so the meaning is, that they would grip faster to hold that than formerly they had done. Under these directions we may gather what has been their guiltiness, and the steps by which they have come to such an height in this hypocrisy and declining. The last word is, Repent, which is a general cure for all evils, and is of special use, for the preventing and removing of such inward evils, as declining from any good condition, security, presumption, and hypocrisy, as we may see through all these epistles. For readily it cannot be evil with the spiritual frame of a Christian, when repentance is in exercise, and it cannot be well when it is otherwise. But of this we shall say no more now.

The third thing in the body of this epistle, viz. the way how the Lord preseth these exhortations in this verse, is by subjoining a sharp threatening, If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief and thou shalt not know. This threatening is general, but it is the more comprehensive and sharp, if we consider these two. 1. That when he saith, He will come, etc., he doth not signify any particular stroke he will bring on them, whereby they may gather, that there is no particular threatening, but it may be comprehended under this general. And so it may be, I will come unto thee and remove thy candlestick, or fight against thee with the sword of my mouth; or call thee and thy people some extraordinary way, to a reckoning and such like. The sin of hypocrisy, especially in a minister, is a most dreadful sin, and they who are guilty thereof are in a most dreadful condition; for their doom is black, and God may call therein all the threatenings that are in this book, as it is Deut. xxvi. 29 and Rev. xxi. 18. And they themselves cannot tell how many evils they are liable unto at Christ's coming upon them. 2. If we consider, that this coming of Christ's is no friendly coming to them; but as the coming of an enemy upon them, and that in some terrible manner, suddenly and unexpectedly surprizing them. And so it preseth them to the present exercise of repentance, because the coming of the Lord would be dreadful unto them in that condition; and yet it was hard to know how suddenly they might be surprized by the same.

The fourth thing in the body of this epistle, is the consolation laid down in reference to the handful that had some life. For if they were but as two or three on the tops of the utmost branches, the Lord will not neglect them. This consolation, verse 4, hath three parts. 1. The persons are described to whom it is sent. 2. The consolation is laid down in a promise. 3. The reason is given, why the Lord putteth this difference betwixt them and others. The persons are several ways described; 1. They are said to be some names; this is according to the scripture phrase, to shew their eminency and excellency beyond others, who by their integrity had as it were procured themselves a name in Christ's account. So this phrase is understood, Acts i. 15. viz. not only it signifieth some persons simply, but some persons that are eminent.
2. They are even in Sardis: and this commends their honesty, that had kept somewhat lively, even where minifter and people were dead. 3. They are a few names; which theveth that in comparison with the multitude of this church, there were but few sincere believers, at leaft in a lively condition although outward things looked exceeding fair, which also heightens their commendation. 4. In the description, it is faid, Thou haft, relating to the angel: which faitheth that a lifeles fminifter may have some lively persons under his charge, and yet he is little to be thanked for it. We conceive that this doth not only respect the title which he hath, to all that are members, but it seemeth to relate to a peculiar interest in these few besides others, and fo they might be faid to be his, as being begotten by his minifter. In which respect, he could not be faid to have thefe who had no sincerity at all. 5. They are defcribed by this, That they have not defiled their garments. Which relateth not only to purity in outward practice; for it is like that was not fo rare a thing in Sardis, but especially it relateth to their inward liveliness and freedom from those evils, especially of sccurity, formalitv, declining, hypocrisy, and such like that are common in the place. And thus to keep the garments, is often taken universally, as respecting man's inward condition, as well as that that is outward, and particularly, chap xvi. verse 15.

The confolation itfelf is in this promife. They fhall walk with me in white. Which hath a twofold conflation in it. 1. That they fhall walk with Christ, and to enjoy his company, and be made happy objectively, by the possessing of his presence. 2. That in the enjoying of Christ's company, they fhall be cloathed with white. Which, we take to hold forth the unconceivable glory which fhall be put upon the souls, and even the bodies also of believers, when they fhall be rafed in glory, and bear the image of the heavenly, &c. 1 Cor. xv. and fhall be conformed to Christ's glorious body. Phil. iii. 21. and fhall shine as the fun in forrow, Mat. xiii. 43. It is called white, 1. Because then there fhall be no spot among the all the congregation of the first born. 2. When Christ is on his conquest, chap, xix. he appeareth in white. And in this place it is to shew forth the believers absolute victory over all difficulties and enemies. When Christ was transfigured, his garments did shine, fo fayeth he here, that the believer, who keepeth himself pure, fhall walk in Christ's livery, and as it were he fhall give them new cloaths like unto his own; thus they fhall be subjectively happy.

The reason subjoined is in these words, For they are worthy. We may take up worthines under several confiderations. As Firft, When there is suppoft to be in proper justice a condivinity between the deserving of the person, and the thing that is bestowed upon him; As when a workman is laid to be worthy of his wages, speaking as amongst men. In this respect Scotus and many of the schoolmen that follow him, deny that men can merit any thing before God. Because there is such a distance between God and creatures, that no creature can make God his debtor, without respect to his own free engagement and promif; and also because there is no due proportionable blendens between the great happiness of eternal life, and what men can do to procure the fame. This doctrine is much oppofed by the generality of the Schoolmen, and later Jefuites, as having these absurdities with it. 1. That it destroyeth all proper merit. 2. That it layeth, there is no condivinity in good works themselves, without respect to God's promife; whereas they fay, such and such works had been condignly meritorious, although there had never been such a promife. 3. They fay it is all one with the heretics opinion, and such like of which possibly we may fay a word some other where, if the Lord will. Yet this firit aception of worthines or merit, cannot be admitted here. Because, 1. It contrains the end of Christ's giving this promife, which is to express the freenes of his grace in taking notice of such, and bestowing such an excelf priviledge on them beyond their deserving. 2. It is contrary to what is implied in the promife, For if they had absolute perfection for the time so as to merit to be thus dealt with, then it would suppoft that they did already walk in white, and were simply free of all blots; whereas Christ doth difference their future happy condition from what they had for the time in this
conceived in these terms, so as it may carry in it a
suitableness to their present honest condition. And
the Lord often useth this expression both in his pro-
mise and threatenings when he intendeth not to shew
what is due in strict justice, but only that there is and
will be a suitableness and proportionableness between
men's carriage and his dealing with them, as we will
after find, chap. xvi. 15, 16. And this we rest in, as
the meaning of the place, and as most clear from the
scope thereof.

The conclusion followeth: wherein, 1. There are
some encouragements given to the overcomer, ver. 5.
And then the common advertisement, ver. 6. which
is in all the other epistles. There are three promises
made to the overcomer. The first is, The same shal
be clothed in white raiment. Which is, upon the matter,
that fame which was promised to these few sincere mem-
ers that were in Sardis; and is here proposed to
shew, that not only these in Sardis, but all that shall
faithfully wrestle and overcome, shall be made partak-
ers of that excellent privilege formerly mentioned.
And yet I suppose none can say that all that shall be
cloathed in white, and admitted to heaven, are in
strict and proper justice worthy of the fame; yet up-
on the former popish principles, this will follow, if so
be the proper worthiness of these in Sardis, had been
the thing that procured this privilege unto them, viz.
to walk in white.

The second promise is, And I will not blot his name
out of the book of life. The book of life is frequent-
ly mentioned in this prophecy: and God willing we
may take occasion to speak somewhat of it chap. 20.

Only now we say, that there are four books figura-
tively attributed to God (to mention no more) for
God hath neither need nor use of books; but after
the manner of men for helping us to take up his mind,
he thus expresseth himself. First, There is a book
that is more general, and comprehendid his decrees,
which, in his ordinary providence, he executeth in
the world from time to time. In this respect, all his
works are laid to be known to him from the begin-
ing, as he had had a particular roll of them all. And
it is with respect to this, that David (Psal. cxxxix 16.)

respect, that although they wanted not their own
defects, albeit they were sincere, and free of the
faults that others were lying under, yet wanted they
not all spots; but at that time when this promise should
be fulfilled, these spots should be washed away that
they should walk fully, in white. Secondly, Worth
or merit, is sometimes taken as it respecteth God's
grace, and not his justice. Thus a believing sinner may
be said to be worthy, because of Christ's availability,
and to have heaven bestowed upon him in God's right-
eousness and faithfulness. 1. Because in Christ he is
accepted as worthy: and so they may be said to be worthy
in him, as they are just and righteous in him, that is,
through the imputation of Christ's worth and righte-
one. unto them: for though it be said here, that
they are worthy, yet it is not said that they are worthy
in themselves. 2. In this respect believers may be
said to be worthy, because God hath freely con-
descended to promise such things unto them: and there-
fore to speak so according to the terms of the law of
grace, they may expect and claim the performance of
such promises from the righteous judge, who cannot
in his justice but perform what he hath promised, as
if there was a tie of strict justice by merit put upon
him. And this agreeth with the apostles reasoning,
2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. In the third place, often this word
which is rendered worthy here, is to be understood
of a meetnes and suitableness which is in such a thing
without respect to any merit or proper justice. Thus
it is rendered, Matth. iii. 8. 'Bring forth therefore fruits
meet for repentance.' The word rendered meet
there, is the fame that is rendered worthy here, and
importeth only that there ought to be a suitableness in
their fruits to true repentance. This will agree well
to this place as the scope cleareth; the Lord layeth
them clean, when others were defiled; therefore they shall walk with him, when oth-
ers shall be polluted. And the reason is subjoined,
it is suitable and meet it should be so, that those that
difference themselves in keeping clean from the sins
of others should be by me brought to a condition
where they shall have eternal and absolute whiteness.
And at the first view, it is clear that the promise is
fayeth, 'Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.' A second book is of God's omniscience; which taketh in all things past, present, and to come, as if he had kept a diary of every event, and had written up every word and action of men. In reference to this, the books are said to be opened in the day of judgment, Rev. xx. 12. A third book is of God's special care of his church. Whereby as it were, he hath set forth himself to have a peculiar care and oversight of her, and what concerneth her. This is mentioned, chap. v. 1 & c. A fourth book, is called the book of life. Which relateth only to the names of such as our Lord hath ordained to glory, and doth import that they are as definitely and distinctly determined and known by him, as if they were by name and surname particularly recorded in a book. It is this book, that is here called the book of life. Because, 1st. The end thereof is to ordain to many to life. And, 2d. Because there is an immutable connexion betwixt being written in this book of life, and obtaining eternal life. And so being the first and sure door that maketh entrance unto life possible and feasible, and gives the right to, and is the foundation of all that followeth; therefore deservedly it geteth this name to be called the book of life.

It rests then to consider, what it is not to blot out his name out of the book of life. It is not to be understood as if there were a scraping out, and putting in into that book, posterior to God's eternal and immutable degree. Because, first, in that respect it could not be called the book of life; for so many might die who once were in it. Secondly, it is contrary also expressly to the end and use thereof in the day of judgment, where chap. xx. 12. express mention is made of the opening of this book for this end, that whoever were found from the beginning written therein, might be kept from the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, as is said in the 15. verse of that chapter; and if the connexion of being written in this book, and the obtaining of life, were not peremptory, there could be no such reason of opening this book in the day of judgment. Thirdly, Whatever this be, it is something to be performed after this life; and seeing it cannot be imagined that one can die with his name in this book, and afterward have it blotted out; therefore such a gloss cannot be put upon this place. And who would have further confirmation of this, may have it in the learned Gomarus his digression on this very text. The words there are to be understood thus, as importing more than they express, viz. that in the day of judgment Christ will own the overcomer, and present him before God, as one that was enrolled in the book of life; and given to him in the bargain of redemption, for this very end, that he might raise him up in the last day, and give unto him eternal life, as it is, John vi. 39. 40.

That this is the meaning, will appear by considering the third promise, But I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels, which doth expressly hold forth what we affect of Christ's solemn and honourable owning of them as his and giving to him in the great day, when all the holy angels shall be present. We shall lay nothing of the other part of the conclusion, which is so often, but never needlessly repeated. Now, we may take some few observations from the several parts of the epistle, besides these that are already hinted.

Observe, 1. To have a name without reality, is an exceeding great evil; yet an evil incident both to ministers and people. 2. Those that have had once something may through unwatchfulness be brought to a very low posture, as it were, to be ready instantly to expire. 3. Folks may have some extraordinary motions at some times; and yet afterwards fall from these, and forget them, as if they had never had such purports and resolutions. 4. There may be some honest, where there is much deadness, even in the public ordinances; and God may keep some lively, even in such a place as Sardis, when the generality are dead, and this tendeth exceedingly to their commendation. 5. A church may have a great name for many professors, and yet the number of the truly sincere may be very few. 6. Godsilen is of great value wherever it is, if it were amongst few.
It is like religion in power was not much thought of in Sardis; yet what advantage will these few have, beyond others that were of the greatest name, when Christ shall come to judgment? It will never be well understood what advantage there is in true holiness beyond profanity and hypocrisy, till by Christ's second coming this be manifested.

Belide these observations and what hath been said, there are yet some few questions tending to the further clearing of this epistle; as first, If an unformed holy ministration may be a lent minister of Christ? Secondly, If such a man may have gifts in exercise; or, if even a believer may have gifts in exercise when his grace is in no good condition? Thirdly, If such a minister may have fruits? Fourthly, If usually such a minister with his gifts hath many or rather but few fruits? and lastly, if by his deadness the ordinances be so polluted to others as they cannot without sin partake of the same with him? To which we shall answer shortly in order, by laying down some doctrines from the text.

And to the first we say, that men that are unformed as to heart honesty, may be de facto ministers in the church of Christ, and while continuing such, ought to be so accounted; what this angel was fitly in respect of his fate we shall not determine; yet this is certain that although he had a name to be living he was dead: and his works were not perfect before God, whatever they were before men. And comparing this with the condition of the angel of Laodicea following, we conceive there is ground to say, that men that are for their own sake unformed may yet be ministers in Christ's house, and are to be esteemed such while they continue in that room; seeing our Lord Jesus doth so here. And this is not to plead for profane ministers, as by this they themselves might have peace in their discharge of ministerial duties; or, as if others whose place gave them a hand in the admitting unto or keeping in the ministry, such as are, or may be discovered legally to be so, might from this have any defence; there will no such thing follow hence: But it is to plead for the ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ought not to suffer deroga-

...
lomon remarketh of himself, Eccles. ii. that his wis- dom remaineth with him, even when his heart was bent upon vanity; gifts are deceitful and deceiving both to meet themselves and to others; grace is an other thing, and although sometimes God will strike the idol-shepherd in his right eye, and make even his gifts to wither, thereby to shew the necessity of nearness with him; yet sometimes will he continue the exercise of them, that thereby his sovereignty may appear, and that men may not lay too much weight on a common gift and also that the edification of others may be furthered.

To the third we say, That a man whose particular condition is not approveable before God, may not only have gifts and be called to be a minister, but also may have fruits and some success in his ministry; this Angel hath a few names, even in Sardis. And no question Judas in his ministry, wanted not fruit, seeing one report is made of all indifferently, Mark vii. 20. And the preaching of Christ by the envoys, Philip.i. 4. feemeth to have had success; otherwise their preaching had been no great ground of rejoicing to Paul. This also is to shew the Lord's sovereignty, who will make use of whom he will in his work; and although having grace do not always accompany common gifts of the spirit, yet are given to profit with, 1 Corinth. xii. 7. And seeing they do not always, nor often profit them to whom they are given, and yet are not simply unprofitable when they are some way improved, they must therefore profit others for whom they are given.

To the fourth we say, That although such a minister may not be altogether always without fruit; yet often great gifts with an unfound frame of heart have but little fruit and few converts. He hath here names, but a few names, though he himself had a great name; and certainly in part it is imputed to his unfoundness, whose works were not perfect before God: so that although men could not cenfure him, yet before God he was not kindly and natively driving the design of that peoples edification, whereof this of having a few names is a consequent, as the real honesty, though with a little measure of gifts of the Angel of Phila-

delphia, did not want its own influence upon the success of his ministry. This therefore sheweth the danger of an unfound lifeless ministry, that often the fruits are exceeding few, where there are any at all. Hence these Scribes and Pharisees are, in Christ's account, as to fruit, and to savor of souls, Matthew ix. 29. as almost none at all, although he gave not people way at their own hand to cast at them. And considering that turning of men from their evil way, and standing in God's counsel, Jer. xxxiii. 22. and walking with God in equity, and turning many from their iniquity Mal. i. 6. go together. It is so marvelous that those who are negligent in the one, be also least blessed with the other. These we conceive God hath wisely linked together, that the more a man hath of him, the more fruit his commission in his mouth should have. And although this be not peremptory in all cases, especially in the comparative degree among honest men; Yet, 1. This connexion is more suitable in itself, verse 12. That one who tenderly and singly aimeth at fruit, should attain more, than one who indeed intendeth but the feeding of himself. 2. The one hath a promise and many claim it, 1. Tim. iv. 16. the other is judicially smitten in this: for as fruits are in part some reward of grace to a faithful minister, to fruitless is a just stroke upon the other. 3. There is a connexion also in respect of means; tenderness in a minister begeth to faithfulness, sympathy, &c. And the want of it, unfitteth a minister to conceive experimentally of many things, and so he is indispensible to speak them fearfully; and it marreth that boldness, which immediate eying of God giveth; and by it, a minister is incapacitated to deal in secret with God for the people, and is apt to lay stumbling-blocks before them. And so partly by wanting what he should have, and partly by being prone to foster their security, or strike their wounds untenderly, or stumble them by his carriage, he in these and many other respects, looketh as one not suited and fitted in an ordinary, at least a kindly way for the begetting of many. So that whatever in some extraordinary cases the Lord may do, yet this is most usual; which should make
people desire lively ministers, and pray that they may be kept to; and also should make ministers conscientiously see their own particular conditions, and that in reference to their ministry, least by their declining in their own spiritual estate, and their neglecting thereof, they have no less influence on the fruitfulness of their ministry, than by the direct neglecting of proper ministerial duties.

From this also we may gather, in answer to the last question, That no personal corruption in joint worshippers doth pollute any of the Lord's ordinances to another, or on that account, necessitate a separation from them. For if the corruption of any had such influence, then it were especially the corruption of ministers, then were it not to be thought that the Lord would not have such, even after their discovery, to be acknowledged still to be ministers, which yet here and in the former instances is clear. The word and sacraments administered by such, if rightly received and improved, are owned by him as his word and sacraments, as well as when administered by the most holy, as from the considering of the forementioned instances may appear.

There are yet two particular questions, which possibly may be desiderated by some, to which we shall speak a word before we leave this epistle. The first is, By what symptoms a minister may discern his own deadness while things seem to go well with him in public? Or what may give a him occasion to suspect himself to be under such a charge, as is given against this Angel here? The second is, What may be the means of a minister preventing such a condition, or of recovering himself therefrom when fallen into it?

To the first. We say that even when things go well in public before others, a minister's works may yet be liable to this charge of not being perfect before God. And we conceive, upon search within and reflection upon himself, may be discerned by these or such like symptoms. 1. When there is a decay of lifelessness in his own particular condition, that is, when there is no exercise of repentance in himself as a Christian, nor freshness and tenderness in communion with God in secret prayer, and other Christian duties; if in such a case he should preach as an angel yet cannot that be taid to be perfect before God. 2. In such a frame a minister ordinarily is not kindly affected with the discharge of ministerial duties, nor with sympathy towards the people, but he goeth lightly under the burden of these, almost indifferent what come of the fruit, if fairly and without any palpable discovery of his infirmity, such duties be put by. 3. Upon this it followeth, that if there be acceptance of the thing amongst the people, there is but too much quietness in the minister, without reflecting upon his indisposition and unfruitfulness, and without being taken up with the desire of fruitfulness among the people. This is fulsome-like, when a minister so acteth in ministerial duties, as if there were no more called for, than the throughing what is public before men. 4. Something of this may be gathered from the scope and strain of his doctrine, that is, if there be any secret aiming to commend himself by such doctrine, or if of its own nature it seem to tend more to that, than to edify and feed the souls of hearers. If his own gift and present acceptance among the people be well satisfying to him, so as he be under little fear of getting up, and if he be unfrequent, and cold in his addresses to God for liveliness and success: these and such like things not look well. 6. Somewhat may be perceived by ministers inclination to converse with unlearned untender men though they be civil, and to keep up general discourses and questions with them, rather than to converse with such as are tender, and love to have their exercisings and practical cares for the matter of their discourse: it cannot be well when it is so. 7. It is not right with a minister, however it be in the exercise of his gift, when he is not walking under the impression of sinful defects, and unfruitfulness and want of zeal as to his end and manner of carrying it on the most commendable-like duties. For it is no good token in a private Christian to be without the impression of his own corruptions and sinful infirmities, so it cannot be right with a minister when his ministerial defects are not sensible to him. And when there is not an actual exercise with the selfishness, carnalness, vanity, etc. that are...
in him, it is too these have too much sware with him.
Now, to the second, viz. What a minister ought to do in such a case for recovering himself?

Answ. The reading of this epistle seriously will indeed satisfy this; which we may draw out in these directions. 1. It is necessary that a minister observe his own condition, and take notice of the sinfulness and hazard thereof. This is implied in the word remember, verfe 3. and indeed who cometh to ponder and consider rightly their own condition, are in a fair way of recovery. 2. There will be a putting of every thing right that belongeth to a Christian; oftentimes decaying in Christianity, bringeth on this deadness in the minister. And therefore there can be no better mean of recovery than once to put the soul in a right posture in this respect. 3. It will further this much, that he begin with the serious exercise of repentance of what is past, and that as to the defects that cleave to him, both as a Christian and a minister, this maketh the beginning of a recovery to be solid. Therefore it is commanded, verse 3. 4. There would be a special care had in the doing of ministerial duties, that not only they be done, but that they be done in a right manner; that is everything be done as in the sight of God, with an eye to this, that it may be found perfect before him. This is in the word be watchful, and implied under this Angel's charge of not having his works perfect before God. 5. There would be zeal and carefulness in the begetting and keeping of life and livelings among the people, as in himself. And for that cause a doing of every thing with respect to that end. This was the Angel's fault in his deadness, viz. the neglecting of this, and it is commanded to him, to strengthen what was ready to die, as a thing befitting his recovery. This is in a condescending way to seek to feed the people with what is profitable, though thereby a minister should seem to some to lose his name and reputation. 6. There is need in all things to be denied, and to exercise faith in him that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars also, without which there is no attaining to livelings. And for this end doth the Lord do dere himself in the inscription of this epistle. Much dependance on him, walking with him, standing in his counsel, &c, and that in the meanest particular steps of any ministerial duty, as not daring to undertake any thing without him, and so an acknowledging of him in his grace, as to the fruit of every thing, this is a very fountain of the life of a minister.

LECTURE II.

Verse 7. And unto the angel of the church of Philadelphia, write these things, sayeth he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, be that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth.
8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.
9. Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;) behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.
10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.
11. Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.
12. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name.
13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.
tion, verse 7, the body of the epistle, verse 8, 9, 10, 11: and the conclusion, verse 13.

In the inscription, the Lord the director of this epistle, doth set forth himself up in the three. He that is holy. He that is true. These are two essential attributes of the God-head, and shew that our Lord Jesus is God. And he taketh these titles to himself in this place, that, 1. He may shew unto the honest church, their honesty could not but be approved of him, who was holiness itself. And, 2. To strengthen their faith in the expectation of the performance of his promises, however they looked improbable-like, because he who made them is true, and truth itself. The third title is, He that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth. This respecteth his office, and holdeth him forth as the great steward of the house of God, who is entrusted with the management of what concerneth the same; and is invested with power and authority to execute the same. It alludeth to Isa. xxii. 20, 21, 22, &c. where the Lord speaking of his preferring Eliakim unto the government of Jerusalem, and Judah, doth express it thus; And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulders. So he shall open, and none shall shut, and he shall shut, and none shall open. Now this, as attributed here to Christ, is not be understood principally of his essential and absolute dominion as God. For, that cannot be, called the key of the house of David, but it is to be understood of his mediatory kingdom, whereby he as mediator, is invested with power and authority for ordering the affairs of the house of God. And as at standeth in this verse if doth hold forth, 1. That Christ Jesus as mediator, hath a peculiar oversight and government of the church. 2. That in this dominion of Christ's, is fulfilled the promise of perpetuating the power of the house of David. Therefore it is called the key of the house of David, which is committed to him. 3. Here is held forth the sovereignty and aboluteness of Christ's dominion. Therefore, He shutteth and no man openeth; and openeth and no man shutteth. There is no marring of any of his orders; for he having obtained this name above every name by God's exalting of him thereunto, Phil. ii. 9. There can be no imaginable competition with him, in the exercise of this power. 4. This being compared with the former two titles, doth show that he who is entrusted with the supreme government of the church is God. He is holy and true, and therefore can do no wrong to any, nor fail in the performance of what he promiseth, which is of great consolation to his people. This last is here mentioned, to encourage and strengthen this honest weak angel and church against the many difficulties they had to wrestle with, as we will find in the body of the epistle.

This angel and church, it is like have been, before others, far from that estimation that Sardis was in. For they have but a little strength, and many enemies, yet were they much more honest and commendable before God, and fruitful under the ordinances they had; therefore the Lord indites a most comfortable epistle unto them.

In the body of the epistle, we have these three things, 1. Their present condition, is in several respects described. 2. Their commendation is laid down. 3. Some excellent encouragements and directions are given them for the time to come. These three being interwoven, we must open them as they ly.

Befide this general, I know thy works; which though common to all the rest of the epistles in some respect, yet may be taken here as holding forth his particular approbation of this church, because there is nothing quarrell'd in her. This will not indeed prove she was altogether free, but that being honest and free of gross faults, the Lord doth not rigidly reckon with her. Befides this, I say, in the 8. verse of this church's good condition, is set forth in these four, 1. Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it. This is the fountain of all that is commendable in her, and from which it doth flow, viz. Christ's conferring such a mercy upon her. And this is a main encouragement premitt'd for the strengthening of the honest angel of this church. For understanding of it, we must consider, 1. What is
meant by an open door. 2. What by Christ's setting of it before the angel, so as no man can shut it? By an open door usually is understood in the scripture, the Lord's making way for profitable preaching of the gospel, which standeth not mainly in having access and liberty, without any external restraint to preach the gospel, but especially it standeth in God's giving inward liberty to the preacher, and in his containing of the word, and making it effectual and successful upon the hearts of hearers. This is called, Col. iv. 3. A door of utterance, when a minister is not straitened in preaching the gospel, but as it were the door is opened to him. And 2 Cor. ii. 12. 'When I came to Troas to preach Christ's Gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.' Which is something peculiar and special signification of God's sending him and removing of difficulties out of the way, and making his ministry successful there, and 2 Cor. xvi. 9. It is said: 'A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.' So that there may be an effectual door opened, even where there is much opposition. In sum, it importeth these two or three. 1. That there is a straitenedness in ministers who cannot bring forth the gospel as it ought to be brought forth, and will when the Lord fendet forth the spirit and enlargeth a man with boldness to speak the same. In respect to a door of utterance is opened unto him, as in that place, Col. iv. 3. is clear. 2. That there is a further let beside this, viz. when the ears and hearts of hearers are so locked up, that the word hath no entrance, but is repelled. The Lord openeth this door when by the work of his spirit upon hearts, as upon the heart of Lydia, he doth make the word to be received and admitted. In which respect, 2 Thes. iii. 1. Paul desireth them to pray that the word may have free course, that is, that there be no shut doors to mar the progress of the same. Both these are understood here, viz. liberty for the minister to speak, and that with countenance and success among the people. We conceive also, that this phrase of an open door, doth take in a concurring of God's providence, for the keeping of the word ministr'd, and ordinances in such a place both in the respects that are mention'd, notwithstanding of the numerousness and maliciousness of opposers: and this agreeeth well with that word, in this verse, And no man shall shut it. And this may be a third thing imported in this expression, though it be not of the same kind with the former two every way.

By Christ's setting open of this door before the angel, so that none can shut it, is holden forth 1. Christ's supremacy and sovereignty in giving gifts to men, liberty and inward freedom to improve them, and also a blessing upon them in making them successful. It is not gifts by which a man will be able to preach if the Lord give not a door of utterance; yea even the great apostle Paul hath need of this, Col. iv. 3. nor is it the having of utterance that will obtain fruits among the people, if the Lord do not open an effectual door and give the word free course among them: Hence it is, that sometimes where there is most utterance given, there may be less success than when there are fewer gifts, because he who hath priviledge it is to let open doors, doth open more fully the door of utterance to the one, and the effectual door to the other, and doth not open both equally to all. 2. This importeth the necessity and inevitableness of success. When Christ thus openeth the door, success cannot but follow; and no man or devil can shut out or impede the same, when he pleaseth to countenance his ministers, and to commend the word to the hearts of hearers. Now it may appear what the meaning of this part of the verse is, which relateth especially to the angel, viz. I have called thee to this ministry and have given thee some measure of utterance, though thou hast not much ability, and especially I have ordered matters so as the word from thee shall have free course and success. And rage who will, this shall not be obstructed. By which also we may see, why the Lord took the title to himself, that doth immediately go before this.

The second in the verse is, For thou hast a little strength. By little strength here, is to be understood weakness in grace, for that is eminently commendable; nor yet little countenance in the discharge of mis-
nisterial duties, but it looketh to his parts and abilities, which it is like were not many and great comparison of what others had, that is, it may be he who was not able to speak of, nor search into so many profound mysteries, and follow doubtful disputations, as others were in a capacity to do. This is not mentioned here as any ground of commendation, being considered simply and in itself, but is mentioned for these two reasons, which being put together, will clear the scope: 1. It is given as a ground of Christ's opening the door before him, as an evidence that what success he had, was attributed to his countenance of him, because thou thyself hast but a little strength. And this sheweth, that as oftentimes Christ is most tender to the weak believers; so also to the weak ministers, that are yet bent by him, and honest in the discharge of their commission. 2. It is mentioned here to heighten the commendation that followeth, viz. that though thou hast a little strength, yet thou hast kept my word. It is the joining of these two together, that sheweth wherefore this is here taken notice of.

The third and fourth expressions, which most expressly hold forth the commendation, are, Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name: by keeping of the word here, is not only understood the keeping of purity in doctrine, but especially these two. 1. A keeping it in practice by being conformable to them, in their walk. 2. An avowed preaching of the truth by the minister, and his adhering to and owning of the fame in his station notwithstanding all the reproaches he met with. For the scope relating especially to the minister, this keeping of the word must imply also something peculiar to him, which is commonly expressed in the old testament by this word of keeping the Lord's charge. The last word, Thou hast not denied my name, is to the fame purpose; but doth import more than is asserted, viz. that notwithstanding the many trials thou hast met with, yet thou not only hast not faintly denied my name; but hast openly and confidently avowed and confessed the fame. And these two, being compared with a little strength, which this angel had, do make the evidences and commendation of his honesty the more wonderful. In the 9. and 10. verses, the Lord giveth two special encouragements unto them, having no some testimony of their by-gone integrity included in them. It is like this honest church, hath been under a two-fold perdition, as we have seen in some of the former epistles. 1. From the corrupt and unbelieving Jews, who having synagogues in many places, did prove great persecutors and reproachers of the name of Christ, and his worshippers. This the Lord doth encourage them against, in the 9. verse. 2. From heathens; in reference to which he comforteth them, verse 20.

The consolation, which is laid down, verse 9. doth apply the three. 1. There is a description of these corrupt Jews: they are said to be of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but do lie that is, they indeed call themselves Jews, and Children of Abraham, and God's covenanted people, i.e. but they do lie, it is not so, for now they being broken off by their unbelief, are truly of the synagogue of Satan, and followers of him, as we expounded it, chap. ii. verse 9.

2. There is the promise which the Lord maketh to this church, I will make them come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. In sum it is this, these corrupt Jews do now calumniate thee; as if thou were not of my church nor beloved by me; but sayeth he, by my inward power I will make them come and worship before thy feet, and know indeed that I have loved thee.

The words of the promise may be two ways understood, and we conceive that both are well in here: 1. That they may be understood of sincere conversion and to the meaning is, I will convert many of the blasphemers, and as an evidence thereof, make them come and worship before thy feet, that is, really worship God in the assembly with thee, like that word, Isa. lx. 14. 'The fons also of them that afflicted thee, shall come bending unto thee, and they that despise thee, shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee City of the Lord, the holy one of Israel. And in this expression, the pro-
from some outward evidences of God's favour, which
often is in many hypocrites.

The third thing in the verse is the Lord's making
this promise observable, both by doubting and re-
peating the same; and also by prefixing a behold at
every time thereunto, which sheweth, 1. That the
thing is most rare which is here promised, viz. to
have blasphemers made converts. 2. That it is a
most excellent favour to a minister or church, when
such a mercy is bestowed, And 3. That although it
difficult like; yet in this case it is sure, seeing for
the confirmation of the faith of this church, the Lord
hath repeated the same.

The encouragement in reference to the other per-
fec tion followeth verse 10. Wherein 1. There is a
common trial foretold. 2. There is a promis e made
to them in reference to the same. And 3. Some ground
as it were a reason of this promise, is permitted, verse
10.

The trial that is foretold is several ways set forth. 1.
It is called a temptation. It is usual in scripture to
this affliction by the name of temptation, as James 1.
2. 'Count it all joy when ye fall unto diverse tem-
pinations,' and to also verse 11. The reason is, be cause
such afflictions want not many circumstances waiting
upon them, which do indeed make them temptations;
and so other men are tried by them, or through their
own corruption snared upon such occasions. 2. It is
an hour of temptation; to signify both the definiteness
and shortness thereof; which doth carry an encour-
agement in the bosom of it. 3. It is a trial which shall
come upon the world. By world here, is not be un-
derstood the heathen world, as contradistinct from
the church. For that world is not the object of such trials,
b ut it is instrumental therein: it is then the church
spread up and down throughout the world. They shall
shall be tried. And usually it was so, when perfe-
cution was moved by the heathen emperors, it spread
through all the corners of the world, where any part of
the church was. 4. The end thereof, is, To try them
that dwell upon the earth. That is, the faints that live
upon the earth; and so earth here is not contradistin-
guished from the Church simply, but thereby the church

Pharaoh's scope, is to foretell the conversion of the Gen-
in the days of the gospel. The word in the first
language is, I will give them, &c. which doth ex-
press more significantly both the nature of this work,
as to the angel; it is a very singular gift to him to
have blasphemers made converts, and also if they be
the freeness thereof; it being a gift of Christ's grace.
This we conceive is to be taken as a part of the mean-
ingen: and is clear, 1. From the scope which is to show
the fruit of Christ's keeping the door open before this
minister for his encouragement, viz. his making the
word powerful for the captivating of gain-layer s unto
the obedience of Christ. 2. The word added. And they
shall know that I have loved thee, seemeth to im-
port something of a kindly principle acting them in
this.

Again, 2. The words may be understood as holding
forth a feigned submission of many unto the or-
dinance of Christ who from Christ's clear owning
of his church shall be made, being as it were allo-
nished, to acknowledge the same, and to say, doubtles
God is among such a people of a truth, as it is, 1 Cor-
14. 25. And this being a promise made to the church
as a piece of her splendor and happiness, that her en-
emies shall lie or given feigned obedience unto her,
Deut. xxxii. 29. and a thing also that doth tend to
the evidencing of the Lord's respect to his church, we
take it under this promise likewise. So the meaning
will be, I will give some of the Jews as real converts
unto thee, and others of them shall be so convinced
of my respect to thee, as shall make them counterfeit
in their profession, and give thee some reverence also.
For if there were not some converts, the promise
would not be so great as it is, yet it cannot be expec-
ted, that this reality should be universal amongst the
Jews. And according to the former exposition, these words which follow, And to know that
I have loved thee, are two ways also to be understood,
viz. either of such a spiritual fifering of the saving
effects of God's love to such a people, which beget-
toth a charitable persuasion in them of the fineness
of such and such persons; or it is to be understood
of some common and general conviction, flowing
militant is contradistinguished from the church triumphant. The privilege of Philadelphia is not, that the shall keep fromills that are common to the men of the world; but this, that when the church should be under persecution generally, the Lord should secretly and tenderly preserve from the weight of that trial, that other were to meet with; which is the second thing to be considered in this verse.

The promise in reference to this trial, which is made to Philadelphia, is in these words, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, &c. It may be two ways understood. 1. As being a promise to keep her from any prejudice by that trial, though she might meet with the same. This is indeed truth, but cannot be said to be a peculiar privilege to Philadelphia; for all the Lord's people might plead and expect that, and yet some peculiar thing seemeth to be holden out as to Philadelphia in this promise. Therefore 2. We understand it thus, when others shall be under persecution, thou shalt either be altogether free from that particular trial which is to come, or at least in a great measure shall be kept from the extremities of that trials, by shall be put unto. And in this respect the promise beareth something peculiar to Philadelphia; and therefore cannot be made use of by others, as a ground to expect freedom from temporal crosses except there be the like warrand to apply the same.

The last thing in the verse, (though it be first in order) is the ground to which the Lord doth knit this promise, Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee, &c. The word of Christ's patience is the gospel; called so, 1. Because usually the crosses followeth it, and the professors thereof, have need of patience. 2. Because it is the great school-matter that teacheth the exercise of patience; for which reasons, it is also called The Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, chap. i. verse 9. Their keeping this word of his patience, doth import their owning of, and adhering to, this gospel with much patience under many crosses and much persecution. And so this connexion doth not imply any merit in them procuring this peculiar privilege; but doth express Christ's tender mercies, and to lay so, his condescending equity in his proceed-

ing who seeing this church had little strength, and yet had borne out more steadfastly and patiently under many former trials than others who might be of greater abilities. Therefore, out of his tender mercies he now promiseth to keep them free in a particular manner from a coming trial.

The last thing in the body of the epistle, is the advertisement, verse 14. Which hath the three, 1. An affirment of Christ's coming, and that quickly, Behold I come quickly, Which sheweth that though he seem now to be absent, and to delay his coming, yet it will be found otherwise. It is said to be quickly; 2. Because it is not long in comparison with eternity. 3. Because it will be sudden to enemies. 4. It will be feathorn to friends. It will not be one hour behind the due time; and therefore may be said to be quickly.

He is for the present hastning, and to lay so, making dispatch of what is to proceed his coming, and so may be said to be coming quickly. This is here mentioned as a ground of encouragement to the angel to hold steadfast upon the one side, and as a watchword to scare them from declining on the other, seeing Christ was to come to judgment, and that shortly. The second word is a direction, Hold that which thou hast. Which is in sum, ye are in a good condition now, be diligent to retain the same, and like expression was expounded, chap. ii. 25. The third thing, is a warning added to this direction, Hold fast, &c. that no man take thy crown. In sum it is this, thou art now in a royal condition, thy honesty is thy crown before me and others, and it saith a promise of a Crown after this: therefore be diligent and steadfast, lest by your declining, ye be prejudiced of your crown. It alludeth to running amongst men, where they that fit up in the way, though having run well, yet obtain not the crown, because some other oustrip them, and an obtaineth the same. Here the scope only is, to shew that these who fit up in the practice of Christianity, shall all surely be deprived of the crown of glory; and it is here added, to shew how the Lord addeth spurs to his most faithful servants for preventing of their falling.
The first part of the conclusion, (for we shall say nothing of the second) is, verse 12 comprehending five privileges to the overcomer. The first is, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. By the temple of my God, must be here understood heaven, and so, to be made a pillar, is to be fixed there in heaven, as a trophy of the victory of Jesus Christ, and as singularly and eminently fitted for, furnished with, and fixed in the glory that is there. For, 1. The properties that follow, will shew that this can only be understood of heaven. 2. Thus also it can only agree with all the other promises made to the overcomer which principally relate to heaven. 3. There is no other thing that can be expected by every overcomer but heaven.

The second thing is, He shall go no more out; The access that believers have to God's company and temple here, hath interruptions; and the believer is again soon down from any mount, where Christ may be transfigured before him. But sayeth the Lord when I shall make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and settle him in heaven, there shall be no more any interruption of communion, either by God's bidding himself on the one side, or from the believer's whooping from him upon the other; but he shall be by the powerful grace of God established there, and shall go no more out. And this is added, as a special consolation to the believer that is weary of his own gading and whooping from God, that there is a time coming, when that shall be broken off, and he shall go no more out.

The third step is, And I will write upon him the name of my God. Pillars that were erected as monuments of honour, were honourable; according to the name or inscription that was written upon them. Now there can be none more honourable, than to have the name of God written upon them, and to be devoted to him. We conceive also, it imples a sharing and partaking of the glory of God in some measure as a good creature is able to partake of the same.

The fourth thing is, And the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from my God. We must understand,

1. What is meant by this new Jerusalem, before it can be understood what it is to bear its name. By the new Jerusalem and city of my God, we understand one of two, either, 1. Heaven, which is the seat of the church triumphant, called here the new Jerusalem, because it so far doth exceed the splendor and beauty of the church, or Jerusalem here upon earth. And it is said to come down from heaven by because the preaching of the gospel, the kingdom of God is brought near, even to the door. Or, 2. The congregation of the first-born, that are already perfected in heaven, called the new Jerusalem, because though they be of that same church of Christ, yet are they in respect of their glorious qualifications and perfections, as it were, a new church. And thus it is said to come down from heaven, not so much to signify any local mutation, as to shew where it is for the time; and that their original, as such is from God. Both these turn to one, and to shew, that by this promise is understood, that the overcomer shall be admitted as a free burgess and citizen to glory amongst the rest of the congregation of the first-born. And thus to have the name thereof written upon the overcomer, is to have him, as it were, declared a free burgess and citizen of that glorious incorporation. That it is thus to be understood of heaven, and not of any rate of the church upon earth, the reasons before mentioned do evince. Be this it is a promise that is to be performed to every overcomer, and that after his full victory here, and so con amore after his death. And therefore can be understood of no other thing but heaven.

The last thing is, And I will write upon him my new name. The mediator's new name, is, the exaltation which he hath received after his resurrection and compleat victory, as is clear, Philip. ii. 9. The writing of this upon the overcomer, is, the making of him a joint sharer of that his glory, and so set upon one throne with himself, and eat and drink at one table with him, and to behold his glory as himself doth pray, John xvii. 22, 23, 24. the due and proportionable difference being always betwixt the head

3 K. 2
and members. Now put these together, and so the overcomer shall be glorious in himself. For 10. He shall be a pillar. 2. He shall partake of the glory of God and have his name upon him. 3. He shall partake of the glory of heaven, and the fains that are there already. 4. He shall partake of the mediator's glory and bear his new name; and what more can be imagined? Thus the Lord shall be admired in all that believe, 2 Thess. i. 9. in that day when every believer shall be as a trophy erected to the glory of the grace of God, and for a memorial of the love that our blessed Lord Jesus had unto, and of the victory he obtained for elect sinners by his redeeming of them.

It rests now that we observe somethings further from this epistle beside what is already hinted; wherein it is not our purpose to insist.

Observe, 1. There is difference betwixt gifts requisite to the being of a minister, and successe by the exercise of these in the ministry. There is here a little strength, that respecteth the first, and an open door, which respecteth the second: and these two are distinguished one from another. And thus we will find throughout Paul's epistles, that difference is made betwixt his liberty to preach upon the one side, and God's opening an effectual door to him upon the other.

2. We see that Christ is the giver of both, viz. gifts to ministers, and of successe among the people. 3. We see that he distributeth not to all alike, but an open door is set before some, more than before others, and when not at all before others, as by comparing this and other epistles together is clear.

It may be asked here, 1. What way a minister may know if an effectual door be opened to him amongst the people, seeing Paul sometimes affirmeth the same? How a minister having such an opportunity, ought to carry in the improving thereof.

To the first we say, that this cannot be discerned alienarly from a man's gifts: for, it may be that where great gifts are as we will see hereafter. Beside it is like Paul had not always this open door open to him, at least it was more in one place than another. Nor is it merely to be gathered from a man's free-
dom from external crosses in a place, nor yet from the great following he may have; for there may be many adversaries where this effectual door is opened; 1 Cor. xvi. 4. and there may be no such thing, where there is great peace and applause. Yet we conceive by these and such like characters, this may be somewhat discernible, 1. When a minister geth the door of utterance upon the one side opened to him, and there is an opening of ears among the people to welcome the fame upon the other: which is not to be understood of carnal itching; after, or being tickled with a gift, but of love to edification, and simplicity and diligence amongst them: which sheweth that such a man and his gift is commended to them, and so they are in the greater capacity to get good of him. 2. Where this is, it hath real changes following, and much solid work: for by it people are not made light and notional, but are made humble, serious, tender, fruitful, etc. 3. Where such a door is opened the devil often fageth, and fetheth himself to oppose, traduce, or some way to blash the ministry of such a person, more than of many others. This poor angel hath much affliction, when the ministers in Sardis and Laodicea are free. And so when an effectual door is opened to Paul at Ephesus, this is added, that there are many adversaries 1. Cor. xvi. 9. Yet even under such affictions, there are many trials of providence to be marked in the Lord's way, for counteracting that ministry, and many evidences of respect to the fame from such as are tender 4. It is a good token of an open door, when someway observably the Lord defeateth the devil and proflavity in a place, and is making him fall like lightning from heaven by the preaching of the word. 3. The experimental proof that is most sure, is an actual gaining of ground upon the kingdom of the devil, and a bringing off of prisoners unto Jesus Christ which is the proof given here where God promiseth new converts: and is ever supposed by Paul, when he mentioneth this door.

Now to the second, viz. How a minister ought to use such an opportunity? we say, 1. It is to be improved with all diligence in his duty, as a man that
is to reap corn that is already ripe. It is to be made use of with all humility and self-denial, lest by being tickled therewith, he prejudice the master of his glory, and so procure straitening to himself. It would be with much fear and watchfulness; with fear lest he miscarry, or any foul miscarriage in the birth; because of his unskilfulness; with watchfulness, lest the devil sow tares while he is sleeping. And the conception prove false without reality, as to many hearers. This is Paul's word, 1 Cor. ii. 3. "I was among you in much weakness, and in much fear and trembling, which shewed the kindly impression which he had both of his own and the peoples infirmities. 4. It would be approven zealously; that is, so as the authority of Christ may appear upon his ordinances both to adversaries and friends. 5. It would be made use of to say so solidly, by making the foundation sure, by proposing solid food to souls, as the substantial gospel truths, and the uncontroverted duties of holiness. For, there is hazard too soon to bring such a people to the new wine of the most sublime things in doctrine, or the most extraordinary practices of grown Christians; and it is better that they be fed upon milk, and what is healthful and nourishing, than that to please their appetites, they be diverted with useless questions. 6. There would be much dependence upon God in such a case; for he is the master, and hath appointed a great steward over the house, who hath the keys laid upon his shoulder: and the minister in such a case, would know that he hath no tack or lease of such a condition, but is at the master's pleasure: and therefore he would be acknowledged in every step of the work as it is done, or in doing. Lastly, The great shot of all preaching would be driven constantly, both in public and private, viz. the edification and salvation of the people, and the forming of Christ in them by travelling, as it were, in birth for that effect. Observe, 4. Sometimes there may be greater success unto mean gifts, by Christ's countenancing the same; than where gifts are in themselves more eminent and shining: the reason is, because, for the attaining of success, it is not only necessary to have the exercise of a gift; but also to have a door opened to them by Christ: and these two are sometimes separated, as was formerly said. And by so doing, the Lord would teach ministers, to know their own insufficiency for any such thing; and also necessitate both ministers and people to the acknowledgement of him. There is a notable instance of the power of mean gifts beyond greater abilities in the history of the council of Nice, wherein a subtle philosopher who had long kept the assembly jangling with disputes, at last by a man of small parts (in respect of others who had been disputing) was convinced by the simple propounding of the truth of the gospel, which he closed thus, This is the truth of God, philosopher, believest thou this? Who answered, he said. Then said the honest confessor (for so is he stiled by the author) If so, then follow me, and be baptized: unto which the the philosopher yielded, as if he had never learned to gainfay; expressing these words to the hearers, and especially to some other philosophers that were with him. So long as I was dealt with by words, I did repel words with words, but when power proceeded with words out of the mouth of him that spake, I was not able, said he, to resist that: and thereupon instantly went out to be baptized. At first all the doctors were affrighted that the truth should have suffered; and therefore hardly gave way to him to speak; yet did that simplicity prevail by God's blessing, to the conviction and conversion of the Philosopher, when all these Scholastic debates did not. This is recorded by Rufinus, in the tenth chapter of his book, which is the first added by him to Eusebius his ecclesiastical history. Observe, 5. That some men of mean and small gifts or parts, and who are not able to do much by writing or disputing against subtle adversaries: do yet often prove more stedfast adherers to truth in times of persecution, than others who in the former respects have gone far beyond them, and have been of greater esteem as friends to truth, both with themselves and others. This angel's strength was not much; but his stedfastness and patience under affliction was great. Worthy Perkins, on the place, giveth a memorable instance of this in the time of the persecution under
queen Mary of England, viz. that there was an honest man of mean parts, and no great esteem, near to Cambridge, who did seal the truth with his blood, when all the great scholars and doctors of that university did miserably and shamefully make defect from the fame. Obs. 6. That oftentimes an honest minister with mean gifts, hath more countenance and success in his ministry, than where greater gifts without honesty are, as by comparing this angel with the angels of Sardis and Laodicea in this same Chap. is clear. For (to say no more) he hath this advantage, that his works may be found perfect before God, wherein the others cannot but be defective. Obs. 7. That a little measure of gifts, being honestly and faithfully improved, have their commendation from Jesus Christ, as if they were of the highest measure and degree: Because it is not gifts that commendeth a minister to Christ, but faithfulness in improving the measure which he hath: and so if two talents be faithfully improven, it will be said, well done to that servant, and he will be called faithful, even as well as he, who had five, or even ten talents, bestowed upon him. And if these were well considered, ministers might be less anxious for the measure of their gifts, and more provoked to be zealous and faithful in their improving of the same. Obs. 8. That it is a special mercy, even to be kept from the common trials that others meet with: that is much mercy in God’s people being kept free fromills, that otherwise they might be overmastered with; and it is not by chance or fortune, that the lot of others, but this cometh from the Lord’s over-ruling providence, keeping them from that hour of temptation, which in his wisdom is ordered for others; who is therefore humble and thankfully to be acknowledged in the same. Obs. 9. That steadfastness in honesty and faithful adherence to Christ and his truth, do never of themselves involve a people in trials and afflictions; but in God’s good providence, do often prevent the same. Therefore this honest and zealous church, is kept free from a coming storm, which was to try all the world beside, Obs. 10. That it is not impossible, to God to make open blasphemer real converts, and that sometimes he hath actually done and doth the

fame. Obs. 11. That when he doth this, it is one of the rarest gifts that can be bestowed upon a church, and one of the greatest confirmations that an honest minister can meet with in his ministry; and in the usual dispensation of God’s providence, doth attend a minister’s honest, zealous and faithful discharge of his duty in simplicity. Therefore both ministers and people would not only be animated and encouraged to pray for the same; but also to love and follow honest simplicity and faithfulnec, as the most suitable and probable way for attaining the same. Obs. 12. That as usually true conversion to God and sincere love to the saints go together, so also is it found in experience, that the more bitternes Hath been against the ordinances, saints or servants of our Lord Jesus. There will be, if conversion be true, the more full and manifest testimonies of respect shewed to them, even often beyond what are shewed from those that have been formerly sincere. Obs. 13. That profane men, before their conversion, do not look upon honest simple and godly followers of God, as so beloved of him as indeed they are. Obs. 14. It is a good token when men are brought in sincerity, to acknowledge, that it is neither the great men, nor the wise and learned men of the world that are beloved of God; but the only godly, and all such, whatever their places or parts be. Obs. 15. The right impression of godliness in a person or church, is not to conceive such and such to be more deserving than others; but to be more beloved of God, which is the great fountain of all the rest.

Concerning ministerial qualifications.

If we will compare the angels of these three churches in this chapter together, we will find great difference; thef of Sardis and Laodicea, it is, like, had many gifts, which made the first get a name from others, and the last to esteem of himself; yet hath none of them a great commendation for grace, but the contrary; He of Sardis had a name, but was dead, and his works (whatever they appeared to men) were not perfect before God; what he of Laodicea was, 3 L
that epistle also will clear. And for fruit, the angel of Sardis hath little, but a few names; and it is like he of Laodicea had less or none at all. The angel of Philadelphia again, is in all these three contrary; he hath few parts, but a little strength; yet hath a good testimony of honesty and success. Whence may we not only gather, 1. That there are different measures of gifts amongst ministers: And, 2. That some are more honest than others. And, 3. That the most honest have often the meanest gifts in appearance; and who have greatest gifts, often are least conscious in the improving of them. And, 4. That a sincere honest minister may have very mean gifts, either considered in themselves, or as being compared with others: and yet be more faithful in improving of them, be more accepted of by Jesus Christ with his small measure, and have more fruits and greater success, than others of more shining gifts without tenderness to their walk: but we may also have occasion to enquire, what qualifications are requisite in a minister of the gospel? And particularly, if learning be any way useful to a minister? Or, if it be not rather hurtful, seeing weak Philadelphia is so commended, when others are reproved? Or, if grace ought to be reckoned amongst ministerial qualifications? There are here extremes, some giving too much to learning, and too little to grace, and others doing the contrary. These are not then to be looked on as inconsistent; but as agreeing well together: For, it is not the angel of Sardis’s reproach, that he had a name or gifts: but that he was unanswerable to them: Nor is it Philadelphia’s commendation, that he had a little strength: but that he improved well that little which he had: otherwise, one talent may be hid and abused as well as five. To speak a word therefore to the thing, we conceive that these three are necessary for the complete qualifying of a minister, or, of one of the ministry; viz. 1. Gifts. 2. Learning. 3. Grace, the second helpeth to manage the first; the third sanctifieth both, and maketh them level at the right end and mark. Yet take these advertiments, 1. That there are degrees in all these, and that we intend not to flint to any rigid measure or degree in any of them. 2. That although they be necessary; yet not equally, nor after the same manner, the first two being necessary to the gift, or being of ministerial qualifications; the last belonging to the bene gift, or to the well and integral being thereof, as will afterward appear.

By gifts, we understand a fitness given of God, whereby one is capacitated for such a calling: and although by improving, it may encrease; yet we conceive that it is in itself no acquired thing simply, but is like a stock or a talent that is given to trade within such a station: and therefore by no pains, skill, or art, can be attained, where it is not given. Hence it is peculiarly called a gift; and of Christ’s giving, Eph. iv. 12. 1 Cor. xii. and 14. 1 Tim. iv. 14. and 2 Tim. i. 6. The apostle comprehendeth it in that word didacticos, apt to teach, 1 Tim. 3. And we may take it up in these three. 1. A capacity to discern and conceive of the things of God with some distinctness; if this be not, there can be no progress to any other step; and this may be called the gift of knowledge (as there is a word of knowledge which doth suppose this gift, 1 Cor. xii.) whereby one is able to take up the truths of the gospel, which every one is not; This is prayed for to Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 7. not as to a Christian simply, but as to a minister. 2. It taketh in a fitness to express and bring forth, for the edification of others, what they have conceived themselves; called by the apostle utterance, Col. iv. 3. 4. and he that hath it, didacticos. And it may be called the word of wisdom or knowledge, whereby one is fitted profitably to speak to others; without which, no knowledge is sufficient. 3. There is also comprehended in this gift, an energy, or efficacy, which bringeth out things in another manner, and with another stamp than the rhetoric and eloquence of men can do. Hence the word and power, in the preaching of the gospel are distinguished, 1 Cor. iv. 19. ‘I will know,’ not their word, but their power, (what the two great divines Calvin, and Martyr say on the place, is excellent to this purpose) and this, we conceive, is the main differencing thing of a ministerial gift, the former two being common to men of all
profeffions in some respect, but this is not. Hence many men may have much knowledge, and be able by great eloquence to express it, and yet be far from that power and life which a native ministerial gift hath with it, as the corrupt teachers at Corinth, who abounded in human eloquence, were: which (as holy and learned Mr. Boyd, of Trocherge linebacker,) is to be tried, not ex done, or, by the gift only; but, ex diis efficacia, or, by the efficacy of that gift in the impression of it upon confidences. And, altho' this may be het known to a spiritual ear, which can try and discern gifts, as the Palate meats; yet is the thing clear: in scripture, and often, as it is more, and less, will be acknowledged by natural hearers; such as not a few of Christ's, and John the Baptist's hearers were, who yet notwithstanding discovered this power and efficacy in their preaching, which they did not in the preaching of the scribes and pharisees, Matth. vii. 29: that is, when a preaching for matter and manner of expressing exquisite, yet will let us affect, and have less weight, than some few words spoken thus in simplicity by another. This efficacy consistseth not in natural fervour and outcry; there may be much of that, and little of this, and contrarily, nor consistseth it in any mere exercise of art, in disposing of the matter spoken, or choosing of taking expressions. These things, it is true, when not affected, may have their own use; but otherways such affectation of words, may well draw men to admire the carrier, or love their gift; but doth not engage to eftem him of that 1-enth, and chiefly to commend the matter that is spoken, to the confidence; which is the native rule by which a true gift is discerned and iured. And we may consider it mainly in these: 1. In its simple plaineness, or plain simplicity, whereby the truths of God are proposed like themselves, having nothing mixed in to divert the hearer from them; but they made as naked as can be to them, for their understanding of them; This simplicity is often spoken of by Paul, and is opposed to human eloquence, as in the epistles to the Corinthians. 2. It consistseth in evidence and demonstration, a gift whereby one is fitted convincingly to propose or press such a thing, not fo much doctrinally in drawing conclusions from premises, as by the leaving the impression of such a thing upon the conscience, that it is bound with it; this is called the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit; and of power, 1 Cor. ii. 4. 3. There is a power and efficacy which accompanyeth this, as to its effects; this maketh threatenings fo weighty, that Paul will make Felix to tremble; and it maketh promises sweet and persuasive, so that Agrippa will almost be persuaded to be a Christian; this will make even the idiot or stranger (1 Cor. xiv.) to say, doubtless God is there. And that is more than an ordinary discourse, even of such a subject, thus to commend the word and ourselves to mens confidences in the sight of God; when by his affliction, he maketh the gospel to triumph in every place, and to be a sweet favour to him in all, 2 Cor. ii. 14. 4. This ministerial gift taketh in a reasonable way of speaking as to the time, occasion, hearers, &c. Thus it is a gift of right dividing the word of truth, 2 Tim. ii. 15. so as neither to strengthen the wicked, nor to faint and make sad the righteous; but to lay battery at the proud imaginations of natural men, for taking in of these strong holds, and to pour oil in the wounds of exercised sinners, and that so, as the one, may not by the preacher's fault, partake of the allowance, or be wounded with the stroke that is designed for the other: this is indeed true learning, to be able to condense and make plain a word in season to the weary, Is. l. 4. and such a one, is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. 5. There is in this gift a parresia', or holy boldness and freedom, whereby in an authoritative way the Lord's word is spoken as it ought to be spoken, such as is observed to be in the chief pastor's preaching, Matth. vii. 29: it is called Col. iv. 3. 4. 'a door of utterance, and a speaking as it ought to be spoken,' or, as it is, 1 Pet. iv. 11. 'as the oracles of God; so that in less or more, this gift ought to have a stamp of the majesty of God on it, as his word hath in itself. And this rebuking with authority, that none despise this ministry, is both often mentioned in Paul's practice, and recommended by him to others, in the persons of Timothy and Titus; and it is like, something of all
hath been in this angel of Philadelphia. And this
power is not any thing phystically and inseparably u-
nited to the man, or to his preaching, but is in him
as in mel and dexterity given of God, which he ac-
companieth with a singular impression by his Spirit or-
darily on the hearts and consciences of hearers, there-
by discovering it to be of him.

For the second, viz. learning, what to say of it will
be harder to decide, seeing it hath many several accep-
tations; as, 1. It may be taken for acquaintance with
scripture, and with divine and heavenly things in it;
or, for acquaintance with human literature, as know-
ledge of tongues, arts, sciences, &c. 2. We may con-
sider learning, either materially in itself, as it is a fit-
tness which a man hath to reason for a truth against an
error, to draw conclusions from premises, to open
hard places, or reconcile seeming contradicting places,
and to answer objections, &c. or we may consider it
in the manner how men come by this faculty, or ac-
quire this fitness to understand tongues, to investigate
and search into difficulties, &c. and thereby come to
be enabled to improve the gift given, and to stir it up;
which is either by an extraordinary illumination, as
the apostles had it, and prophets of old, without any
mediate pains or means; or by an ordinary and mediate
way of reading, studying, and learning of these
by mediate helps, which may conduces for that end.
Now, in answer we say,

1. That learning considered materially, or in itself,
as it impieth acquaintance with the things of God,
that is simply necessary. This all the apostles had,
viz. ability to reason against gainers, to open the
mysteries of the gospel, &c. This is required in all
ministers, 1 Tim. iii. 2. and Titus i. 9. that he be apt
to teach; and it is useful in reference to the truths he
hath to propound, whereof somethings are hard and
not easily understood, which the unlearned and igno-
rant, are ready to pervert to their own destruction, 2
Pet. iii. 16. A minister then had need to be thus
learned, lest he speak, not knowing whereof he af-
firmeth, 1 Tim. i. 7. and being unable to hold
faft the form of found words which himself hath

learned,' 2 Tim. i. 13. he be turned aside to foolis
unlearned questions, chap. ii. 23. It is also needful
for his opening of scripture, for his dealing with ad
versaries; and that 'both to exhort and convince
gainers.' Titus i. 9, 11. 'whole mouths are to be
stopped by him, as in many of the epistles, we see Paul
did; and that in a learned and methodick way of
dispute; and this did Stephen, Acts vi. and it is fre-
quently in that story. Yea, there is even a learning re-
quired in reference unto the weary, unto whom words
and expressions by a singular dexterity are to be wail-
ed, Isa. l. 4.

2. For the manner of acquiring this learning and
ability, we think it not simply necessary to tie it to
the ordinary mediate ways; for God often did com-
municate it immediately; and if he had thought
good, could have continued it in his church in that
manner.

Yet, 3. Seeing the Lord now giveth not this ac-
quaintance with divine truths and ability to reason,
&c. immediately; the way of studying, by reading,
and being brought up by others in the knowledge of
these, is now upon the supposition, simply necessary
also. For if it be necessary to know the mystery of
the gospel, and men by an immediate way do not at-
tain it, then it is necessary to follow the way, where-
by it is attainable. That it is not now immediately
tcommunicated, we fappose is clear in experience.
Men cannot now speake with a strange tongue,yea not
read their own tongue without teaching and learning;
and can it be supposed that they shall be fit for pro-
phesy, which is the greater gift? Beside, 'the Lord
hath not left us his word to ly-by us, but that we
should read it as the commaund is expresed, 1 Tim:
iv. 13. &c. 'Give thyself to reading.' Yea he hath
so valued many parts of his word purpofely, that
the reader should be provoked to search into it, as
is several times intimated in the same prophecy.
And seeing there is a communition of gifts, and
what is made known to one, may and should in a
right manner be made known to others, and that
by write as well as by word; what reason can there
be, that a believer or minister now may not, and
should not improve the knowledge that others before him had, or now at a distance from him, have in the mystery of God as well as by conference, he make use of that which is alive and present? And what other way is there then than by reading to attain that? This cannot be denied to a private Christian much less to a minister; and there may be fruitions of ignorance, error and confusion, which flow from the neglect of study shew the necessity of this. Neither is it for nought that parents are commanded to bring up their children in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord, which in Timothy's education is commended. Which could not be, if this way of acquiring knowledge were unlawful. And it is also confirmed by that property given by the Lord himself of the Scribe, who is taught unto the kingdom of God, Matt. xiii. 52. that he bringeth out of his treasure things new and old. Whereby it appeareth not only that he hath a treasure or store laid up, but that he hath in it, what is old, as having been of long time useful to the church, and what is new, and added thereunto by his own pains of labor.

For the knowledge of human learning, and the studying thereof, such as tongues, sciences, history, etc. although we conceive them not essential and simply necessary for the being of every minister, so as none could be a minister, without them; yet we conceive them useful exceedingly to all, and necessary for the church, being used in a right subordination to the great end of edification. For, although the Lord gave gifts of many tongues; yet are the scriptures in two original languages only: and it is not necessary to be acquainted with these? Yet hath the Lord made use of no extraordinary gift of tongues to translate them into several languages: but of men who by his oileasing in the way of study had acquired skill in these languages, which saith, that such as study is necessary to the church. And indeed if that had been unlawful, many nations of the Gentiles had never had the word, and so had never been churches, had not this been. That therefore which is such a mean for the propagating of the gospel and so blessed of God, cannot be displeasing to him, who could have appointed otherwise, and not left this necessity on us, if he had thought meet. Befie the right using of all sciences even these which men by their corruption do most abuse, contribute exceedingly to advance edification. Not by furnishing new weapons the scripture is the only sword; but by enabling men to manage the old. These are to men like skill to one that hath strength, to teach him how to handle his arms for his safety, like physic to the body, to make all the members act to their several uses; and like the pulling out of something in the ear or the eye, which marreth the hearing or seeing. So learning is but the fitting of the natural faculties of the soul, or reason, and even of the gift formerly mentioned, to act neatly, and to be forth-coming accordingly, and suberviency to the orders and dictates of a sanctified judgment. Whereas, as otherwife a natural and habitual indisposition doth much incapacitate men for the exercising even of that which they have. Neither can this be thought frangere seeing men are not born skillful in any common occupation till it be taught them. It is no marvel therefore that they be undersetters at the main things. And the writings of heathens have been made use of for good ends by Paul, as his citing of them up and several occasions cleareth, and can the reading thereof hurt us? It is a good similitude which Basilus Orat. ad adolescent. That as dyers when they are to dye purple, do first put some common colours on the cloath to make it receive the purple the better, so human learning is useful for fitting one for the more profitable study of divinity. Only, we say, this learning would be well regulated, so as to be made use of only for edification, not flying to that as if the principles of heathen philosophers were more sure and strong than plain scriptures, or as if loathing the scripture phrases and arguments, we would confirm truths from more learned mediums out of these. Much less would we reconcile our principles and the scriptures by ascribing such a meaning to the scripture, as must be contrary with them, as loathly to
brangle them in their authority than the scriptures of God; nor yet by using their phrasers to derogate from scripture plainness or simplitici, as often the miferably blind schoolmen do; which is an high fault. It is abused also, when a minister thinketh himself something because of it, and despiseth these who are inferior to him therein, or when he accounteth that in himself, or in others sufficient for qualification, or when he useth it for ostentation or getting of a name amongst hearers, that is a poor learning, which maketh the message less intelligible and less useful, and that is truly a learned pastor, who can make spiritual mysteries truths most plain and palpable to the simplest hearer, as Luther once said, that he is the ablest preacher who puruliter, populariter, et simplis simile, docet. Melt. Adam. in vita Lutheri. Learning ferveth to enable one in searching forth truth, to conceive what is solid or in solid, and to express it plainly whereas that is a great abuse of learning used by the schoolmen, follow them in it who will, to make the plainest scripture, or practical thing obscure with many doubts, questions, diverse fenses, objections, and many frothy undifying notions, which have never profited them that have been occupied therein, and is contrary to the true end of learning which ought to be edification. And often the most learned preacher, in this sense, hath the most ignorant people. He is not the most learned and skilful lawyer, school-master, &c. who knoweth most speculatively, but he who can reduce it to practice, as the nature of his calling doth require. So is it truly in the learning of a minister, he who can inform, convince, or edify others with most dexterity, is the most learned minister, though it may be the less knowing man.

3. We said also, that grace is necessary and that he that thus carrieth the Lord's message now should be holy, as they were, who of old carried his vessels. We do not rigidly call for this as for the former two, so as if no man could be a minister without having grace and unless he be truly regenerated. What was said in the former epistle, doth guard against this; yet we may assert, that it is necessary by necessity of precept, for holiness is a qualification in that same roll with ability to convince gainers, Tit. i. 8, 9. And also by way of minds, it is useful and necessary in many respects. 1. For himself: he cannot have confidence of his calling, or of his being approved of God in it, without this: though he may be called, yet he cannot act as called of God, and so must be much incapacitated in that respect. 2. For the work which is of that nature that it requireth communion with God and a standing in his counsel, Jer. xxiii. 18, 22. Otherwise it may be accounted a stealing of his word without acknowledging of himself, ver. 30. And though there be necessary in any calling, yet the nature of this sheweth them to be in a singular way necessary in it. There cannot be that boldness in the message, especially where difficulties occur, without it. 4. For application of truths, and speaking especially to the weary, this is necessary; that they may more natively take up the cases of others, apply the remedy to them, by marking forth-coming the consolation to others, wherewith they have been comforted themselves, 2. Cor i. 9. Which is a main way whereby God fitteth his ministers experimentally, and in some respect was thus qualified. From this Luther said, that these three, tentatio, meditatio, and oratio, were requisite in a minister: and they who want this holiness are certainly exceeding defective. Further, in respect of his having fruits, it is most necessary, these being often blessed of the Lord with many, and others with all their learning but with few, as in the two churches appeareth, beside a ministers praying having influence on the hearers profiting as well as his preaching: and he being to pray for them, and to account their thriving to be an answer of his praying as well as the fruit of his preaching as in Paul's practice is manifest: what can the unrenewed minister do here? Can he ly between the porch and the altar? Can he strive without cealing in prayer to God for them? And therefore must he be much incapacitated to be profitable in this respect? Yea for the credit of the ministry it is requisite that he be of good report, even to these without, otherwise his word will not not have much weight: and what will gain such a
good report without holiness? Hypocrisy often is not much convincing, neither is it continuing, whereas holiness even in a common servant will adorn the gospel, much more in a minister, who is a city set on a hill, and cannot be hid.

Again, we say, that this qualification of holiness should be greatly respected both in a people calling or choosing of a minister, and in a Presbytery ordaining of one for a people; so that if they should respect all other qualifications, and yet never enquire for this, they are exceeding faulty; and although holiness be not simply necessary to a minister, as if without it he were not to be accounted so, when lawfully admitted, as is said; yet we conceive that neither a people, nor a presbytery should pass over that qualification in their choice or admission, so as to make no enquiry for it, or not to respect it, where, it may be, there is nothing to sway any to that opinion of the man in well grounded charity, but somewhat more to the contrary: For, the people are not left to call whom they will; if it were a deacon, he is to be a man full of the Holy Ghost, Acts vi. And this place being the first clear evidence of a people’s interest in their calling of a minister, this rule for their proceeding must be observed also. Again, it being such great a trust, as to be entrusted with the oracles of God, and with the souls of people, can he be thought fit to endeavour the saving of the souls of others, who yet maketh no conscience in taking heed to his own? This is the apostles reasoning, 1 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 4, 5. If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Which is proposed by way of question, to shew the unanswerableness of that reasoning, by which he pretexts the observing of the former qualifications. And certainly these two are not without weighty reasons put together, Acts xx. 28. and 1 Tim. iv. 16. Take heed to thyself, and to the flock and doctrine. But to shew this, that who careth not for the one will never natively and naturally care for the other. Especially that word, which followeth being considered, ‘So shalt thou save thyself and those that hear thee,’ intimating, that carelessness in his own walk, may not only mar his own salvation, but also

the salvation of his hearers, seeing these two ordinarily are carried on jointly, as in this epistle: and, can people dispence with this, to have only a form of ordinances, not caring whether their ministers have fruit amongst them or not? Or that the profit be to many or few? And yet there cannot be expected (whatever God may sovereignly do) from a man that standeth not in God’s counsel, Jer. xxiii. 22. And therefore turneth not many from their iniquity: neither can any expect that the Lord will approve that he should be made a steward in his house, and an under father to his children, who yet upon no charitable ground can be accounted a child himself, and what confidence can there be, that a man not esteemed gracious, shall either Christianly carry in the outward form of religion, or yet keep soundness in the faith? And will they not be accessory to these evils, who have hazarded so much on them, who are not worthy of any such trust?

The considering of this, as it relateth to a presbytery’s duty, will confirm it further: we say, they ought not (whoever call, or whatever one’s parts be) to proceed to admit men to the ministr’y, without respect to this qualification of holiness: my meaning is not, that search in extraordinary ways should be made for knowing of men’s conversion, or, that infallibility should be expected in this, or, that any particular evidences in such a measure or degree should be pitched on, without which nothing is to be satisfying, for there are degrees, as was said) but because even scholars are naturally sinful, and gifts do not mortify corruption, nor edify, but as they are well improved; and facing often by men’s profanity, good gifts do much hurt in the church; and facing there can be ground to expect the right improvement of gifts by one not supposed to be gracious, therefore trial would be, 1. To clear that he be not profane, and that nothing can be charged on him. And, 2: That there are some things making him look holy like, and giving ground, in a discerning charity, to esteem so of him, that whatever afterward he prove they may have peace in what they have done, and lastly, That some fit time and way be taken purposely for trying of this.
This is clear. 1. From the many directions that are given to ministers concerning this one thing, in the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, where they are expressly limited in their proceeding in this, "That he be holy," 1 Tim. iii. 2, &c. and Tit. i. 8. And this holiness is not only described negatively, that he be blameless not given to wine, &c. 1 Tim. iii. 13; but positively, that he have a good name, be sober, just, holy: which sheweth, that on account of this they would not ordain them, but positively, that he have a good name, be sober, just, holy: which sheweth, that on account of this qualification proposed for the apostle, Acts vi. 1. although Judas in God's sovereign wisdom had been employed, yet there is another rule given them to walk by, that they take to himself; they must take one of these who had given best proof of their integrity, ver. 23. And through all the epistles, when Paul is recommending ministers, there is ever some evidence of their sanctification given; whereby he would let us know, what weight is truly in that qualification for commanding of men for the ministry; and what sort of men others should recommend after him. And there are also many reasons which may be gathered from what is said, to make ministers very careful in this, that holiness be well looked unto in instruments, as they would expect an open door to be let to them by the Lord, as he doth here.

If any should say, 1. That this looketh like the way of rigorous trying of church-members, and seemeth to favour that conceit. Ans. 1. I am not speaking of the manner of proceeding, but of the thing, whatever way any judicature or persons in Christian prudence shall take to satisfy themselves in the particular, I conceive can be regulated by no certain directions; for, that will be fit in one case, which will not be in another, &c. 2. Although there be a trying and comparing here called for; yet it will not hold as necessary to all members because there is not the like ground: they may, nor such precepts nor practices of trial of members, as there is in this: and were it so clear for members, I suppose it were hard to shift it. Yea, 3. This doth overturn that rigour and scrupulosity concern-church-members, it is so far from strengthening of it: for, if there be somewhat singular required of a minister, and if one that is already a church-member be yet to be proved, if probably he be holy, are he be a minister, so that one may be a church-member for his holiness, and yet unfit, in respect of his being defective in this qualification, to be a minister; yea, a deacon,
then is there not such rigid and accurate search to be made for positive evidences in every church member; for then, there could be no addition to it, or further length to go; but from this, it is clear that something is required in the trial, of an intrant to the ministry, more than of one to be admitted into the church: for one may be warrantably admitted to the church, who yet may be unfit in this respect to be a minister; therefore the extending of this conclusion to all the members indifferently, is unwarrantable: for, this new trying of them, supposes the former not to be so exact, and yet all this probation is to be of such as are within.

If any should further object, that this layeth on that which is impossible. Anf. There is no such thing intended. But, 1. It is more than is needful to every church-member. 2. It is somewhat that needeth proof and trial, and is not to be taken on trust: but the manner of trial we leave. 3. It is somewhat that may warrant the confession, not to determine infallibly concerning such a person’s state; but concerning a man’s own act in a deliberate well-grounded concurring in his ordination; so that there be no ground for a challenge afterward, being put to say, it was sudden, and so to charge himself as accursory unto, and guilty of, his sins also, if afterward he miscarry; which is intended by that precept, 1 Tim. v. 23. &c.

If it be objected further, then there would be few ministers entered, and many congregations would be depopulated. That great pattern and patron of learning and piety, TROMER, when he moveth this objection to himself, (which sheweth that it hath been ordinary, in all times lo to dispute against this duty) answereth, that it is not so much to be respected, quot, or, how many be in the ministry, as quales & qui, that is, who, or of what qualifications they be. Therefore (faith he) it had been the advantage of the ministry that they had been ever fewer, rather than that many who are in that station should have been admitted to it: for (faith he) some became not only useless themselves, but do incapacitate others, and make the ministry deplorable before all by their carriage. And in-

Indeed it is often found so, that many congregations had been better still to have waited for what providence might have ordered for them, than to have been planted as they were. Many excellent things hath he to this purpose, page 1187, &c. particularly page 1107, &c.

We are persuaded, that whatever profane men think of holiness, that yet the people who desire to have their souls saved, will be loath to have a blind-guide, who by falling into the ditch, may hazard others, or, one that may heal their wound lightly; or at best, point out the way to them, but in little join with them in it. And especially, that ministers of the gospel, who know what esteem Christ hath of souls, and what difficulty it is for themselves to walk thinly in this ministry, even though they mind their own salvation; and what native and natural sympathy is called for betwixt a minister and his flock; and who are well acquainted with the devices of the devil, who aimeth to make havoc of souls by an ungodly, as well as by an erroneous ministry; and also are laying to heart and seriously minding their reckoning to Jesus Christ at his appearing, for the souls of such congregations, as they have had access to provide with ministers, whether his sheep were committed to a friend, or an enemy, to one that loved him, and so would feed the lambs: or one that loved and fought his own things, as all men in nature do, and so would feed himself. We are persuaded, we say, that such will tremble to be accursory to such heinous affronting of Jesus Christ, or such cruel betraying of poor souls in committing them to an ignorant, or unfaithful-guide, who may fall in the ditch with them. And seeing this is of main concernment to the advancement of Christ’s gospel, and the edification of peoples souls, to have ministers according to the Lord’s heart, and not mens, to feed the people; and a special promise subjoined to his marrying of a land, Jer. iii. 14. And an evidence of his dwelling with a people. Let all such therefore whether people or ministers, who have a hand in this, he secretly in the fear of the Lord, and, by the coming and appearance of our Lord Jesus, the great
shepherd of his sheep, that they be wary and circum-
spect in this most concerning business, as they would
not in that day be guilty the of blood of many souls,
that unholy ministers cannot but be guilty of; and as
they would not be accounted partakers with them in
all their sins. And, no question, this command amon-
gst others, is implied in that charge to Timothy,
1 Tim. vi. 13, 14, 21. And it is very observable, that
in these epistles, while he giveth directions to Timo-
thy, and Titus in the name of all ministers, which
are to be obeyed to the end of the world, he do often
chargeth, more than in other epistles, that these com-
mands should be done without partiality; which cer-
tainly sheweth, that ministers must especially reckon
for their observing thereof. Yea, that charge is, par-
icularly given in reference to this duty, 1 Tim. v. 21,
and 22. "I charge thee, &c. Do nothing by partial-
ity; withal subjoining, lay hands suddenly on no
man: which as Calvin observeth, is upon this ground
given, because men often are ready to be partial in
admissions therefore, faith the apostle, whatever
others do, 'do not thou partake of that sin with them.'
And though that reverend forecited author Mr. Boyd,
be every way most moderate; yet page 1108. doth
he cenfuse the preposterous moderation of some good
men, who are too charitable in the matter of admis-
sion of men to the ministry; and directly antithes-
that in trial of Spirits for such an end, not only the
doctrine, sed et animorum motus, conflitia, conatus, are
also to be proven. And if nothing satisfying appear
which may hold forth God's call, although it were
for many years, it is to be forborne: Nec enim tam re-
fert quot hab hoc ministerio sunt gentes quam qui sint, et
stant a causur delicti a quibus probati; praepulchrum plu-
rum adicatis, vel unum aliquem admittit qui sit unus ex
mille, &c. quam plurimos indifferentem admisit, ex mille
vix unum, qualimcupias inventur. And therefore, cit-
eth our Lord's practice, Luke ix. 57. who though
most tender of the churches edification, and in a time
when the harvest was very great, and the labourers
but few, yet doth reject two, who seemingly offered
themselves with affection to the work, and prefers
one, not so seemingly forward as the other two. In

all which, and in much more to this purpose he doth
excellently enlarge himself as in a thing of most grave
cconcernmen, to the churches edification. His fa-
mous master also, divine Mr. Rollock, doth most pa-
thetically press this; and particularly in his lectures
upon the Lord's last sermon and solemn prayer, John xvii.
Lect. xxiii. Although this be true, and will not we
hope, by any be called in question; yet there are two
things which possibly to some may need more par-
cularly to be spoken to; seeing it is easy to run into
extremes. The first is, what length may be attained,
or is to be aimed at in this trial of a ministers sancti-
fication, by virtue of that precept, lay hands suden-
ly on no man? Secondly, How it may be made to ap-
pear, that seeing so much is attainable in this case,
that as much is not to be sought after in the trial of
private members? We shall therefore, before we leave
this, speak a word to these.

To the first we say, 1. That by virtue of that pre-
cept, there is no infallibility to be expected nor pre-
tended unto; because there is no such thing possible;
nor doth the Lord in his word give such symptoms
and evidences as may found such a judgement or de-
cision of another persons gracious estate; nor is this
to be required for, as if the validity of a persons
ordination did depend upon the same; for, ordina-
tion may be valid, where no sanctification is, as was
formerly laid; but is it such a trial and probation as is
opposite to rashness and haughtiness, and may give
ground of quietness unto them that go about this
work, even though the person should not be found
afterward answerable. Because the ground of their
peace, is not the reality or truth of the thing; but
it is to say fo, the reality of such and such evidences,
which after trial are found indeed to be fo, although
possibly they be not fineere.

2. We say, that negative evidences, or negative
knowledge; that is, that we ourselves know no evil
of the person, and such like, will not be sufficient
to exoner us in proceeding to ordination, according
to this precept: for, that may be, where a man is
not known at all. Besides, that will not give ground
awkward acting in religion, and piety by which men
may be warrantly judged positively gracious.
Page 142:
The word of truth is to be committed. Also the scripture: holdeth forth such qualifications as are positive
to be enquired for in this case; which were useless, if negatives we e sufficient. And certainly there is a
negative holiness, at least required in a private member;
yet it is clear that more is enquired for in an officer: yea even a deacon is not to be admitted without
special qualifications, which are not requisite in ordinary members. Amongst other words: Ambrose sayeth on his place non enim sufficit ii sinceri
mine sit, quia merita ejus debent præire bonorum operum
ad eumque in ad ordinamentum.

3. We say then, that something positive is attainable,
and is to be enquired for; which though it be not infallibly convincing of the persons state; yet
can be sufficient to quiet the mind against the chal
lenge of rash and sudden proceeding in that matter.

1. That there be a search in the external positives
that are given in the word, the knowledge where
of may be attained by search. 2. There may be
some observation of a man’s way and tract of car
riage from which some discovery may be made of
a man’s equable: if, single: and spiritual in
such duties. 3. There may be some discovery attained
of a man’s universality in these duties, by
considering his carriage in reference to divers
cases and conditions, and divers persons, both such
as are more tender, and others. That these are attainable cannot be denied, at least so far as is neces
sary for the scope foreaid. And certainly, that pre
cept must be understood to require proof and trial
in this, so far as is possibly attainable, otherwise a
man cannot be thought to be sufficiently examined
in his duty, as the reason subjoined confirmeth. Es
pecially in such cases where neither the good work
nor the evil of such men are open before hand. And
these being attainable as is said, it will follow then
that they are to be enquired into. Judicious and
le rea Mr. Wood in his piece against Mr. Lock
both assert, That there are some more eminent out
ward acting in religion, and piety by which men
may be warrantly judged positively gracious.

Page 152:
In these words, there is requisite some seemings of
spiritual sincerity in a man’s profession to be
that he doth it from a spiritual principle upon spiritual
motives; and for a spiritual end. But a mere, lober,
not mocking; serious profession without more, is not
a positive appearance of spiritual supernatural
sincerity. Which sheweth, that such a thing is possible,
and experience also doth confer this.

4. We say. That in this precept it is implied that
these positive evidences are not soon to be trusted;
but that men are seriously, and diligently to enquire
in the reality of them, for the quieting of themsel
ves rationally in concluding that he is so and so quali
fied. And we conceive is the great scope of that precept.
For the general, that a minister should be
eminently qualified even in reference to godliness. I
suppose will not be denied by any. The miscarriage
is ordinarily in the application, and that is not pur
posedly to admit an unholy man to be a minister, but
to account a man holy without ground, and there
upon suddenly to proceed. The apostles scope there
fore is principally to guard against this, that such
thoughts of a persons fitness be not suddenly and with
out trial admitted and entertained. And we sup
pose that although particular evidences be not inflicit
on; yet trial in the general, seriously and with cir
cumstances gone about, will do much to quiet the
mind in reference to its own act. And is this to un
derstood by Chrysostom, Theophilact, and others, as
importing a command to try, and try again.

If it were more particularly enquired, what these
positive evidences are, which may be warrantly
looked for in one that is to be admitted to the min
istry? Anfw. Although by proportion, what may
evidence one man to be gracious unto another, so far
as is requisite for one man to judge of another, that
will hold here: and though there be some generals
laid down which include many particulars as to be
holy, full of the Holy Ghost, Acts vi. such as have
given good proof of their faithfulness and constancy in religion, Acts i. 21, 22., and such like; yet beyond the reach of the scripture hath pitched upon some particular characters for the discovery of this.

First, he is to be a man that ruleth well his own house; 1 Tim. iii. v. 4, 5., which doth imply a man's faithfulness and profitableness, as a Christian; in whatsoever private station he hath been in formerly; so it is to be looked, how he hath done this duty of a son to parents, of a student in his studies, of a private Christian in his private walk with others, or how he hath behaved himself in families, or in other places wherein he hath more need of access to be edifying, and such like. This one character putth to take trial, 1. Of a man's zeal and sincerity in studying edification according to his place. 2. Of his prudence in managing and ordering what he may meet with. And, 3. Of his authority, how probably he may be able to keep people in a kindly submission to Christ's ordinances, as the particular observing of that place will bear forth: which speaketh not only of his fitness to teach, but also to govern in the house of God. And it would seem, that though always the church is not to be restrained from calling one that is young and without a family; yet by a man's living sometime after his going through private studies before his coming to the ministry, or having a family to govern there might be much more access conveniently to discern a called minister in respect of this qualification: for as the apostle reafoneth 1 Tim. iii. 5., "If a man know not how to rule his own house how shall he take care of the church of God?" Secondly, he is to be tried according to these marks wherein a Christian may be tried, such as to be vigilant, to be sober, which looketh to sobriety in his whole carriage not only to be harmless, but to be of good behaviour, given to hospitality, not greedy or covetous, patient, &c. 1 Tim. iii. 3., Titus i. 7., 8., in which qualifications, not only is to be tried what are mens practices; but what are their dispositions, or infinities, what are there natural inclinations and disposition and such like and if these be forward, except by the evidences of the opposite graces, there be hope that they shall be subdued, there can be no confidence to proceed; for a minister should be meek, gentle, no brawler, &c. Thirdly he is one that must have a good report from them that are without, 1 Tim. iii. 7., which importeth a shining eminency in his conversation, so as to be a convincing even to wicked men from whom seriousness and sincerity will get a testimony, when lightness and lukewarmness will be abhorred even by them.

Fourthly, he is to be a lover of good men, Titus ii. 8., It is a mark of a believer to love the children of God; and here it is made a character whereby one, that is to be called to the ministry, ought to be tried; and it is such a love to them, as is demonstrable and evidenced to others by their conversation with them, estimation of them, and that in opposition to others, whom in that respect they love not, though possibly their natural ties to such may be more. This character doth first suppose capacity in them to discern good men beside others. And secondly, A principle within, making them to love and esteem of such, which where they are in reality, are both commendable in themselves and cannot but somehow commendable to others. And therefore may be the more warrantably observed and laid weight upon, and when they are wanting proceeding may, yea should be at the greater stand and non-entry.

A fifth evidence is, that he be no novice, 1 Tim. iii. 6., which holdeth out that he ought to be of some settled standing in the profession of godliness; at least there would be ground to think him so; which cannot well be, if the man have been but as others in his education, and possibly come by reason of the thoughts of a ministry to have some firmer outward carriage than others; when yet, as to the practice of religion he may be but a mere novice, and to give no ground to found a rational charity for expecting any thriving of the work of grace in his heart, or of the work of the ministry in his hands.

When these external evidences are found, then ministers ought to reflect upon all, to see if any thing can be gathered concerning the sincerity of their end, spiritualness of their walk, and such like, as by the
words of these two eminent divines formerly cited doth appear. And because this cannot be discerned by one act or two, in a month or two. Therefore it is necessary to take time, and to consider the equalitie of such a man's way for satisfying of themselues concerning him. And though it is not like that each minister can come to a well grounded knowledge in reference to the admission of every one, by his own particular acquaintance; yet in such a case it is to be supplied by the testimony of such, who being able to discern, thoroughly satisfie themselves upon solid ground, dare confidently give testimonies of the good behaviour and christian carriage of such a person according to the former characters: and such testimonies, when given, ought to have weight. Therefore we see that in scripture, the faithful servants of God used to commend such as were of their acquaintance, to others: and such recommendations wanted never weight. Only concerning this we say, that leaving recommendations and testimonies may have much influence upon the good or ill of the church. This would not be overly gone about; but these Cavets would be observ'd: 1. That when men testify positively such and such qualifications to be in any, they would have ground of satisfaction in their own conferences that such things are true, and consistent in those knowleges. 2. As this testimony would be on knowledge, so the matter testified, would be weighty and such as being true evidenced some good beginning, or appearance of the work of grace. There are many testimonies given through Paul's epistles to several persons; but we will still find them have these two: 1. The thing testified is something that doth indeed commend them as christians, as having love to God, and to the edification of souls, and such like. 2. If is upon knowledge; yea oftentimes from such evidences as were discernable even to others, such as suffering for Christ, distributing to the faints, painfullness and diligence in what they have been employed about and such like. On the other side, there is also need of taking heed what testimonies be received. And, 1. That the testimony be full bearing out these characters sufficiently in the bottom thereof; otherwise it can be no proof of them, whoever be testifiers, and it may be it were not impertinent to do it in the apollis words. 2. Respect is to be had to these who give the testimonies. And, 3. To the ground upon which they give it, viz. If it be of there own certain knowledge that they do testify such things: or only upon the report of others and such like considerations, wherein faithfull presbyteries will employ their zeal and prudence for the satisfying of themselves; and so there is the less need to insist particularly on them.

Now as to the second if any should ask what reason there can be more to enquire than in reference to members? And if the one will not follow upon the grounds that are laid down for inferring the other? We answer it, is enough to say that this enquiry in reference to ministers is commanded and the other not. Neither will any objector I suppose, be able to give such precepts for the trial of church-members, as have been laid down for this trial in reference to ministers. It is observable which that great vindicator of this truth, concerning the admission of church-members without such exact trial, doth answer to this objection; I mean learned Mr. Wood, in his examination and confutation of Mr. Lockyer's Littlestone, page 80, 34. Mr. Lockyer had made the same objection which he answered thus, all that Mr. Lockyer here bringeth in concerning admitting persons into offices in the church, is idly and imprimit the allied to the point in hand: we acknowledge that none ought to be put in such offices, but such as give evidences of all manner of godly conversation; we have an express and full rule for this, 1 Tim. iii. and hands ought not to be laid upon any man, without a foregoing trial and proof of these things. But where will ye shew us in all the scripture from the one end to the other, such a rule requiring such qualifications in persons and such a trial of them before and in relation to there admission into the fellowship of the visible church; and to be under pastoral care and the ministry of the word? If he could shew us this either in precept or approved practice, we should soon yield and be at an end of this controversy; but this he
cannot nor ever will be able to shew; and therefore the reasoning from the care and accuracy to be used in trying persons who are already in the church, in relation to admitting them to places of office, unto admission of persons into the society of the visible church, is unreasonable. Thus far he convincingly to the point in hand. It is observable also, that these amongst the ancients, who have said and done most against the Novatians and Donatists, have been yet most pressing and peremptory in this, viz. That none with any blemish should minister in the holy things, as in the writings of Cyprian and Augustine is clear. This is enough to remove such objection: yet for further satisfaction, we say that there want not palpable reasons for this difference; as,

1. When a member is admitted, he is received to be trained up in Christ's house or school, and therefore if he professes himself docile, and subject himself to ordinances, it cannot be expected that he will be, or can be accurate before he has learned; for it is within the church that properly Christliness is taught. It is not so in the admitting of one to be a minister; for, he is to be entered to be a teacher; therefore more must be required of him; and he is supposed to have been a scholar in Christ's school and under his ordinances for some considerable time; and therefore more may justly be expected and sought for from him.

2. When a professor seriously desirous of entry to the church or baptism, he doth it by pleading a title or right thereto according to Christ's warrant: whereas in a church-judicatory is obliged in justice to decide and that legally according to his title and right, and if he be found to have such a right, they cannot upon any consideration justly refuse him; but in trying a man for the ministry there is no such title and right which can be pleaded for. This is no man's particular privilege, which he as a faint or professor, may claim by virtue of the covenant, or Christ's institution as he may do the sacraments; for many have right to these that have none to this. 2. A particular person may be kept from the ministry and not be wronged even although he be honest; be-

cause in admitting thereto church-officers are to walk according to the general ground of the edification of the church: and therefore when it is not for the edification of the body a man may be foreborn, to speak to and not admitted to such and such a particular charge, at least without the wronging of any just title of his which cannot be in baptism if he be qualified accordingly as is called for in such a case. For in deciding anent the admission of a particular member, the question runneth, if he have what giveth title to membership, but in deciding concerning a man's admission to a particular ministry, beside any qualifications of his as a church-member, it is to be considered if it be expedient for, and edifying to the church, that such a man be admitted to be a guide. And therefore there is more of Christian prudence and deliberation required in the deciding of this, than in the other where mere right hath place.

Lastly this difference may be observed that in deciding the first, viz. the man's right, church-officers must decide according to what judicially is made out, for a person that giveth in his title looking like a serious professor he cannot be refused although men have only a negative knowledge of his sincerity yet this cannot be admitted in a minister where want of clearness and positive satisfaction is enough to keep a man from positive deciding for the admission of a minister. All which may be thus illustrated suppose some in an incorporation or city should claim to be burgesses thereof by virtue of there sufficient title and right thereto; in this case the judges were to decide strictly according to law, as they found these titles to be made out or not: and it were injustice to refuse them that priviledge if they were found to have right to the same: but if an incorporation or city were to choose out of all the burgesses, some to govern, to be Thesaurer, or the like; the case would be quite different, for so men were not here to decide what were any man's particular right, but what were good expedient for the whole body; and so many might be past without and prejudice to them which could not be in the first. In this last election also men walk not fo much by what is judicially made
out of the fitness of any person but as they are satisfied their qualifications and fitness by their knowledge of them and acquaintance with them in the private course of their carriage; both which will well agree to the case of the admission of ministers, as it differeth from the admission of members.

LECTURE III.

Verse 14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write these things faith the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;
15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.
16. So becausethou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue the out of my mouth.
17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.
18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.
19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.
20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.
21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne.
22. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.

This is the last of the seven epistles, and is directed to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans. It containeth the discovery of an exceeding desperate condition, and a most sharp threatening for the same; yet, which is wonderful, it hath a most excellent advice and council unto this Luke-warm church.

The division is common with that of the rest of the epistles. The inscription is, verse 14. The body of the epistle, is from that unto the 21. The conclusion is, verse 21, 22.

In the inscription, verse 14, the Lord taketh these two titles to himself; I. Thus faith the amen, which is expounded by the next words, the faithful and true witness; that is, he who being truth itself, and cannot lie, as he cannot be mistaken in taking up the condition of any although never to secret; it is he that directeth this epistle. Amen, being an Hebrew word, is frequently used even in the new testament, as a sign, or evidence of the confirmation of somewhat that hath been spoken; or as a testimony of the sincerity of the speaker in wishing sincerely something which he hath been praying for; therefore often it is used in the close of prayer; and is here applied to Christ, to shew that in him there is not yea and nay, but yea and amen, as the word is, 2 Cor. i. 19, 20. The second title, is, the beginning of the creation of God: the word rendered beginning here, is not to be taken passively, as if it were to be understood thus, the first thing that was created: for the Greek word will not admit that; but it is to be taken actively, that is, thus faith he who gave a being and beginning to all things that were created: in which respect, it is said John i. 3. 'All things that were made by him.' He taketh the first title in this place: therefore at the entry he removeth all prejudice that might be against his testimony. He taketh the second title, to be a ground of faith to them, foreseeing a recovery from their deadness upon the terms offered by him, seeing he is omnipotent, and can give a being to things that have none. In the body of the epistle we have these four, 1. Their case is propounded, and aggravated, verse 15. 2. They are threatened, verse 19. and the reason thereof is given, verse 17. 3. The cure is proposed, and commended by the way of counsel, verse 18. and lastly, the improving thereof, and the practice of some other things needful to there case, are pressed, verse 19, 20.
Their case is in short, 'thou art neither cold nor hot,' but, as it is, ver. 16, 'thou art lukewarm.' By cold here is understood the want of all form and profession; and so a being in their natural and heathenish condition without any change; this is clear from the scope. By hot is understood not only to have profession, but to have power warmthes and life therewith, and so to have the change through. The condition of this church was neither altogether without a profession, nor yet having power with a profession; but having renounced gross idolatry and profaneness and having been kept free from corruption in doctrine, the sated in herself that formal profession without singleton and zeal in the performance of these duties which she went about; therefore they are called lukewarm as if some way the cold had been put off them; and yet not being thoroughly warm and hot, they continued to be lukewarm which making water most loathsome to the stomach, it is here alluded unto to shew how loathsome this indifferency in the practice of religion was to our Lord Jesus. That this is their very condition, is clear from the scope, and from the amplification following, where it appeareth they had some form, and therefore thought well of themselves; and yet were indeed miserable and wretched under the same. Also, the Lord's provoking them to be zealous, ver. 19, sheweth, that their fault did consist mainly in what was opposite to this. And so their condition will be like Israel's in the days of Elias, 1 Kings xviii. 21. As halting between two opinions, that is neither altogether forsaking religion, nor yet seriously following the same; or, as it is said of Ephraim, Hos. vii. 8, he was a cake turned, that is having the one side somewhat hot and baked, but the other cold and raw. Only this is the difference, that indifferency of theirs was in respect of doctrine, this is mainly in respect of practice.

The Lord aggregeth the hatefulness of this condition in the words following, 'I would thou wert cold or hot,' that is, although you think yourselves much better than others because of your formal profession; yet such hypocrist, is more hateful to me than the want of religion altogether. So this, 'I would thou wert hot or cold,' is not to be understood of Christ's will as prescribing to them a duty; for so it cannot be thought that he commanded them to be cold; nor doth it imply any will or desire to be in him of such things simply; for it cannot be thought that he is so indifferent concerning these extremes, but it is to be understood as his expressing of his loathing of their condition, after the manner of men: and doth hold out this, that he doth esteem such a hypocritical profession to be indeed more dishonourable to him, than if profession had never been taken on. That this is the meaning thereof, appeareth by these considerations.

1. That Christ here is following a similitude usual among men to shew the abominablest of the thing in itself, and it is not rigidly to be pressed in every part of the similitude in reference to him beyond the scope. 2. Because he putteth cold and hot in the same balance together: so that whatever difference otherways be in his estimation of being hot or being of being cold: yet in this place they are made equal, and nothing is affected concerning the one, but is also affected concerning the other: which doth clearly shew that the Lord's expression is to be understood after the manner of men, as was said that is as men use to express their hating of any thing by this, I wish it were, or had been any other way, that fame is the Lord's intent here. I cannot therefore but somewhat wonder that a learned man, Joannis Dalliæus in his apostolopy &c. doth draw this place of the Lord's willing that Laodicea being hot, to confirm that assertion of the Lord's having a will and desire of the salvation of all men, besides his signifying of what is acceptable to him considered in itself by his word.

If it be asked how hypocrisy or lukewarmness may be laid to be more dishonourable to the name of God, than the want of a profession altogether? It may be answered in these three respects. 1. Where no profession is at all, the name of Christ is not concerned, as where it is; and therefore by any miscarriage of such, it is not so reflected upon, and made obnoxious to reproach, as it is in respect of these who
have some way given up their names to religion. It is on this account that in Ezek. xx. 39. The Lord doth discharge the people of Israel to pollute his holy name with their gifts, and bid them go serve every one his Idols, &c. which is not to give them allowance to run unto idolatry; but it is to shew them, that if they would not wholly cleave to him, his name would be less polluted and dishonoured by their direct betaking themselves to idolatry: than it was by mixing his worship, and the worship of idols together. 2. The nature of the sin itself, hath also some aggravations in it, which maketh it exceedingly loathsome to Jesus Christ, and dishonourable to him beyond the condition of such as have no profession at all; for such a person indeed is really cold, and without any religion, as others are; and hath these two things beside, 1. He is a counterfeiter of religion, and that before God. Therefore Acts v. 3. &c. such as are said to tempt God; and lie to the Holy Ghost, because they presumptuously intrude themselves in a profession as if they were something, being yet indeed nothing, and so tempteth the majesty of God singularly to take notice of them, and discover them, or otherwise some way to lay under the imputation either of no discerning, or of approving such unmodesty, as if it were religion. Secondly, Ordinarily such, though they be poor, yet they are proud, presumptuous and haughty in respect of their form; for they say they are rich and increased with goods, &c. ver. 7. which no person without all form can be so readily tempted unto: now the Lord abhorreth this empty pride above any thing. A third respect in which hypocrisy is hateful beyond the want of all form, is that it maketh such a persons conviction, conversion and saluation more difficult than if they had no profession at all: for if so, it might have been more easy to have convinced them of their emptiness, and to have brought them to Christ, than in the case of their formality and pride. And thus not only is the case of hypocrisy more dangerous to themselves, but it is more dishonourable to God, because it someway frustrateth the end of his ordinances amongst such. And therefore the Lord usually doth prefer the pub-

leans and harlots in this respect to the scribes and pharisees: because such were more easily convinced and brought to some fruitfulness under the ordinances, than scribes and pharisees were, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves. Thus Matth. xxiv. 31, 32. Publicans and harlots are said to go into the kingdom of heaven before the scribes and pharisees, because they believed John's preaching, which the other did not.

The second thing in the body of the epistle, is, the Lords threatening of them for this ill, by an expression suitable to the ill, verse 16. So then because thou art lake-warm, neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth: which is in sum this, Seeing then thou art in a lake-warm temper which usually men's stomachs can more hardly keep than what is cold, or what is hot, but must spue out the same: as a thing loathsome unto them; to will I in some singular and extraordinary manner evidence my loathing of this thy lake-warm hypocritical temper. And this expression, to spue out, &c. leemeth to import these three, 1. That it shall be such a judgement as will be an evidence of the Lord's loathing of them and giving up with them without respect to their form. 2. It implique a making of them loathsome before others, as vomit useth to be, and so it is the Lord's taking by the vail of their hypocrisy, and making them to fall from that respect and estimation amongst others which possibly they hunted after in this external profession. 3. It may imply the Lord's giving them up to break out into gross external ills, whereby they might be emptied of that vain ground of boasting which they had in their former formality: And this being a common plague that follows proud hypocrisy, and a thing that diverseth the rottenness and loathhomeness of it, may well be understood here, the scope is to threaten with them making them appear to be loathsome, although they did endeavour by all means to cover the same.

The reason of this severity, is added, verse 17, and it is in sum this, I will take such course as may discover thy loathhomeness because thou art not only
miserable and poor, but art conceited and proud as if all were well, and knowest not thy own rottenness and unsoundnes, therefore faith he I will thus discover it.

In this verse we may consider, 1. What was indeed the case of this church. 2. What they themselves did esteem and give it out to be. 3. With what confidence, and upon what ground they did this. And lastly, The connexion betwixt this and the former threatening.

Their true state is set forth in five words, in the close of the verse; the first is, 'thou art wretched:' which is a comprehensive word, and doth ordinarily, set forth the bodily defects and personal unsoundnes and loathomenes of one in respect of grievous diseases, and such like: this here is to be applied to their spiritual condition, which in these respects is no less wretched, disjointed, loathsome, &c. than the bodily condition of any can be. The second word is, miserable: which looketh to a concurrence of external things beside the former wretchedness as want of means of supply, want of fitnes to do for themselves, and want of any solid way of provision made for them by others and such like: thus Ezek. xvi. the wretched child, is descried not only as loathsome with the navel not cut, without washing with water to be supplied, &c. but none eye did pity it to do any of these unto it, &c. so here, Thou art miserable; that is, not only wretched in thy self; but in a disconforted condition in respect of what thou may expect from others in this case. The third word, is, poor, that is, thou thinkest thou hast many good works, and much grace; but it is quite contrary, really thou hast nothing. The fourth is, thou art blind: that is, an aggravation to all; that though thou be in this miserable condition thou art fainefull and ignorant thereof, and neither knowest thy danger, nor how to rid thyself out of the same. The fifth word is, and naked, that is, without any thing to hide or cover; this miserableness and filthines before the justice of God. It is not desperate when folks are poor and miserable in themselves if they have on Christ's righteousness to cover the same: but faith the Lord to this church, thou art in thyselwf miserable, and also without this cover, so that thou art lying as caften forth in the open fields and obnoxious to the justice of God; this holdeth forth a very sad and a very dangerous condition. Yet in the second place we will find their thoughts of it to be far otherways: which the Lord jeteth down in three words, 1. Thou sayest I am rich, that is, abound in grace and good works, and having a righteousness sufficient enough. 2. I am increased with good: which is still to be understood of their esteem of their own spiritual furniture which they think sufficient not only to make them rich, but also to make them abound; and thus become increased with goods doth imply both their esteeming of themselves to have much and also to be upon the growing hand; which is a most dangerous condition when a hypocrite doth not only falsely esteem himself to have grace when he hath none, but doth flatter himself as if he were thriving and growing in the same. The third word is, and have need of nothing: this is indeed a comprehensive commendation of a condition, if there were ground for it: but where this entereth in a perton abounding in corruption it is the very height of self delusion and presumptuous hypocrisy, viz. that a person should think himself free of hazard, well stored with graces and a great length therein, &c. But especially as in this place that he should think himself fully clear, and sure of his peace with God, and interest in the covenant; so that in these respects there is need of nothing this we conceive is here intended, and both indeed look very like the language of stout, self-confident, ignorant hypocrites.

It may be wondered how and with what confidence they could entertain such thoughts. This is the third thing proposed, to be cleared in the words and may be gathered from two expressions, 1. 'Thou sayest I am rich,' &c. which words do not so much express the language and confidence of the heart, and do import not only their thinking of such a thing to be true but their persuasion thereof and confidence therein, even to a kind of audacity and impotency fo as nothing can put them from it, and is like these words

3 P 2
Jer. ii. 23. How canst thou say I am not polluted, &c. and verse 35. yet thou sayest. Because I am innocent &c. some are brought in pleading as it were with Christ in the day of judgment their own justification, and though there will be no such pleading in that day, yet it sheweth that many hypocrites may live and die without being brangled in this their vain confidence, until Christ's final sentence do it, which is the scope of that place. The second word is, And knowest not that thou art wretched, &c. Some might might think how could such poor persons boast of so of their riches? this word sheweth that they were not grofs dissemblers, speaking what they thought not, but that really they knew no better; and so they are to lay so native subtle hypocrites, as subtle hypocry is distinct from grofs dissimbling. Which doth shew, that hypocrites may really be blind and ignorant of their own underneaths, and indeed think it otherwise than it is. 2. That this their ignorance doth not excuse them and extenuate their guilt; but on the contrary, it is both a sin in itself, and an aggravation of other sins to them, and for that end it is both a sin in itself, and an aggravation of other sins to them, and for that end, it is made use of here. The last in the verse is the connexion of this with the former threatening in the word, because; and to this purpose, the reason of my so loasting thee, is not because simply thou art poor miserable and naked, &c. but because thou being such are conceit of thy counterfeit profession, and unhumble and ignorant of thy spiritual ills; therefore I will put thee out of my mouth, &c. otherwise poverty and grace, can agree well; but blind, proud, reigning hypocry, and grace, can never be confiting together in one person.

From which words, these observations are clear. 1. That many be in a very miserable spiritual condition under some seeing form and profession. 2. That yet such who are poor and rotten, and within have some profession, are oftentimes exceeding vain, proud, and carnally confident in respect of the fame. It is a wonder that a person or church, in such a condition, should yet esteem itself so as this doth: but this presumption and vain confidence is not the least part of

the habitability of the sin of hypocrisy and of the conceit of natural hearts. 3. It appeareth here that many may abhore themselves with great confidence, and as having many seeming good grounds for their doing so, who yet may not be abhore by the Lord.

4. There is no condition more dangerous to a person and loathsome to Christ than to be poor and proud, or corrupt and rotten and yet withal to be conceit and confident. 5. This universal confidence and satisfaction with one's own condition, is oftentimes not such a companion or fruit of the most desperate hypocrisy; because sincerity being imperfect as to its degrees and forever walking within sight of many wants is still labouring under the sense thereof; and so in a dissatisfaction with its own condition in one respect or other. 6. We may see also, that it is a main part of a minister's duty to rip up the secret and hidden hypocrisy of hearts, and to beat down the proud presumption of secure hypocrites, and so as to reprove the grofs outbreakings of profane persons. 7. In application, ministers would commend the word to confidences, and therefore would seek to convince the hearers of their own heart-language who oftentimes think more proudly and grossly of themselves, and of their own condition, and even of religion itself, than they dare outwardly profess.

The third thing in the body of the epistle, is, the cure which the Lord proposeth for such a case, verse 18. There is a wonderful depth of iniquity and hypocrisy in their case; but here there is a far more wonderful depth and mystery of free grace and infinite love in the proposed cure. It is proposeth by the way of offer under the expressions that belong to bargaining. And indeed here is an excellent market or fair, wherein we may consider these five.

First, There is the wares proposeth, which indeed are the cure of the former case; and they are contained in three words: 1. It is gold tried in the fire. 2. White raiment. 3. Eye-salve. All which are very suitable to their wretched, poor and blind condition, under which expressions is understood, Christ Jesus himself and his benefits, who only can work the
effects ascribed to these upon sinners, and make such a change upon their spiritual condition: for he it is, that is made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. And considering the strain of the gospel where these properties are only attributed to Christ, together with the scope of this place, and there can be no doubt of this.

Secondly, We may consider here the parties that are bargainers: upon the one side the offerer is the prince of the Kings of the earth, the beginning of the creation of God, our beloved Lord Jesus who maketh offer of himself to sinners, and faith behold me, behold me unto these who were not called by his name: on the other side, these to whom the offer is made or who are to be the buyers, they are, wretched, poor, miserable, &c. This looketh disproportionable like at first: yet it is such well with the bargain of grace, where the Lord's merchant is every man that hath no money, Isa. lv. 1. providing he be thoroughly sensible of the same.

Thirdly, We have the commendation of the wares, especially in reference to the parties that are proposed to: as, 1. The excellency of the things themselves, the gold is tried, the raiment is white, &c. There is nothing in our Lord Jesus but is exceeding excellent. 2. The wares are exceeding useful and profitable, it is gold that maketh rich. The person that hath Christ wanteth not righteousness to pay his debt; and there is no other thing to make a person rich. 3. This raiment covereth nakedness: sin is not taken notice of, where Christ is put on by faith; for his blood cleanseth from all sin, whereas there are many naked loathsome souls under gorgeous robes. 4. The wares are most suitable to the party to whom they are proposed: they are poor, Christ maketh rich; they are naked, he covers: they are blind, he enlighteneth them, and openeth their eyes: there are no such fit suitable wares for a sinner as Christ, and whatever account self-righteous men have of him, yet they who think themselves sinners, should by all means endeavour to purchase him. 5. Wares are commended in this, they are necessary especially to such a party: there is no other way to be rich, but by having Christ; no other way to be covered, or clothed before God, but by his righteousness; or, to see, or be in capacity to walk rightly in spiritual things, except he prove the leader.

The fourth thing in this market or bargain, will yet commend this more; and it is this, viz. The terms upon which these wares are proposed, implied in these words, Buy of me; which is not to be understood, as if there were some equivalent price required or to be given for Christ; for that, is contrary to the scope of this place. And considering the excellency of these wares, and the poverty of those that are called to be the merchants, what can be expected of them in recompence for such an excellent bargain? The terms then must be grace, as the same market is proclaimed, Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. To every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price; &c. And verse 3. the wares to be bought are the same, viz. the sure mercies of David; that is Christ Jesus, as being compared with Acts xiii. 34. It is clear whom the Lord promiseth there to give; because there is no other way possible for the attaining of him. This is expressed under the similitude of buying, to show, that as there is in covenanting with God, two parties to be considered as in all bargaining, and some excellent wares which the one must have from the other, so there must be a mutual consent and engaging for the closing of this bargain, as there need to be in bargains amongst men though the difference be still in this, that here all the terms are of grace. But God willing, we should consider the nature of this bargain peculiarly by itself.

The fifth thing in this bargain is, The manner of Christ's proposing the same, 1 counsel thee, &c. Which is not so proposed, as if it were left indifferent to them to hearken or not. But it is thus express, for these reasons; 1. That thereby he may bear out his affection, who as a friend, condescendeth to give them counsel in things that are of most concernment for their own good. 2. This also sheweth the necessity
and advantage of following this advice because they are counselled to it by him that is the counsellor, &c. ix. 6, and the Father’s substantial wisdom. It is thus expressed, to gain their content the more willingly to the name: therefore in the gospel he doth beseech and intreat, &c. that thereby hearts may be induced to submit cheerfully to him.

This verse contains a sum of the gospel, and is a treasure of many gospel truths: as 1. That there is no condition so desperate, but there is a fullness and efficacy in our Lord Jesus to cure the same: he is gold, white raiment, eye salve, &c. and the meaning of these expressions being obvious we conceive there is no need to infill upon them. 2. This doctrine is clear that upon condition of believing and fleeing to Christ, the most loathsome, lukewarm, desperate hypocrite may have mercy otherways such a counsel had not been given to Laodicea. 3. As there is a fullness in Christ, so there is a freeness in grace to make that fullness forthcoming to sinners that will follow Christ’s advice, and there is no finer that heareth this gospel but may think himself sufficiently warranted to close this bargain with Christ if heartily he submit to the terms thereof. But of these no more for the time.

The fourth thing in the body of the epistle is, our Lord’s pressing of this his counsel; which is done two ways. ver. 19, 20. 4. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, (faith he) be zealous therefore and repent.’ The first part of the verse hath the argument in it, the second part is a conclusion drawn from it, the argument is, Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten; that is, it is not my way to reprove with words or chasten with rods thefe whom I carry no respect unto, but I use this way to them whom I love, as I love my visible church, which is confirmed from Prov. iii. 12. And therefore seeing I take this way with you, and do not give up with you, my counsel ought to be the better received. Where it would be observed, that it is still the fame persons whom at first he charged. The conclusion drawn from this, hath two parts. The first is, Be zealous, that is, mind to exercise religion more seriously, in opposition to their former forma-

lity and lukewarmness, and that in the performing of the duties thereof, zeal to the glory of God may be lively and predominant. This we conceive doth not pres new duties, but a more spiritual end, motive, manner and edge of the doing of them; for many duties may be done without zeal to God, though where this is not, they are never acceptable. The second part of the direction is, And repent; which calleth them kindly to be affected with their hypocritical condition. And these two are inferred by the word Therefore, from the former ground that expreseth God’s love to them.

The second way he presseth it verse 20, is by a most infant and importunate pursuing of his offer, with a protestation of his being there, and of his making the same. This is done four ways. First, By shewing his work and pottage, I stand at the door and knock. Hearts naturally are as castles shut and guarded by the devil against Christ; when he cometh with his ordinances, he doth thereby, as it were lay a siege at them, and by his work knock at the doors thereof to gain their content, and the more pungently he presseth by his ordinances he is said to knock the more. And in this respect, Song v. 2, his voice is said to knock at the believer’s door in their sleepy condition; here these two things are imported, 1. Christ’s continuing to deal with his church, and to wait upon her in his ordinances, notwithstanding of her many former refusals. Thus he is said to stand at the door. Whereby it is held forth their ingratitude to him, in keeping of him out, and his patience that still waiteth on. 2. In this by the other word is importedit his growing more infant in his dealing with them, therefore he is said to knock. And indeed the former sharp threatening and charge, and the sweet and free offer be considered, it may well be said that now his knocks are doubled.

The second way he presseth in this verse, is by making his offer particular, as it were, bringing it to every man’s door. ‘If any man hear my voice, and open the door,’ &c. Wherein, 1. He expreseth what he would have. 2. From whom. What-
he would have, is in two expressions, the one is, If any man hear my voice; that is, its hearkening to his voice which he requireth, as Psal. xcvi. 7, for the want of which he complaineth, Psal. lxxxi. 13. And in these expressions often the terms of the covenant of grace are expressed, as Isa. lv. 2, 3, and is upon the matter that fame with buying formerly mentioned, as in that place of Isaiah is clear. And it setteth forth faith's confenting to hear and hearken to, and accept of God's offer of grace in the covenant, as refusing to hear, holdeth forth men's rejecting of the fame. The other word is, And open the door. It is the same thing in substance with the former. Thus also faith's closing with the covenant of grace, is often expressed, as Psal. lxxxi. 10. Acts xvi. 14, by faith the heart that was formerly shut against Christ, is made open to him, and he hath way made for him to enter into the fame, as is clear from Song. v. 2. Psal. xxiv. 7, 9. and Acts xvi. 14, where the Lord's opening the heart of Lydia, is expressly expounded to be her gaining heed to these things which Paul spake, that is, her receiving of the fame by faith. This then is the duty called for, and the terms upon which the offer is made, viz. faith's yielding to receive and admit Christ, for the end for which he is proposed. Secondly, The person called to is thus, If any man, &c. Which putteth it to every hearer as if it went round to every particular person, If thou, and thou, and thou. &c. And this manner of expression doth obviate any objection which might rise, such as, What if the most part reject? Be it so sayeth he, If any man open it shall be well with him. Or if it should be objected, I am a sinner, miserable, a hypocrite of long standing hath often rejected the gospel, &c. This if any man will open &c. answereth all these at once, because where the Lord saith Any man, without exception, who is he that can limit the fame, where a person of whatsoever condition or qualification is found that will accept of the offer according to the terms proposed? And so this any is a particular application of the former advice; yet such a particular application, as reacheth every one of whatsoever condition they may be.

The third way how it is pressed here is, By subjoining a most comfortable promise unto any man, so understood as it is said, viz. If any man will open, I will come unto him; that sheweth an union which shall be between Christ and him; I will sup with him, this sheweth a friendly familiar way of communion which Christ shall entertain with him, as it is Song v. 1, 'I am come into my garden, I have eaten my honey with my honey comb, I have gathered my myrrhe,' &c. Christ is a most heart-some guest where he is entertained. It is added, And he shall sup with me. This is the fruit and effect of the former two, and expreiseth the sweet satisfaction that the sinner who openeth to Christ shall have by union and communion with him, as in that same place of the Song v. 1, when he cometh to feed himself upon his own spices, his own myrrhe, and his own wine, and what he brings with him, then hath he a lare allowance to his friends, as in the next words, 'Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved. O for satisfying a life as it is to have Christ dwelling in the heart, and thus to be feasted with the comforts of his presence which are better than life! And what more can there be requisite to press the making of Christ welcome by sinners than such a promise, or rather, three promises put in one?

The fourth thing that presseth this offer in this verse is, the behold which is deservedly permitted to all. And in this place, beside the usual weight it hath in other places, it is Christ making this offer of his observant to them, so that afterward they shall not get it shifted, but this shall be an instrument taken upon his making the offer, to stand in futurum rei memoriam. And so islike that, Be it known unto you, men, and brethren, &c. whereby Paul clooth his sermon, Acts xii. 38. And thus as it were, he driveth the nail to the head before he leave it, testifyeth that if this good bargain come not to a close, the blame shall be upon their side. And so we may see how weightily the Lord preacheth in these epistles to the churches.

The conclusion of the epistle followeth, in the last
two verses, having two parts, as all the rest have. The first is a promise made to the overcomer with an excellent qualification of the same, verse 21. The promise is, To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit upon my throne. It is in substance the same with many promises formerly mentioned, viz. a promise to make him partaker of Christ's glory. It is not only to bring him to glory, but to make him a sharer of that glory which Christ the head-pieceseth; that so he may reign with, and partake of the fruits of his dominion and conquest. The qualification and amplification of this promise is, Even as I overcame, and am set down upon my father's throne. Which doth import these three, 1. The greatness of this glory which they are to partake of; Christ is set upon the Father's throne and they are to be admitted to Christ's throne, and so consequently to partake both of the glory of the Father, and of the Son according to their capacity. 2. It is set forth in the sureness thereof; it sure to the overcomer, even as that exaltation is sure to Christ. 3. It seteth forth the method of it; so that as Christ did first suffer and overcome, and then come to glory; so these that are to be set down upon his throne must come in the same method by wrestling and overcoming to obtain the same.

The other thing of the conclusion is, the common advertisement, now the seventh time repeated, verse 22. Yet is never idly done: which speaketh, 1. What all men's duty is, viz. it is their part that live in any place at any time, to receive the word of God with as great reverence, as others who lived in some other place, and at some other time; therefore this advertisement is given equally to all the several messages. 2. It speaketh mens sinful stubbornness that are not easily brought to give obedience to this principal duty.

It is meet that we take notice of some difficulties that may arise from the words. And here it may be enquired, What is to be thought of this church? or,

What judgment may be given of the fame? Anfw. Although it be hard to determine perpetually concerning their state, yet it appeareth that the condition of this church is the very worst of any that hath been written to. For, 1. There is nothing in her commendable, (as least condemned,) as was in Ephesus, Pergamos, and other churches. 2. There is no person excepted from the charge of luke warmness and hypocrisy, as was done in the epistle to Sardis, verse 4. But the strain of the epistle runneth to charge them, and charge them all with a most grievous charge. And seeing our Lord doth take this title to himself in this very epistle, to be the faithful and true witnesses, it is not like that he would have altogether past over their honesty, or such as were sincere amongst them, without commending the fame, if there had been any such to be commended. For our Lord kept that way in all the former epistles; and had there been any sincere persons in this church, it had been no lesto their commendation and the commendation of his grace to have commended the fame. Yet we think that the Lord is in tryfing terms with them, and there fore might possibly have some to call effectually from amongst them, which maketh him thus out of love continue and knock. Yet we cannot see any ground to conclude that there was any sincerity, or sincere persons amongst them for the time. Upon which several questions may arise; As,

1. It may asked, If there can be any particular church without some sincere persons in the fame, seeing it is compared to a floor where both wheat and chaff are?

Anfw. If we consider the visible church as catholic and universal; so indeed she can neither be without hypocrites, or without true converts, as may be gathered from these similitudes whereby she is holden forth in scripture. But if we consider the particular societies or congregations that meet together at ordinances for worship, we suppose that it cannot be so peremptorially determined in reference to each of thefe as if there had been never a particular church without hypocrites on the one hand, or sincere persons on the other. For there is no such promise that can be
extended to every particular congregation; but these promises must be applied to the catholic church, in which only faith cannot fail. Again, these properties and descriptions of the visible church, do not agree to every particular congregation, but to the church universal which is called the kingdom of heaven, and linked to such and such similitudes. Besides if we consider experience, it will be hard to say that never any company of hypocrites did combine together of themselves, or by providence were called to meet, at the same ordinances in the way of a particular congregation. There can be little said of this church of Laodicea, to vindicate her from this. On the other side, it were hard to say ever any, though the most choice number, should meet together in a church way, and be without hypocrites. This indeed I grant is much more difficult and cannot but be much more rare than the other; (which I suppose is but too frequent) yet considering what may be said for these hundred and twenty who did meet and continue together, Acts 1. 15. we suppose it is hard simply to deny the same. From which it will follow, that the visible church must be principally considered in the new Testament as catholic, seeing there many properties and descriptions can only be applicable to it as such, and are not so to be applied to particular congregations.

2. It may be enquired that seeing this church is held forth as hypocritical, What may be the characters of a hypocrite, as they are here drawn by the Lord?

Answ. There are two kinds of hypocrites; one is more gross, and do indeed know that they are but dissemblers; these are not properly hypocrites but dissemblers. A second sort is, more subtle: that is, when not only they make others to esteem of them, as if they were sincere; but when they come indeed to have such an estimation of themselves, these are properly hypocrites, and such as are described here, verse 17. Now from this epistle, such a description may be gathered; 1 A subtle hypocrite is one that hath some large profession, and fruitfulness as to many external duties. In this respect, he is not cold, as wanting all form, but it may be, he aboundeth in that. 2 Though he hath much form, yet he hath no power nor reality at all: otherwise he could not be denominate a hypocrite, though he might be said to have much hypocrisy in him; and in this respect, the hypocrite is not hot, even as he is not cold. 3 He is one that notwithstanding of this his want of sincerity, is yet still insensible of his poverty, wretchedness and misery, &c. Thus verse 17. he knoweth not that he is poor, miserable, blind, &c. And this is a main piece of the futility of hypocrisy, whereby not only others, but even the person himself is deceived, in respect of his own estate and condition. 4 As he is insensible of his poverty, so is he highly puffed up with the estimation of what he appeareth to himself to have: and thus his security is peace, his presumption is strength, and confidence; his praying and common liberty in the same, are most lively parts of communion with God, in his account. And thus he layeth He is rich, verse 17. and really thinketh so. 5 He is a man that doth continue and grow in this self opinion: for being acquainted with through convictions, and with any apprehension of declining, or falling from the good which he had, he doth apprehend himself to be upon the growing hand, and so to him still, his faith, grace, and state of friendship with God, &c. do become the more unquestionable to him, and he supposeth himself to be in all these respects upon the thriving hand; therefore it is said, that he thinketh himself to be increased with goods, &c. 6 He is one that is exceedingly well contented and satisfied with his own condition. And so in his own estimation, there is none more honest and sincere, none that loveth God more faithfully, or is more beloved by him. And in a word, none with whom he would exchange his condition. This is a man that needeth nothing in his own account, but is as if all were well already. 7 Under all this he is a man that hath never been at the market of free grace, nor hath bought, or put on the white raiment, &c. therefore still all the wares are his own, his righteousness is of his own spinning, his peace standeth on his own bottom, and Christ hath never been fled.
unto or accepted of for righteousness by him. Therefore is there still need of making offer of, and preferring the market of grace unto and upon him. Notwithstanding of this, he is as confident as if all were well. And he is in an incapacity, except the Lord do it in an extraordinary way to be convinced either that he was sincere in the strain of his walk, or that he hath not received Christ, or made use of his righteousness: and though he may take with many particular challenges; yet he is guarded, as it were, against these two. Therefore it is said, there must be eye-salve bestowed upon him, to discover his nakedness to him. And this is even the height of all, when self-conceitedness and vain confidence to possess the heart as to make all convictions to be rejected, and to keep the soul sleeping securely without fulfiling his own naughtiness.

3. If it be asked, How a person that is so unfounded cometh to have such thoughts of himself, or such confidence of his own condition? we may answer, Upon these considerations. 1. Men are naturally lovers of themselves, and admirers of what is in themselves. Hence it is, that men are so easily induced to overvalue their own natural and moral parts, and upon the fame account, these things that look more spiritual like. 2. Men naturally cannot discern the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned. It is no wonder therefore that they take that which glittereth to be gold especially this being added to the former consideration. He hath all the concurrence the devil can give him to cause him entertain such thoughts. And therefore often such a man is kept from gross temptations, and foul out-breakings, which many sincere persons are tortured with; by which the devil simul to keep all in quiet, as the scope of the parable runneth, Matth. xii. 29. If we consider his practice, it needeth not seem strange that he be thus deluded, for he doth not search himself; he doth not make hypocritically his burden, or use these means whereby the sincere hearted are helped to a discovery of their own naughtiness. And therefore, what wonder is it that such be strangers to this? 5. When they go on smothering convictions, neglecting duties, and such like, there is something that cometh judicially from God to give them up to that dissolution, so as to trust the language of their own hearts concerning their own state, beyond the most clear convincing reproves that may come from the word of the Lord. And this is to be found Isa. lxxiv. 20, in a very irrational like thing, as the worshipping of images and stones, yet such a person being turned aside by a deceived heart, cannot deliver his own soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? 6. There are some concurring things which may also have influence upon this, as suppose men to be so esteemed by others who are esteemed gracious, especially if upon some fits of convictions, or common exercises, they have been inconsiderately cried up by ministers, as exercised Christians, when as yet the exercise hath not taken root, nor hath it been adverted possibly, how it came to a close. By such and such like means, often may a novice, or one who is not a Christian throughly, come to be puffed up and fall in the commendation of the devil, by this or some other way. And no question these foolish virgins were not a little confirmed in their vain confidence, and presumption, from this, that they had the company and countenance of the wise virgins, which it may be many others had not, Matth. xxv. 4. If it be asked, If a hypocrite can discern his own rottenness and hypocrisy, or fear and suspect the same? Answ. 1. A hypocrite may come a great length as to this, at some particular times and occasions, especially when some sudden fears seem to surmise, or when some particular challenge and the fear of wrath is born in upon him; yet in so far as he hath thes, and entertaineth them, he cannot be called a hypocrite, but in so far as he beareth down and palleth over the same. For there is a real ground of suspicion and fear within him, &c. and therefore to be affected therewith, is not properly hypocrisy, except the same be hypocritically used; that is, that it be kept from making discernible to him, the rottenness of his state, but on the contrary, he becomes the more vain because of flashes, and seeming ex-
ercifies, when yet they have never been suffered to come the length of any real sincerity. 2. We suppose the continuance of such suppositions, challenges and fears, is inconsistent with the state of hypocrisy of which we are speaking, because security and presumption to say so are essentials to such a hypocrite. And we conceive that the continuance of such challenges, fears, &c. in any degree, cannot be consistent with such an absolute security and confidence, as was formerly spoken to. Yet no such fear or exercise, &c. will be a proof of sincerity, except they be rightly improved for the discovering of a person's self-inability, and for the putting of them to the market of free grace, by which only such fears can be rightly removed. 3. Where these fits of fears and suppositions are in hypocrites, they proceed rather from some apprehension or feint of wrath, as in those who despair concerning their salvation, than from any seen or felt groans of the corruption that is in themselves, or from any dissatisfaction with their own faith or sincerity upon the distinct discovery of their own rotennees and hypocrisy in itself: and therefore such fears follow not upon their own searching of themselves, nor result from the discovery of their own naughtiness, nor are willingly entertained by them. But on the contrary, it is some apprehension of wrath that wakeneth them; and what apprehensions they have of their ungodliness, are but impressed upon this occasion; whereas the believer first feelth and seetheth the body of death within him, and then hath the apprehensions of wrath flowing from that.

4. In their doubtings and suppositions, they are most sensibly touched with respect to the end and event; that is, they doubt whether they may attain heaven, or miss it; and possibly because of their unbelief they may draw such sentences something against themselves, yet are they not usually brought to sentence themselves in respect of their own state, and to judge themselves as lost and graceless. For eye-false, to discover our nakedness, is a gift of Christ's giving, and goeth along in one bargain with gold, white raiment, &c. Therefore it cannot be thought that any hypocrite can have this kindly discovery of their own nakedness, and natural loathsomeness in respect of the root thereof, though they may have many particular fruits discovered to them. 5. If a hypocrite come under any fit of terror or conviction thus to sentence himself; yet even, it is not simple dissatisfaction with his own sinfulness, which maketh him do the same, but some apprehended terror of God upon him. And therefore when that is removed, his sentence paith upon himself is retreated. And so in such a case, a hypocrite's sentence of himself is but his expressing what he apprehendeth to be God's sentence upon him, or it is his foretelling of what he thinks coming. And this supponeth God's sentence to be past in his apprehension, which maketh them not, so much paise their own sentence upon the account of their own devisings, as to express with regret what he hath passed already; which by no means they would do, if they did else where. Whereas a sincere person both arraign and judge himself from the sense of his own guilt, accounting it just that God should do so; although they do not look upon his deed as the ground of their, as in the former case but on their own guiltiness without respect thereto.

It may be asked. How a minister may discern a luke-warm temper among the people over whom he hath charge?

Anfw. Although peremptory decision of such a persons state who hath a form of religion, be a thing that ministers, nor others, are not to take on them; yet considering that such a case is often most frequent and that it is of most weighty concernment for a minister to discern the same; also that where it is common, it is ordinarily one way or another so far discernible as is fit, to a searching discerning eye. We may offer from these words such characters thereof as may help a minister in applying of himself suitably, at least to their present frame. 1. Such a luke-warm temper hath much more light than life, and much more delight in speculative knowledge, and in such preachings as bring some new thing to that, than they have in what really feedeth the soul, and tendeth to search the conscience or awaken any spi-
ritual exercise therein. 2. Such a people have ordi-
narily a heal and unbroken a condition, without fears,
exercices or doubts; and so accordingly there will
be little of such subjects the matter of discours be-
twixt them and the minifter. Yea if such a thing
be moved, either they will suffer it to die out, as a
thing which they are not acquainted with or delight-
ed in; or so entertain it, with some such general
expressions as rather shew their desire not to be
thought ignorant, than any to express their feele
of the same. 3. Much of their discourse of religi-
on will readily be to their own commendation, even
when they feem with the pharisee, Luke xviii. To
thank God they are not like other men. And so
still there is some exftream of their satisfaction with
their own condition that is discernable in their whole
train of their discourse and way, whatever acknow-
ledgments may be intermixed. It is discernable by
pride, self-esteem, vain confidences, &c. that do ac-
company such, which for a continuance of time to-
together, can hardly be hid to a searching minifter.
For this doth not only kynth negatively in their way
of spiritual exercises and such like, but it will even
often kynth positively, by their cenaturing of others
when they fall, by affenting their own sincerity, and
the clearness of their own good condition, and by their looking upon all
things which may touch at their fore, as not belonging
to them, and as if they were above and without the
reach of all such grounds of doubting. 5. Such
love rather to have the esteem and familiar acquain-
tance of their minifter, than to have profit by their
miniftry. Hence they will be in short in no civil
courtesy, will be desirous of having the minifter fre-
quent with them, and that he may love them, and
readily complain if he humour them not in that, yet
he may be many nights in their company and find it
hard to edify much, or discover any great preemin-
ence in them to take the word off his hand. We fee the
pharisees invited Christ to their houses, thinking it a
part of esteem, and name, to be familiar with such a
perfon; yet it is not recorded of any of them that they
intended their edification, or made use of such op-
portunities for that end, as Mary did, Luke, x. 42.
6. Men in such a frame as they are professed ene-
mies to profanity, fo are they secret whisperers a-
gainft true tendermens and tender perffons, they won-
der what spiritual exercises are, and why folks will
not believe, and fo quiet all their doubts; they are
ready to count diligence and seriousnes beyond their
own pitch, to be but fancy and conceits as we see
in some pharisees, condemning some poor women
that were mourning at Christ's feet, and upon occa-
sions they cannot well hide the fame, especially
when any faults break out in such, as once seemed
to be more tender, then they blefs themselves in their
own form of religion, and inflult upon thee; where-
as they that are truly spiritual, are commanded to
restore, and will readily endeavour it, such as fall
with the spirit of meeknes, Gal. vi. 1. 7. Some-
what is discernable by a peoples converting with oth-
ers. For such readily love to converse with those
that do admire them, and make no doubt of their pie-
ty and sincerity. And fo minifters and people both
that speak smoothly to them, without riping up any
thing of their wounds, are most beloved by them,
and spoken of the greatest commendation, even in
their absence. 8. Some thing also may be gathered
from this, if the congregation be esteemd to be
generally religious, and if their manner of carriage
under it be still the same, and hath been so for a
long time together, without any observable change,
and such like. When these things concur, it may be
justly suspected if such a work be real that is so uni-
versal and easily constant. By these and such like,
an observing and discerning minifter may at least
come so far in the knowledge of such a case, as may
warrant him to apply himself to deal with them
suitable to the same.

6. If it should be asked, How it is that a minifter
ought to deal with people in such a frame? This
will be indeed more difficult to answer, and will be
the matter of many serious thoughts to a faithful mi-
nifter, left he run, and labour in vain amongst such a
people. For there is no people with greater difficul-
ty gained by the gospel, and there is not ordinarily
any case that doth destroy so many souls in the visible church, as this doth. And therefore there is not more zeal and prudence required in reference to any sort of persons, than in reference to fuch. For helping to answer this, we offer these things from the way which our Lord uteth in this epistle. 1. A minifter that hath to do with fuch a people, would endeavour to have a minifterial eftem amongst them, that is, that upon the one fide, he may have a testimony in their conftitutions, that he loveth them, and with fuch the good of their souls, as a faithful minifter should do; otherways if there should be any other jar, all his reproofs and threatenings will be accounted to flow, from that, and fo be rejected. Again on the other fide, when I lay this refpeét ought to be minifterial, it is to include a carnal, trivial refpeét and affection, that doth proceed from too much familiaritie with fuch persons, than which there is nothing more dangerous both to minifters and people. For where it is, he is accounted a companion, and plainness from him hath no weight with it; for they cannot think that he would conffen with them fo familiarly, if he had indeed fuch thoughts of their condition, as faithfulnes will put a minifter to express in fuch a cafe. And as fuch persons usually fak to gain fuch affection and familiaritie from their minifter as a special meán to keep him in esteeming fo of them as they do of themselves, fo minifters would beware of giving them fuch a fumbling, but to endeavour fuch an eftem amongst them, as is for the works fake, 1 Thel. v. 12. 2. A minifter in fuch a cafe would not hold upon general doctrines, nor the reproving of grofs Scandals only, but he would fent himfelf in application to infift upon hypocry, and fuch warmthes, and fo to decribe it, to fhew the rienefis of it, and the loathfomenes of the hazard that cometh to foulds by it, and that in a searching, grave and weighty manner, that he may be feen to be affected there-with himfelf, as the Lord doth in this place. This would be done pungently and purposely, as if a minifter were building forts to beliefe a city, or taking a firm hold by the gospel; and therefore one battery would be made to follow upon the back of ano-
er need of any thing, than by weighty powerful preaching and convincing application, to bear and knock at the hearts with the word as with a hammer, because there is no condition more rife, and more dangerous in the church of God, than the same which we have spoken.

Concerning the identity of Angel, Bishop, and Presbyter.

It may possibly seem strange to some, that in the exposition of all these epistles, we have still applied what is spoken to, or of the angels, as being spoken to, or of ordinary ministers; whereas to some it appeareth that these angels, were some singular and eminent persons, having jurisdiction and authority over other ministers, such as is usually given to bishops and prelates as contradistinct from the other. And that therefore this exposition and application, which all along, doth confound bishops and ministers as if there was no distinction amongst them, is not to be admitted.

To say something to this now upon the close of all the epistles. We do indeed acknowledge that this exposition doth confound the same, and will admit of no distinction amongst them as amongst officers of the church of a higher and lower place. And although we hinted somewhat at the reasons of this, chap. 1., ver. 20.

Yet we shall attest any serious reader who will ponder and weigh the series of these epistles, and the application of them, if he can judge it possible to expand, and apply these epistles in any useful and practical manner, and not be necessitate to understand what is spoken of, or to these angels, as being spoken of, and to the ministers of their churches. And having now gone through the same, we professe ourselves to be more confirmed in the exposition of this title angel, which was formerly given. And if it were not so, we truly would not know how to confound these epistles or to apply the same to one, such as this bishop contradistinct from ministers or presbyters is supposed to be. And although we purpose not to digress in this, yet that it be not looked upon as any unreasonable thing thus to confound bishops and ministers, and to take them for one and the same officer; we shall propose these four considerations.

The first is, That we are sure this is agreeable to scripture; and if in scripture they be thus confounded, it must certainly be safest to speak with it. Now that the scripture doth so, may appear from these epistles which even many of the antients made use of for this end. The first is Acts xx. where ver. 17. Paul doth call the elders of Ephesus, and when he hath continued for a time to speak unto them ver. 28. he doth give them this title of bishops, for what is translated overseers, is in the original episcopos, in which place they are most evidently spoken of as one, both in respect of name, and in respect of office.

The second place is, Philip i. 1. where Paul directeth his epistle, beside the saints to the bishops and deacons, without mentioning of any minister or presbyter. The reason why they are called bishops in the plural number, is not, because there was plurality of lord bishops, as distinct from ministers in one city, but it is because by bishops, is understood the plurality of ministers that were therein. And Chrysostome upon the words observes, that in the scripture, distinction is made betwixt these titles, but the same that is a minister, is also a bishop.

The third place is, Tit. i. 1. by comparing ver. 5. with ver. 7. where in the one these words are, For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou should ordain elders or ministers in every city. And in the 7. ver. after he hath given some directions concerning their qualification, he doth subjoin this as a reason, enforcing the same, for a bishop must be blameless, &c. and if both were not one, there could be no force in his reasoning. The word also rendered bishop, is that same which was in the former places.

The fourth place is 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. Where Peter exhorting the ministers, or preaching elders, to watch carefully over the flock and to feed the same, expresseth the nature of their office to consist in this, in having, or taking the oversight of the flock: which
some do plead for have the same original, and are grown up by the same means, to be distinguished from others as being above them, viz. by mens pride and human confitutions.

I know that even by some of the fathers these two places, viz. Eph. iv. 11, 12, and 1 Tim. iii. 2, with 8, are adduced for the same end. Because in the first place, the apostle reckoneth out both extraordinary and ordinary preaching officers, without making any mention of bishops; which could not be, if they were not the same with pastors that are named, as Ambrose on the place affereth. And although it seemeth that in some things he misrepresents the primitive order of the church, yet is he forced to add, Ideo non per omnia convenunt scripta apostoli ordinacioni que nunc in ecclesia est quia hic inter ipsa primordia scripta sunt. And though that last reason hath no weight in it, to infer any change upon the church now, in respect of its office-bearers, from what it was then in the apostles days, and ordained to be by them, yet this is clear, that he granteth a clear difference between the state of the church in these days, wherein this distinction of bishops from pastors was come to some height, from what it was in the time of the apostles, which certainly must be the most pure times of the church. In the other place, viz. 1 Tim. iii. 1, &c. The apostle proposeth certain rules for the trying and ordaining of one to be a bishope, and after in verse 8, he doth immediately pass to the office of a deacon, without mentioning of a presbyter or minister. Which sheweth that in speaking of bishops he understood presbyters, and did acknowledge no distinct teaching officer between them and deacons. And indeed the rules and qualifications are the same which he maketh common to bishops and presbyters, Titus i. Chryfoftom evoveth the same question on the words, verse 8. Homiliae 11, viz. Why doth Paul pass immediately from bishops to deacons, omitting presbyters? Because sayeth he, between a bishope and a presbyter there is almost no difference, for the care of the church is committed to presbyters; and what he spoke of bishops, doth agree to presby-
phers. Only he subjoineth in the matter of ordination, doth the bishop differ from the minifter. And this difference is not to be underlode to be such as was in the apostles days; for the former scriptures will confute that. Therefore this fame father with others do assert, that then presbyters did ordain bishops, as in the instance of Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. they alayed to make out; but it is a difference that was brought in afterward in the church, and was in exercise for that time, though without any warrand from the word. And if these scriptural grounds hold, as by what is said, they necessarily and clearly must, it mattereth the less what may be fald from other grounds. And so we leave this first consideration.

Our second consideration is, that this confounding both of the titles and offices of bishop and presbyter will be found agreeable to the most pure primitive times. It is true within some few ages, difference was made between bishops and presbyters in the church; yet was never that distinction counted by them to be jure divino, or by the law of God, but as a thing belonging to order in the church, and brought in by custom. Which was, that he who was of greatest age and respect, and did preside in the meetings, was called bishop, which was afterward establifhed by some councils. If we might take the testimony of some papifts here, the will confirm this, Michael Medina, as he is cited by Bellarmin, lib. 1. de Celerectis, cap. 15. doth affirm, That not only Jerom was of that mind with Aerus; whose opinion was, that the bishop and the presbyter were equal and the same, but also, That Ambrofius, Auguffinus, Sedulius, Primaftus, Carylofomus, Theoderetus, Oecumenius, and Theophilactus, were of that same mind. Atque id inquit Medina iti vivi, alioqui jamcitfimi, et jamcrum scripturarum conflitfimi; quorum tamem fententiam prius in Aerus, dein in Waldensiis, poflcremo in Joanne Wiclifta, damnavit ecclesia, &c.

Note here, that this hath been always accounted the common judgment of the Waldenfes and of Wicklife, with his followers, whose judgment is of great weight; seeing they were eminent witnesses against the beall, whereof more may be spoken, chap. xi, and he doth at

large make out the argument of these fathers with Aerus in this point, viz. that by divine right, there is no difference between bishop and presbyter. This testimony will be more clear, if we consider many of these testimonies themselves, as they are set down by. Sixtus, Senenins. Bibliothecæ janæcle, lib. 6. annotatione, 319, and 324. where he hath the words of many of these authors, as agreeing with Jerom, whose testimony is most largely set down, and besides what was already cited from Ambrofius, these words are added out of his comments on 1 Tim. cap. 4. Epipopi et Presbyteri una est ordinatio: uter que enim Sacerdos est sed Episcopus primus est ut omnis Episcopus. Presbyter fit, non tamen omnis Presbyter Episcopus. Ille enim Episcopus est, qui inter Presbyteros primus est, which is not to shew any superiority of degree, but an orderly precedence which he that was the chief presbyter had amongst others. He is also cited upon Philip. i. 1. where he bringeth in Acts xx. 17. and 28 to confirm this, that presbyters and bishops were the same.

Besides these, we may add two more particular testimonies, the first is of Jerom, first, in his epistle to Eutagrius. where at large he affereth and proveth this truth; and when he proposeth the question, would ye have authority? He goeth through these scriptures, Philip. i. Acts xx. Titus. i Tim. iv. 1 Pet. v. and from these places doth confirm, not only the titles to be common; but that the presbyters were by office bishops: and for that cause he cites the Greek word, viz. Episcopates, which in that place of Peter is applied to presbyters, to shew the identity of the one office with the other: yea, he addeth many other places, as the second and third epistles of John, and 1 Tim. iii. where faith he if it be asked, how this distinction did enter? He answers it in that epistle, &c. That is that when afterward one came to be elected and preferred to the rest, it was done for the remedy of schism. And it is observable, that this remedy is said by him to be after John's writing of his epistles, during which time, there was no such difference. And he illufratrach it thus, as if the deacons should peculiarly chose one from amongst themselves, whom
they knew to be induftrious, and give him the title of arch-deacon, for helping them in the managing of what belongs to their office orderly: thus he. Which clearly fheweth what kind of precedence this is which he attributeth to the bishop, even such as he would allow to a deacon, that for some ipecial end is advanced to some peculiar care by others. Again he doth purposely handle this fame thing in his commentaries on Titus i. where without any prejudice by the heat of dispute, having compared verle 5. with verle 7. he addeth. And left this affrtion of his should be thought to be without warrant, he addeth Putat aliquid &c. doth any think that this is not the mind of the scripture, but our own? viz. That a bishop and prebyter are one and the fame, and that the one word, viz. bishop, denotheth the office; and the other, viz. prebyter, the age? for then they used to be well stricken in years; and prebyter signifieth elder. And he doth subjoin, in this place, the scriptures formerly mentioned for confirming the fame, which he doth not only cite but solidly reafoneth the conclusion from them and having cited Acts xx. he hath these words, obferve here diligently, how calling the prebyters of one city viz. Ephesus, he doth afterward fill them bishops. And also maketh ufe of that, Heb. xiii. 17 where subfcription and subjeftion is required to all that watch over fons, and faith he, ibi equaliter inter plures ecclfeicum cura dividitur. And left it should be thought that he afceemed this difference, which afterward followed between bishops and prebyters, to be of divine institution though in part he did then acknowledge some difference, de facto he doth clofe with this, ficuti ergo prebyteri fiant fi ex ecclfeic confuetudine ei qui fibi praeparatus fureft, efe subjectos: its epifcopi noverint fe magis confuetudine quam dispositionis dominicece veritate, prebyteris efse maiores: that is, as prebyters know themselves to be by the custom of the church subjeft to him that is set over them; so bishops would know that they are above prebyters rather by custom, than by any verity of divine disposition or appointment and when he cometh again to the text he ufeth this transition, videamus igitur quales prebyter, five epifcopus, ordinandus fit.

From which testimonies these things are clear: 1. That there was no difference between the names and offices of bishops and prebyters in the days of the apoffles. 2. That the difference was not begun by any apoftolic constitution, but upon church-culture, the decrees of councils and such other grounds. 3. That although he acknowledgeth some difference for the time, as that bishops were to ordain, from which prebyters were restricted; yet that is clearly asserted by him not to flow from any divine constitution, for there can none be imagined after the apoffles days, but from some human or church constitution as by the former wanting both to bishops and prebyters wherewith he clootheth, is clear.

This testimony is to clear, that it doth put many of the papift adverfaries to a fland. Alfonfus Califrensis, as he is cited by Belarmin and Sextus Senensis, in the places formerly mentioned doth not fland to aver, that in this Jerom did err. And Belarmin when he hath given one anfwer, viz. that Jerom intended the change betwixt bishops and prebyters, to have begun upon the occasion of the first feifin at Corinth, because of his alluding to these words, I am of paul, I am of Apollo, &c. and finding him afterward to maintain the fame doctrine from the epiftles of Paul to the Philippians, and Titus, and also from the epiftles of Peter and John, which were written long after the said feifin; to weaken his testimony he faith, Observandum eft fantum Hieronium in illa fua tententia non adeo constantem videri, &c. whereas he is moft constant, faying by mentioning these words he doth not pitch on that particular feifin at Corinth, but in allusion thereeto, doth express the feifins that followed thereafter. And we fuppofe there can be no infringing of these fo direct and express testimonies; yet we may observe what estimation these men have really of the moft eminent fathers, whom they fo much otherways cry up, when they differ from them.

This testimony upon Titus, is the more obfervable, because as both Sextus Senensis hath it, and Belarmin, doth acknowledge, Sedulius Scotus, and Anfelmus, cantuariensis, epifcopus do expound these words.
of Paul to Titus, in the same very words used by Jerom. And so the former testimony is not to be accounted the testimony of one, but the testimony of three, beside others, who in other words incline to Jerom's mind.

The second testimony is of that famous father Augustine, who in his 19. epistle, which is the last of his epistles directed to Jerom, and is also in that order among Jerom's epistles, when he is pleading Jerom, who was but a presbyter, to use freedom with him who was a bishop, and to correct wherein he was wrong, he doth urge it thus, Quanquam enim sepulcrum dominicale honorum vocabulo, quem edictum episcopatus presbyteri major sit.

In which words it is indeed affirmed that a bishop was more than a presbyter, at that time, yet the rule of that is shown to be from the use of custom which had now obtained place in the church. Neither can that exception of Belarmin and some others be of force, viz. that Augustine doth compare, not the use of the Christian church in that time with what was formerly, but the use of these words in the Christian church with what was before Christ. And so the use of the church and divine institution, according to this meaning, will be one; this I say doth most grievously contradict that father's intent. For 1. His scope is to show, that though he was called a bishop, and Jerom but a presbyter, yet it indeed there was no difference, but only such as use and custom had brought into the church, whereas if we expound custom and use otherwise Augustine would seem rather to assert and aggrae the distance that was between him and Jerom than any way to diminish the same. When yet his scope is clear, to lessen that distance of superiority that seemed to be between him and Jerom because of their titles. 2. The very expression will bear the same sense: Jam ecclesiæ usus obtinuit, &c. which necessarily importeth that sometimes such difference was not in custom in the church. And where will it be found in Augustine, that he compareth any custom of the church after Christ with what was before as different customs of different times of the same church? For to him, and almost all the fathers, usus aut consuetudo ecclesiæ is ever taken, when given as a ground of any practice as contradistinguished from divine institution, as in the last cited words of Jerom is clear. Also it may have its own weight, that he is now writing to Jerom, whose judgment in these things was not unknown to him. He must therefore be supposed to use the same, as it was understood by him.

Also in that book which is intitled, Liber questionum veteris et novi Testamenti, among Aug Mint. works, Quæsit. 101. when he hath proven from Tim. iii. the bishop and presbyter to be one, quid eft enim episcopus nisi primus presbyter? And after he marketh, that although the bishops used to title presbyters, compresbyters, yet saith he, they never say to the deacons conciacaoni. And whoever be the author, it sheweth that in the primitive times this title bishop, was rather given as a note of respect to some eminent ministers, than as that which did constitute a different office or officer, especially jure divino. And that there was another kind of identity between ministers and bishops, than any of them and deacons, though ministers virtually comprehend that office also.

It is like it may be objected, that all antiquity did condemn Aerus, whole opinion is said to be this, that he took away all distinction betwixt bishop and presbyter? Anfw. It is the judgment of learned Rivet us in his catholicus orthodoxus, in his reply to the name charge given by Ballius, traditi fecundó Quæsit. 22. That Aerus was condemned by them, not simply as maintaining any thing contrary to truth in this, but as imprudently in practice bringing the order then established amongst them, to the hazard of their union. And there are two clear proofs of this, 1. Because where the same tenets were maintained as in Jerom, and others; yet where these persons continued in the unity of the church, they were never branded with any name of heresy for the same. 2. Because even Augustine, who reckons upon this heresy of Aerus doth yet acknowledge this difference.
to be by no divine constitution, as we have formerly seen. And who will consider the rolls of heresies, set down by these fathers, will find that oftentimes such are reckoned among heretics, who much rather ought to be accounted schismatics. It is observable also, that even adversaries grant that none of these fathers do condemn him for denying that distinction to be jure divino, for which see Eftius, lib. 4. page 35, but for denying it sumply. And lo now we leave our second consideration.

The third consideration is, that there is some footstep of this identity of bishop and presbyter in the most corrupt writings of the most impure schoolmen which may appear in these three; 1. In that, generally, episcopacy is held to be no distinct order from presbyter, or priesthood as they speak, is the highest order in all their hierarchy. And this is current as the doctrine of Lombardus the master of Sentences, Hugo Aquinas, Thomas Waldniliis, and generally of all the Thomists at least. And though they seem to make bishops to be of a more eminent degree; yet by Eftius and some others alleged by him, this is not thought sufficient to distinguish one office from another. And indeed considering their doctrine in all the other branches, or orders of their hierarchy, it will well follow, that these two, being the same order cannot be admitted to be distinct officers seeing in no other order such a distinction is admitted.

2. We may gather it from their acknowledging of this to have been a truth in the primitive times. Thus Lombardus, the great master of Sentences, lib. 4. distinct. 24. when he giveth the reason why only two orders, viz. presbyteratus, and diaconatus, are mentioned by way of excellency in the canons, and are called, ordines sacri: he subjoyneth this as the reason, Quia hos folos primitiva ecclesia legitur habuisse, et de his folis proceps pons apostli habemus: and doth, for this end cite, 1 Tim. iii. and Acts vi. again, that great school-man Cezetan, on Titus 1. 5. and 7. hath these words, ubi adverte eundem gradum, idemque officium, signifiari a Paulo nomine presbyteri et nomine episcopi: nam premisit id circa reliqui te in Cretae constitutes presbyteros; et modo probando re-
gulam, dicit operet enim episcopum, &c. By which words, the identity of these two offices is most clearly asserted, and confirmed: and this also will be found to be the mind of many more.

If it be asked, how then these more eminent degrees of bishop, arch-bishop, patriarch, &c. did enter into the church; and how these differences have arisen? Answ. The same Lombardus in that same place, de quadriparticis ordine episcoporum, doth omit his former alleging of the custom of the old Testament, and other things which he abused and out of Ioforus layeth it down thus horum autem differentia gentilibus introducita videtur; qui suos flamines, alios simpliciter flamines apellabant. Sacerdotes enim Gentilium, flamines dicebantur, &c. which is in sum, this difference seemeth to be brought in from the Gentiles, who used so to stile their priests, as to call some priests simply, others arch-priests, others again first-priests, &c. and considering that the root of the Roman hierarchy, viz. Papacy, and the ordering thereof, did arise from the superfluous Christsians their imitating of the heathenish pontifex maximus whereof we may see somewhat, cap. 13. lett. 4. it is no wonder that these inferior pillars be of the same kind. And if there were any flaw from the word for such differences, it would seem that this great matter had not gone to the Gentiles to be behelden to them for the same. Also Eftius when he is to prove the superiority of bishops, he hath these words, Quod auctem jure divino tantum episcopi presbyteris superiores, et si non sita clarum e facris literis, aliunde tamen abunde probari potest, &c. in lib. 4. senten. distinct. 24. and lo he citest Pope's constitutions, canons of councils, &c.

In the third place this will appear from the considering of the anwers that generally are given by them to these places of scripture alleged, whereby it is concluded that a bishop and presbyter are the same; which are generally one of these two; 1. Some say that though the office in the primitive times was distinct; the titles of presbyter and bishop were common. But we have found already this to be a misera-
ble shift, because 1. This indentity of the names so circumstantiated, prooveth the identity of the offices as was saide; because these places do not only apply the titles but indifferently apply the duties, qualifications, and every other thing that belongeth to such officers, and offices; and there is nothing spoken of the one in scripture, but it is also spoken of the other; neither any thing required as a qualification in, or duty from the one but is also done in reference to the other, and that expressly. A second answer is that of Scotus and some others, who follow him, in lib. 4. Sententiarum, distinct. 24. questions unica where he endeavoured thus to remove that objection, because faith he, at first believers were few and so few, ministers were needful, and it was not necessary that there should be officers instituted in every degree but faith he when the believers did multiply, then it was necessary. Where there is a double fault; 1. That contrary to the scripture it is affecteth, that then the church was not numerous, when as yet very soon the apostles were necessitated to choose deacons for their help. 2. That it supponeth, that when the church is less numerous, there may not only be fewer officers, but that she may want some wholly of such and such a degree. Add, that it supponeth de facto, that the church in the apostles days was not so completely constituted in respect of the kind of officers as afterward which is altogether inconsistent with that perfect platform of the church in the primitive apostolic times. And when such answers are made by the learned of that party to such arguments, what is it, but indeed the granting, upon the matter, that there was no such distinction, or distinct offices of bishop and presbyter in the primitive times in use and practice in the church.

Our fourth and last consideration, is, That this confounding of angel and minister in this place, is necessary from the consideration of the scope, and other circumstances of the text, whatever might be said from other places. For 1. We cannot see how otherways these epistles can be profitably expounded and applied with relation to the state of these particular churches, except this be, as was hinted at the entry of this question. 2. It is certain, that our Lord's purpose is to point out the condition of the ordinary ministers of the churches, as well as of the people, or of any supposed particular bishop. And if this be the Lord's scope, then they must be comprehended under this title angel, to whom the epistles are directed; and if so then what is spoken of the angel, must be applied to them indifferently, (seeing the Lord maketh no difference;) therefore, either we must altogether leave out ministers from being considered in these epistles, and we must thus apply to them what is spoken to, and of the angels. 3. What is spoken here to, or of the angel's will agree to what in other scriptures is spoken to, and of ordinary ministers; as to preach the word, to convince gain-layers, to confute the unruly, to fulfill their ministray, to have an open door, and such like. All which we will find applied to ordinary ministers in other scriptures; and therefore cannot but be so here also. 4. Seeing in no other scripture, there is express distinction made between bishop and presbyter; and seeing it is usual to John to speak of presbyter or elder, as of the highest office that was to be in ordinary in the church; for which cause, he calleth himself an elder, and seeing also he doth never mention preeminence in one office above another, but in the person of Diotrephes, and that insinuation, as may be seen in his second and third epistles. And Lastly, seeing he never mentions bishop, or any other teaching-officer but presbyter, in his doctrine and writings, is it profitable that under this figurative fable, in a prophetic book any other officer than a presbyter, especially such as should have preeminence over his brethren, should be understood, and upon this place alone be grounded, it being ever most safe in such obscure figurative places to expound the same by what is more clear? And it would seem strange, that the institution of presbyters; yea, and of deacons with there qualifications, &c. should be so clear and express in the word, and that yet this superior officer should be so darkly pointed at, and there be no qualifications, directions or rules given concerning him, but what are to be borrowed.
from the inferior pastor. 5. It would also, upon this supposition, be difficult to find out, who these particular bishops could be: for, 1. Some make Timothy to be dead, and John now to be bishop of Ephesus; and can John himself, write to himself, being at that time not in Ephesus? 2. If we take Timothy to be the angel mentioned, will it be charitable to account him to have fallen so from his first love? yea, supposing it to be Oneitus, it will be hard to construct so of him; and so we might go through the rest. Besides, there is in all these epistles a special hospitality and sympathy between the condition of the angel and church, therefore what is directed to the angel at the entry is applied to the churches in the close of every epistle; yea, these angels are supposed to have much immediate influence upon the conditions good or ill of these churches. Now, it may be conceived how the churches and their particular ministers may come to be of the same temper; but it cannot be conceived how it can be so ordinarily between a diocesan bishop and many congregations under him: for experience hath proved that oftentimes there may be a cold dead bishop, and yet where the ministers are lively, the people may be in good condition: but usually when ministers are lively, although the bishop were lively, yet are the people for the generality of them but in a dead condition. Lastly, if what is spoken to the angel’s here, be to be appropriated to one bishop, then it behoved to be said, that it were only the bishop that had the door opened to him in preaching, as in Philadelphia; that he only were commended for his labour and patience, as in Ephesus; that he only did convert souls, and in that peculiar sense, were said to have few unpillotted persons under him, as in the epistle to Sardis, &c. And these things cannot be affixed to bishops, so underflood, but must agree to all ministers in such cases, then must the title angel be so applied in these epistles. We know these things are more fully and accurately made out by many others, to whom we refer the reader: and in particular to that accurate piece of the ministers of the province of London, called jus divinum ministerii evangelici, and to the books that are frequently mentioned there: in: for, it is not our purpose to insist in this: only we conceive that from these considerations there is ground sufficient for our expounding and application of these epistles. It is not unworthy the marking, also, that Augustine expounding that word in the 104. Psalm which is to him the 105. he maketh his angels ministers, &c. he doth understand by angels, preachers of the gospel, without any further distinction or title, which certainly must be done with respect to this place. I shall add a word of that zealous and pious writer, learned Mr. Boyd, who having clearly made out this by many scriptures and citations of fathers, both against papists and others who did here in this were papienites, both close with a laying of famous Whitaker against Sanders, who having cited Jerom’s reason for the bringing in of bishops for the perverting of schism, hoc vero verbum gravissime subjungit, faith he, sed ipso morbo detrius pene remedium fuit; nam ut primo unus presbyter relinquus prelatus est, et factus episcopus in postea unus episcopus relinquus est prelatus. The same learned author also, coming to consider this place of the Revelation, after other answers, doth assert, that under this title angel, a plurality of ministers may be understood, as we formerly did expound the place, whom Christ writeth to in the singular number, 1. That he might shew that there was an unity amongst the ministers as well as amongst the members: and so he keepeth the number of them, proportionably to the number of the churches. And, 2. Because by naming them so, the Lord would have them minded that some way they did but constitute one, and are, in respect of their oversight, so to concur in caring for the one flock, as being each of them ministers thereof, in whole; and in particular, written unto by Jesus Christ, for that end. And so this naming of angel, in the singular number, will rather remove all supposed differences amongst them, than establish the same. Because it is written to one is written to every angel, or minister in these churches, which is the thing that at first we asserted.
An author of late, viz. Doctor Hammond, among many other strange things which he hath, doth take an unheard-of way to evite the former argument. And because he cannot deny but the scripture doth take bishops and presbyters for one and the same, he doth therefore first acknowledge this to be truth: but 2. Affirtem that both are to be understood of diocesan bishops and not of presbyters, as they are understood now. And therefore 3. Doth deny that in the apostles times there was any middle fott of presbyters, as he calleth them betwixt diocesan bishops and deacons. 4. That many mentioned in the scripture and these seven angels in particular were metropolitan bishops having power over, diocesan bishops. All which he affirtem with a great deal of confidence, and doth illustrate the then government of the church from the fourth chapter of this book; which, to him holdeth forth, 1. The metropolitan of Jerusalem, as signified by the person that sitteth upon the throne. 2. Four and twenty diocesan bishops sitting on thrones by him, which faith he, no doubt, was exactly the number of the inferior bishops of Judea, although the same cannot be made out by history. These are represented by the four and twenty elders. 3. Seven spirits, signify the seven deacons which were in that church; Thus faith he was the state of the church in John's time, and no other officer was yet instituted.

Although these be vanities beyond anything which he condemneth in Mr. Brightman himself, and exceedingly unsuitable to the scope of the spirit; and though there can be little expectation to convince any who are unwarrantably affirtem their own imagination as a certain truth, without any warrant from the word, or any history; yet we must say somewhat, seeing the fireth lyreth here, whether there were any presbyters in the days of the apostles, in the notion that we now take presbyters? or, whether all preaching officers were then only bishops with jurisdiction as he doth understand them? For if there were presbyters in this notion as we speak; and if according to his own principles, bishops and presbyters were one

and the same, then it will follow that at that time they were both preaching presbyters and elders. For in pleading that were such presbyters, we purpose not to plead for any middle order, as he calleth it, but according as himself saith, the ascertaining of a lord-bishop to have been instituted in these days, doth necessarily deny the office of preaching presbyters to have been in the church of Christ. So upon the contrary it will follow, that if it be made out that there was such an officer as this presbyter in the church of Christ, then this of bishops as distinct from it must also fall. Now to make out that there was such presbyters in the church of Christ in the apostles days, who were not bishops in his sense, we propound these considerations.

First, Consider the general harmony of all the antients, of all that the school-men, generally ever wrote since the reformation. For I suppose, never any questioned that there was preaching-presbyters in the church as we take them; and cannot elsit it be established, except all these foundations be overturned: without which yet there will not be much to say for it?

Secondly, Consider the principles of that party; for generally, they do account the apostles to have been in the degree of bishops, and the disciples to have been in the place of ordinary pastors; also that bishops jurisdiction over ministers, is instituted and established in Timothy and Titus, their ordaining, admonishing reproving, &c. of ordinary ministers. And if there were none such in the apostles' days they cannot be said to have power over such; and so either these arguments must stand, and this author's assertion must fall, or if it stand, they must fall; by which there is a los to that party however.

Thirdly, it may be considered how that author's ground can be reconciled with scripture, wherein the office and actual being of such an officer as a presbyter, as we take it is sufficiently clear. For which lee. First these scriptures that do most fully hold forth the distinct offices of the church under the New Testament, as Eph. 4. 4. 11, 12. Besides apostles and
evangelists, he gave some to be pastors and teachers. Now by pastors and teachers, must be ministers, as we take them; because they are such as were by feeding and teaching to edify Christ's body to the end of the world; whereas cannot be restricted to bishops as underfoot by him; otherwise the pastor shall not have access to edify Christ's church for any time to come. And if pastors be here underfoot then they must be understood, as then in being as the other officers that are mentioned, and to have had their beginning immediately after Christ's ascension. The second place is, 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29. Where the apostle speaketh of the Lord's instituting teachers in his church, as distinct from other officers. And what can these teachers be but such as we account ordinary ministers, their titles bearing out their office especially to be in teaching? A third place is, Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. Where he that teacheth, and he that exhorteth, are spoken of, and are required to wait upon their offices, and certainly cannot be underfoot of ordinary pastors, whose special duty consists in these. And considering the doctors paraphrase upon these verses, we conceive that either there he expounds them of such as taught for the time, which doth confirm what we said, or did make it a direction to such as afterward might be called to that office, whereby he would intitle that there was none such in being for the time. This is expressly contrary to the letter of the text which speaketh of exhorting and teaching, as present duties of some officers, as well as ruling and shewing mercy, &c. are spoken of.

The second ground from scripture, is such places as hold forth the apostles to have placed presbyters in every church, as Acts xiv. 23. Now it must either be said, that there was no church in the new Testament, but Diocesan churches, or we must say, that the ordaining elders in every church, must be understood of ordinary presbyters or pastors. For it is clear in scripture that there are many churches, which were not in very considerable cities, as that in Cenchrea, Rom. vi. which yet cannot be said to want officers, as also those of Judea and Galatia. And can it be said that there was no church in any village, or part of the country; beside many churches are mentioned to be in Corinth, 1 Cor. xvi. 34. And certainly all had teachers, and yet can it be thought that they were all Diocesan bishops, they must there fore be understood of ordinary pastors.

The third sort of scriptures, are those that speak of many elders in one city, as in Ephesus, Acts xx. 28. and Philippi Philip. i. in Jerusalem, in Corinth, &c. where it is clear, that beside the extraordinary officers that were there, there were also many ordinary teachers and presbyters.

I know that author will repel this easily, by asserting that all these other presbyters were inferior bishops, and that these epistles are not to be understood to be directed to these particular towns, which are mentioned only, but to all the country, whereof these were metropolitan cities and churches. But to this we oppose, 1. How can that be made to appear from any ground in scripture, where neither the word metropolitan, nor the thing is heard of. 2. This maketh two sorts of prelate, bishops, when yet, whatever he underfoot by bishops, in the word it is clear they are but of one degree: And therefore the same rules for ordination, for qualifications, trial and every other thing are indifferently given for all. 3. This contrarieth the very letter, of the text, to say that when he writeth to Philippi or Thessalonica, he writeth to all Macedonia, &c. For the apostle in his inscriptions puteth a great difference in his writing to a particular church, or city, and his writing to several churches, in a country, as by this direction to Corinth Philippi, Coloss. &c. in the one case and his directions not to any church in any particular town, but to the churches in Galatia, and to all the Hebrews, in the other case, is clear: which is done, to shew that the one respecteth a particular town and the Christians in it, and the other the Christians in a whole country. And certainly if we will mark how he distinguisheth Thessalonica from Macedonia and Achai, 1 Theff. i. 7. and how Col. iv. 16. he commandeth to read that
epistle in the church of the Laodiceans, which yet was not far from this town, it will appear that he understood the particular churches which he named. Yet it is clear that there were more bishops in Philippi, and more ministers in Thessalonica, as in epistle cap. v. ver. 12. Now to put his gloss upon the words in that place, faith he Thessalonica was a metropolis, and all the Christian churches and bishops in Macedonia were written unto, when Thessalonica was written unto. How then shall verse 7, and 8. of the first chapter be paraphrased, so that ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. This would be the meaning, ye Christians of Macedonia, are examples to all that believe in Macedonia, which were absurd. Yet, himself doth paraphrase it thus, and this in so eminent a manner, that your example had an happy influence, railed an emulation in all the Christians of the other cities in Macedonia, &c. Whereby it appeareth that the church of the Thessalonians, is to be understood of the Christians of that particular city and that as distinct from other particular cities in Macedonia, &c. Lastly, There are divers ministers in Colos. For, Col. iv. 12. Epaphras is mentioned as one of their number, who certainly was a preacher; and again, verse 17. Archippus is spoken of. And if there were no plurality of ministers in one place, what can be understood by them that are spoken of Phil. v. 15. &c. who preach Christ, some sincerely, and some out of envy? These he seemeth were all in Rome; and yet it will be hard to say that they were all bishops in the sense pleaded for.

A fourth sort of scriptures, are those that gave directions and rules for the calling and trying of the qualifications of bishops and presbyters, &c. Now if these same directions warrant to call and ordain ministers in all after-times, and if the same rules that are given in the epistles to Timothy and Titus ought now to be observed, and the same qualifications to be enquired for, in ordinary ministers, &c. by virtue of these rules, then it will follow that presbyters in these places are to be understood of ordinary ministers. But the former is true, except we will deny that any directions are given at all for trying and ordaining ministers in the scripture. Beside, the apostles scope in laying down these rules is, to direct officers how to walk in the admission of others, until the end of the world.

A fourth consideration which we propose, is, that this denial of preaching-presbyters, is contrary to reason, and is founded upon false suppositions. For, it supponeth, 1. The number of christians to have been few. 2. That an office may be afterward instituted in the church, which was not instituted in the apostles days. Now, let it be considered in reason. 1. If the christians who were so numerous in many places, as in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, Antioch, &c. can be supposed to have been fed sufficiently by one bishop? It being clear that there were many thousands, as hath been abundantly made out by that rich piece, learned Mr. Rutherford his due-right of presbytery and that acute piece Just divinum regimen Ecclesiastici; where also the plurality of officers is abundantly evinced: Wherefore there needeth no more of this. Only we may observe from Acts xiii. 1. That in Antioch beside extraordinary officers, there was a plurality of ordinary teachers, which by no means can be understood of bishops. 2. It may be considered what the case of these churches would have been, when one pastor was absent from them, as oftentimes it was by being sent in mesages to the apostles and otherwise: can it be said that these churches were without preaching-officers and ordinances of the word and sacraments all that time? Yet that must be said, except we say there were other preaching-officers labouring amongst them. 3. It is agreeable to reason, to think that all churches were of one measure so as to be served with one man? Or, that where some few number of christians were converted and did combine amongst themselves, they behoved either to be a diocesan church, which is impossible, or to be none at all, which is contrary to the way of the gospel? 4. I ask if the case of the Christian church was more perfect with presbyters than without them? If it be more perfect with them, then it must be laid the primitive apostolick church was not
in the most perfect form, which will be against reason. If it be more perfect without them, then they were unreasonably brought and kept into the church; both which are absurd.

A fifth consideration is, that the denying of presbyters and ministers in this ordinary notion to have been instituted in the apostles' days, doth go near to strike at the very root of Christianity and overturn the course of the gospel: for, experience teacheth us, that the great work of conversion in the church is carried on by such presbyters: and this affection doth at once remove the same. For, 1. If denieth them to have been instituted in the apostles' days as a mean for converting of souls; and what more can be said to overturn them? 2. Seeing he denies this institution to have been when John wrote this revelation chap. vi. Annotation, what warrant can be afterward given for their instituting? yea, it cannot be shown from history or writings of the ancients when, or how they were first instituted; and therefore in sum they come to be a humane institution; and so such an excellent mean of edification is overturned.

A fifth consideration is, that this affection seems to destroy itself, and to imply a contradiction: for if there was but one preaching-bishop in every one of these churches to preach and administer the sacraments to the same, then either he was equal to the same, the congregations not being numerous, and so he discharged ministerial duties without having jurisdiction over any other preaching-presbyter, of which there were none according to this opinion, or over any other particular church, and if so, he is the very person whom we call an ordinary pastor, or apostolic, bishop, of one particular congregation. And in this sense, we grant there was no other pastor, or presbyter; and being so understood, this prelatick or diocesan-bishop having power over many particular congregations, must fall to the ground: or, it must be said, that this bishop had a charge beyond what is possible to one man to deal with, or, had Christians and officers in diverse places and churches subject to him, which will also be contrary to the assertions of the same author. Now if it implicated not to say that he was a diocesan bishop, and yet had rule but over one congregation; and to say that he had power and jurisdiction over other preaching-officers, and so was not a preaching-officer of the lowest degree; and that yet there was no other inferior preaching-officer; which necessarily implyeth that that bishop was of the lowest degree. If I say these things implicate not, we cannot tell what doth: for, the one thing faith, he hath none under him; the other faith he is none of the lowest.

Neither will any have this to say, that there was an inferior order to be instituted after the apostles' days, over which these bishops were to govern. For 1. It must be made out that there is an appointment in the word for institution of such an officer, which was not then in the church. 2. It will yet follow, that during the time of the apostles, this bishop did discharge the office of a presbyter, and so was the lowest preaching-officer in the church, and that therefore the contradiction would have been still obvious in that time, and they had been liable unto this same argument. 3. If they had then any jurisdiction over presbyters, it behoved to be a non-ens, while they had no being, and that for many years: which looketh not like Christ's way in giving talents to men. And indeed when all is considered, seeing these bishops did nothing but what we allow ordinary ministers to do, and had the qualifications appointed for them, and the same place in the church, viz. to be next to deacons, and have only charge of their particular congregations, and such like: it will be most safe to conclude them to have been bishops and presbyters in the sense that we have laid down. And so we leave any further consideration of this author.

Concerning the covenanting with God, and of a sinner's obtaining justification before him.

This last epistle, directed to the church of Laodicea, doth contain a short sum of the gospel, and God's way of engaging sinners to him. It will therefore be meet to take some more particular con-
federation thereof: for, here, 1. We have man described in his sinful condition, as miserable, naked, and poor; and withal, blind and ignorant of the same.

2. We have the remedy proposed, viz. gold and white raiment, &c. That is, Christ and his righteousness, which is the great promise of the covenant of grace, as the mids leading to the enjoyment of God.

3. There is the condition on which this is offered, that is, believing, expressed under the terms of buying, opening to him, hearing his voice, &c.

4. There are motives whereby the acceptance of this offer upon such terms is prefixed, and that both from the necessity thereof, and hazard if it be slighted, and from the many advantages that do accompany the accepting thereof.

5. We have the duties that are called for upon this acceptance, zeal and repentance, which are comprehensive of all.

This doth hold forth God's way of covenanting with a sinful person, whereby the guilt of his sin, and the curse following thereupon, are removed: Which we may conceive in this order, 1. Man is supposed not only to be sinful, but also obnoxious to the curse of God, and in his appearance before God's justice, to have that sentence standing against him. 2. There being no remedy possible upon man's side, as a satisfaction to that justice, there is an external righteousness provided, viz. the satisfaction of the Mediator, which being imputed to the sinner, is in law to be accepted as satisfactory for him by virtue of the covenant of grace and by virtue thereof, he is to be absolved and discharged as if he himself had satisfied: this is the meritorious cause of our justification.

3. This satisfaction of the Mediator, is not imputed to all, nor to any, but upon the terms agreed upon, viz. that it be received, and rested upon, therefore the gospel is preached; and this righteousness is not only revealed therein, but offered thereby to all who shall by faith receive the same: in which respect the gospel, as it is contained in the word, and the preaching thereof, is commonly called the external instrumental cause of our justification. 4. When by the power of God's Spirit, the sinner is brought to receive this offer, and to rest upon this righteousness, as the only ground of his peace and his whole defence against the law, before the justice of God then according to the offer, he becometh interested in this righteousness, and Christ becometh his righteousness, who is, by this receiving of him, put on by the believer; and by this he may plead abolution from the challenges of the law before God's justice, as a debtor may plead abolution from his deb upon his instructing the cautioner to have paid it. And in this respect, faith is called the condition of the covenant; because it is upon this condition that justification is offered to us therein; and upon this condition, God becometh our God, and Christ our righteousness: and it is also called the instrumental cause of our justification because, it acteth by receiving Christ, as he is holden forth in the word; and if that be justly called the external instrumental cause which doth offer him for our righteousness, then may faith well be called the internal instrumental cause which doth offer him for our righteousness, because it doth receive him for that same end, and because by this receiving, he becometh our righteousness upon which our justification is grounded. Hence 5. Upon this receiving of Christ, and presenting of his righteousness, for our defence before God's justice that righteousness and satisfaction is imputed to us, and accounted for ours; and upon this, our sins are pardoned, and we absolved before God: and this is that wherein formerly our justification consisted, and this is the end why this counsel is proposed, that by receiving of this offered righteousness, this may be attained. This way of restoring sinners by grace is often set forth by way of mutual bargain as in covenanting, treating by ambassadors, marrying, buying, and such like, all which do import a mutual closing of a bargain upon mutual terms: and thus it is expressed, to shew, not wherein formerly our justification doth consist; but to shew the way and terms by which we may come at it, and upon which we close with God; and in this respect, faith is called the condition of the covenant of grace; because it supplieth that place.
and hath in it that which ordinarily a condition hath, that is proposed in making of a mutual bargain; sometimes also it is set forth under legal expressions, as to legel an accusation against to charge and arraign a sinner before justice, and then to absolve him from that charge in opposition to condemnation; and thus fin is called debt; and to punishe, is to exact or require satisfaction: and Christ in that respect is called the cautious or secure: and his suffering, satisfying the pardoning of the sinner, is called justifying, or absolving, in opposition to condemning; and the deriving of this from Christ is called imputation, or to repute the sinner righteous upon Christ's satisfying for him, it is the reckoning of Christ's satisfaction, on the account of the sinner. All which expressions are borrowed from the way of legal and judicial procedure before men. The first way is the shew, how we become friends with God, viz. by covenanting with in Christ Jesus. The second way is the shew, a prime benefit doth flow from that friendship viz. our justification. Thee two are not to be conceived different things, or successive in time, much less be seperated but as they be different ways of holding forth the same thing, whereof the one doth specially relate to the means the other to the end, and that so, as grace and justice may be seen to go along in this great business, and that a sinner may be helped to conceive of the same the more distinctly, when he hath it moulded in the terms and forms used among men and that under divers considerations; that so he may the more satisfingly comprehend this mystery of free justification. Concerning which in the general we say.

1. That the immediate meritorious cause of our justification, is Christ's righteousness we take for granted: for, it is the gold here that maketh rich, which the dyvor could not pay his debt: it is the raiment which covereth our nakedness: and therefore the righteousness of the saints, must be put on, communicated external and imputed righteousness: so that, supposing a man to be pursuad before the part of God's justice here is no defence can be proposed but Christ satisfaction, which will only be a revalent exception in that court; which in Paul's example is clear, Philip. iii. 9. As, if it were asked, Paul, what wilt thou flee in that day? Only to be found in him, faith he, not having mine own righteousness, which is by the works of the law, but that which is by faith in Christ. Thus Christ is our righteousness, and we are righteous in him, as he was made fin for us: for that opposition. 2. Cor. v. 21. Doth evince this; but our fins were imputed to him, and so were the immediate ground upon which he was found liable to justice: in that same manner therefore, his righteousness must be the immediate cause of our being absolved being his righteousness must be transferred to us, as, our fins were to him, as is saith.

2. That this righteousness of the Mediator, is immediately imputed to us, hath also been accounted a truth amongst the orthodox hitherto; that is that as a cautious paying of the debt being instructed in a court; is sufficient for absolving of the debtor from the creditor's pursuit; because in the law, the cautious's paying in the debtors name, is reckoned as if the debtor had paid it; and so it is imputed to him, and ascribed to him; so it is here. And this way of imputing Christ's righteousness immediately doth serve exceedingly. 1. To humble the sinner, when that thereby he is justified, is not in himself; this being certain, that we are more proud of what is supposed to be in us, than of what is imputed to us; even as a dyvour hath lestost heast of when the cautious's payment is immediately imputed to him for his absolution, that if by his industry he had procured nothing to pay for him, although the stock had been freely bestowed on him by the cautious. 2. It serveth to commend Christ, and to bound all boasting and glorying in him, who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, &c. 1. Cor. i. 30. For this very end, that he who glorifieth might glory, in the Lord.

3. This rideth marches between the righteousness of the two covenants, that the one is inherent and constitutive in works; that is, as the apostle speaketh, Titus. iii. 5.) the righteousness, or somewhat which we
ourselves have done; the other is without us, and cometh by imputation; and so is not only distinguished from our own righteousness, but opposed to it in Phil. iii. 9. And although this truth be misrepresented by many; yet we judge it to be impenetrable; and that in the great day the decision will be found favourable thereon, when only happy they shall be that shall be thus found in Christ. Thus therefore we are to conceive the terms of the gospel, as if a daubed dasyour, were ready to be apprehended, having nothing to pay, suppose one should offer to undertake for him, and pay the debt, so as he might be liberated, upon condition that he should acknowledge his benefactor, and plead ever his defence against the pursuit upon the cautioner's payment, and the discharge procured by him; in this respect the cautioner's payment is the meritorious caufe whereby such a man is absolved, viz. because that payment is reckoned for him, or imputed to him; yet his pleading that defence, or producing of that discharge, immediately, may be said instrumentally to procure it, because it is not the cautioner's payment simply that is attained, as a relevant defence in judgment, till that be instructed, and except the defence be found thereon, for, to the law provideth so it is not Christ's satisfying simply, but his satisfaction, pleaded by faith, and fled unto that justifieth; for so the law of faith hath enacted yet the producing of such a discharge, mereth nothing, but giveth a legal ground of right to the same that doth merit, and so to what is merited. And the Lord hath appointed this to be the condition of justification, viz. the pleading of Christ's satisfaction before the bar immediately; for, 1. That stopeth all mouths; and none can produce that satisfaction but they must necessarily acknowledge emptiness in themselves, justice and grace in God, and love and fulness in the Mediator; 2. The pleading of this sheweth a compleat, perfect, equal, evangelick righteousness in all, whereas if it were any thing in us that were accounted so, then it would not be equal, if perfect which cannot be laid of that which is our righteousness; or, that one man had better ground to be justified upon, and a better righteousness than another.

3. That faith is necessary for justification, so that none can expect to be justified but believers, hath been elo hitherto almost amongst all uncontroverted, till that of late Antinomians have opposed it: but the scripture is very express, &c. In limiting all the promises of pardon to a believer. 2. In saving all that believe not, and declaring them to be under the curse. 3. In placing faith correlative taken, in the room that works had in the first covenant, which must be in reference to justification itself and not the sense thereof only. 4. In altering that we believe that we may be justified, Gal. ii. 16. &c. So that there needeth not much speaking to this, besides, that many things spoken of repentance, may be applied here. And if it be found, that faith is either the condition of the covenant of grace, or the instrumental cause of justification, this will necessarily follow, that there is no justification without it. I know there are some divines that use different expressions here; yet seeing they also oppose Antinomians, we will not flick on that.

There is more difficulty in conceiving of the manner how faith concurreth: that there is some eminency in it, is acknowledged both by Papists, who account it a radical grace, having influence on all other graces, and so having special influence on that which they call justification; and also by some others who making works with it to be conditions of the new covenant, do yet acknowledge a special aptitude in it, for applying of Christ's righteousness; and that therefore it is the principal condition, and other things, less principal in this. Indeed the last opinion, I esteem to differ from us, 1. That they place faith, repentance, and works in one and the same kind of causality, in reference to justification. 2. That this causality is but to account them all causes sine quibus non. 3. That all instrumentality is denied to faith. That faith is not alone the condition from any respect to its immediate acting on its object Christ, but as other graces are. 5. That Christ
is not our immediate evangelical righteousness, but faith properly taken, and that as comprehending all other duties and graces under it; and so it is both properly taken, and improperly. 6. That therefore we may be said to be justified by works as by faith. Faith being taken largely for all. Altho' where the thing is clear, and Christ is rested on in justification, and his satisfaction acknowledged as is in this case, there needeth no great debate for words and terms of condition, imputation, instrument, &c. yet these being still used among divines, we conceive there is no just reason to call them, the use of them having now of a long time made them to pass in this matter, without mistake or strict binding of them to the acceptations wherein they are used in other matters: much less is there reason to cry down the matter expressed by them: and it cannot but be said, that such new controversies should be moved. We are persuaded, that the reflecting on many worthy men the obscurity of the troden path by new questions and objections, the confounding of readers by professing as it were a different strain of the covenant, from what formerly had been preached, the giving of an open door to men to propose new draughts in all things and that not in expressions only, but also is alluded in fundamental material things, &c. shall be more prejudicial to edification, nor the bringing forth of this shall be useful. For by this all the former doctrine of justification be retracted where we are till now? If it stand so as the followers thereof of may attain heaven. What is the use of this to full a new mould, with so much professed danger in, and dissatisfaction with the former? will it not be welcome to papists, to have protestants speaking in their terms, and homologating them in condemning the former language of the most eminent reformers? And though unlearned or unread divines be the epithets of the opposers of this doctrine; yet possibly experience may show, that such may most readily be the embracers of it. I say again, when the church is overwhelmed with controversies already, it is not fit to contend for words, seeing there is some agreement in the nature of faith and in the necessity of works; and we are sure, where both these are, there can be no hazard; yet if under this new model another matter be comprehended than formerly hath been intended by other expressions in the writings of others, it cannot be so easily approv'd, lest we should condemn the generation of God's people who have gone before us. Laying by therefore prejudice and contention for words, we shall a little, so far as our scope permit, enquire into the truth of faith's peculiar concurring for the application of Christ's righteousness in the covenant of grace and what may be said, of works. In reference to which, we would permit,

1. That this way of covenanting, is borrowed from the practice of man with man, to set forth somewhat of a spiritual nature betwixt God and man: for which end the multitudes of covenanting, marrying, treating, accusing, justifying, &c. are borrowed, as hath been said.

2. That tho' all mutual covenants have their conditions; yet are they to be distinguished, because sometimes the covenant is such, as entering into it, intitling to the benefits comprehended in it, as in a marriage-covenant, entry hereunto intitling the wife unto the husband, and all that is his: sometimes again, the relation must not only be entered, but all the terms thereof actually performed, before there be a right to the thing promised; thus is the covenant betwixt a master and a servant: for though the servant be the master's servant at the first instant of the agreement, yet hath he not a right to the covenanted hire, till he hath performed the service, and accomplished his term: in the first of these covenants, that which entereth one in that relation, is the condition, not so in the second.

3. Hence we may distinguish the condition of a covenant; sometimes it is taken materially (to say so) and more largely, viz. for all the duties that are required of one in that relation, and so a wife's dutifulness to her husband after marriage, and an adopted son's dutifulness to his father after adoption, &c. may be called conditions of the marriage-covenant, and of adoption; sometimes again, a condition is,
taken more strictly, and, to say so, formally; that is for such a thing as maketh up the relation, and intitles one to, and infinites him in the privileges covenantanted: to formal consenting in marriage, is the condition; and a son’s actual accepting of the offered adoption, and engaging himself to be dutiful, do infinites him in the privilege of a son, although he hath not yet actually performed all that he engaged unto; and in this respect, the actual performing of some duties, is rather the duty of one in such a relation, than the condition required to the up-making of it.

4. There is a difference betwixt these privileges and benefits of a covenant that flow from it as such, have interest in their husbands, all adopted children in their parents, whatever years they be of, &c. And these benefits and privileges of a covenant, which are but conditionally promised, even to these within such relations, and require more than being in covenant: as altho’ a wife but have interest in her husband, as she is a wife; yet can she not plead the dowry covenantanted, except the continue a faithful wife: for if she fail in the essentials of the covenant, she may be divorced; or, an adopted son cannot plead actual possession of the inheritance, tho’ he be a son, till the term come that is appointed by the father, or he perform something called for in the right of adoption, which intimated also, Gal. iv. 1, 2, &c.

Now to apply this, we may some way see in what sense works may be called the condition of the covenant of grace, and in what sense faith only. 1. If we take the condition largely and materially for what is called for from one in covenant; so works may be called the condition of the covenant. Even as a wife, or son, their performing of conjugal and filial duties to the husband or parent, may be called conditions of marriage, and adoption: yet if we consider the condition of the covenant of grace strictly and formally, as that which doth actually intertitle one in, or entitle him unto Christ’s righteousness, and maketh him a son, that is faith properly taken, as it doth unite with Christ, John i. 12. because it is impossible

our right as in the covenant of works it was necessary; but believing and the covenant only.

This difference betwixt the covenant of works and of grace, may be conceived thus: supposeth a debtor being sued for his own debt, should either plead no debt, or that he had paid it, or would pay it; this is the covenant of works: again that of grace, is a debtor acknowledging debt, but being unable to pay, pleads only the cautioners payment, and expecteth to be abolved upon that account; and not as if by a cautioners intervening, he had all the debt forgiven him to so much, or had a new bargain gave him for a penny yearly, or a pepper corn in the place of a thousand talents; and in a word so much down, or that for gold ore of gold should be accepted: for so, 1. Some would have their penny more weighty than others, and thereby be more justified than others, or at least have a better ground to be justified upon. 2. It would be still the same kind of condition, and so the same covenant in kind major & minor non variant specii: for, paying of one bushel, for an hundred chalkers, still layeth it is victual rent, although it be of grace, that it is so little: and indeed so, the first covenant might be called of grace, because the good promised were so far beyond the rent required; and so it were but as a man that did at first require a talent, for that which were worth more and should afterward after and require only a shekel. 3. It cannot be so, for the fainers charge is not that that he wants his penny or pepper corn, but that he hath broken the law, his righteousness therefore must be such as doth meet that charge, Rom. viii. 34. and so it must be such a righteousness as must stand before suffice, and be equivalent, at least to his own fulfilling the law, or his having satisfied the penalty thereof. 4. When the apostle opposeth the righteousness of the law and gospel, he opposeth not as it were a thousand talents to a penny, or one sort of works to another, but the righteousness of Christ, or to be found in him, to all kind of works whatsoever, Phil. iii. 9. 3 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. &c. and to have the righteousness of faith, and the righteousness of Christ, and the righteousness
faith are ever one and the same, and are still opposed to works.

From this also it doth appear, that covenanting doth in order of nature proceed from justification. Because by covenanting and being in covenant, we come to have a right thereto, as to a promise of the covenant, as the accepting of an offered pardon doth go before our having actual right to the following privileges, or a woman's consent before her actual claim to the husband's goods, though the one is not supposed to be without the other, even as the breach of covenant doth precede our being liable to condemnation by the law. Hence also we may some way gather that there may be some formal different consideration of the condition of justification from the condition of the covenant. For justification being a legal judicial act, it must presuppose such a condition as may be a ground in justice to absolve a sinner, and therefore in this Christ's satisfaction as presented and pleaded, must be the only ground: for it is with respect to that only, by which a sinner can be justified; and is to be found in Christ; Phil. iii. 9. Covenanting again, being a mutual deed, wherein the Lord condescends to make a free offer, and admit in covenant upon condition of receiving the condition here must be that which entitleth to that thing offered and entereth the person within the bond of the covenant, which must be faith. Hence these two acts of faith whereby it is defined, may be thus conceived. 1. It receiveth Christ and so entereth into, and cloeth with the covenant and geteth instantly a title to what is contained therein. 2. It refeth on him, what is judicially understood as one refeth on a relevant defence, and therefore pleadeth it, as it is said, Rom. ii. that the Jews refeth on the law, which was to expect justification by it and so to rest on the righteousness thereof: in which sense we now rest by faith on Christ's righteousness. This supposeth one to be in him, and in the covenant, and it looketh as such to justification, and in respect of its manner, of acting immediately on Christ our righteousness, it may well be called the instrumental cause of our justification. Thus suppose a sinner to be lying under God's curse, to conceive one to believe in Christ, but he must be conceived to have title to him, as a wife hath to her husband, or a son hath to his father. And so he cannot be conceived to be a believer, but he must be justified: because to have interest in Christ and his righteousness cannot be separated from justification.

2. We say, if we look to such privileges of the covenant of grace as presuppose something beside being in covenant to antedate, as for example, entering into life, admission unto glory, and the like; in that respect, works, and holiness may be called the condition of salvation, because that is not actually attained without these; even as a wife's dutifulness may be called the condition of her maintaining her dowry, yet neither is this properly a condition of marriage, nor the other, of covenanting with God: but if we look to the privileges which follow the covenant immediately and do agree to a covenanter as such, as to be justified, adopted, &c. in that respect, not works, but faith is to be called the condition of the covenant and of justification: because by faith they are inflataed into that covenant, and so in these privileges that agree to a covenant as such.

Hence, 7. We may see, that when we speak of the covenant of grace and its condition, it is not to be compared with every covenant amongst men indifferently, as supposeth, to that agreement that is betwixt a master and a servant, and a husbandman and his labourer for his hire, which presupposeth working, and so the performing thereof must go before ere the servant or labourer can plead any thing upon their agreement, but it is like a marriage-covenant or free adoption, which doth indeed infer duties to follow in the respects foresaid, and doth imply an engagement to perform them, but doth not presuppose the actual performance thereof, before any right can be pleaded by such relations, but only the agreement and engaging to the same. Hence in scripture, the covenant of works is compared to that covenant which is betwixt masters and servants, and the husband-man and his hired labourers, &c. and the reward is called debt or hire, not because of...
any merit or condignity in the works; which cannot be pleaded, even in Adam's case but because the performance of the duties of holiness and obedience, was necessarily presupposed to the having right to the great privileges contained in that covenant: for though Adam was in covenant with God at first, yet could not claim life by virtue thereof, till he had continued in the obedience of the commands, and actual performance of the same, as servants must do before they can plead for their hire. Again, the covenant of grace is compared to free adoption, or a man entitling of a stranger to his inheritance upon condition of his receiving that, and to marriage betwixt man and wife which is frequent in scripture; not because the covenant of grace requireth not holiness and works, but because it doth not require them actually to precede a person's title to all privileges covenanted, and doth freely entitle him to the same, upon his entry therein, as a wife is entitled to what is the husband's, upon her marriage with him, although afterwards he be to perform the duties of that relation, rather as duties called for by it, than as conditions of it. Hence we may call the covenant of works, a servile covenant, and the covenant of grace, a filial or conjugal covenant: and therefore, although holy duties be required in both; yet there is difference, and the one is of works, and the other of grace. Neither is it the difference, that works in the one were meritorious, and in the other not: for there is proper merit in neither, nor is the difference to be placed in this, that the one requireth works perfectly holy as the condition thereof, and the other evangelick works not perfectly holy: because so, there were not the same law for ordering of holy duties to us which they had, nor that same absolute pattern of holiness for our copy, viz. God's holiness, calling us to be holy, as he is holy; nor were defects, in reference to our perfect holiness, found under the covenant of grace, if perfection were not required therein. All which are false; besides that so it were still of works: but the difference lieth in this; that our working is not to be the ground of our right to the inheritance, nor actually to precede
nels by which we may be justified: so faith must be the internal instrument, because it receiveth the same that is offered by the word; and receiving, is no less necessary to justification, than offering: and seeing that receiving and offering relate to such other, and both to the end, there is reason to attribute the same kind of causality to the one that is given to the other respectively.

2. We are said to be justified by faith in Christ, as the people were healed by looking to the brazen serpent, which was to typify this, John iii. 14. Now they, by the virtue of the serpent, considering it typically and with respect to the appointment did receive health yet so as that health was attained by looking thereto; in which respect, their eye or look, might be called instrumental in their health, although it was not looking simply, but to that object with respect to the Lord's appointment: even so it is here; it is Christ's virtue whereby we are justified, yet so as by faith it is apprehended and according to God's appointment looked unto: and, thus, as Matth. vii. Thye eye is called the light of the body, because it is the organ by and through which light is brought or letten into it; so faith may be called our righteousness as it is the mean by which Christ's righteousness without us is apprehended, brought in as it were, and admitted of, to be ours.

3. Justification is still held forth in judicial expressions, as is said: now as then an accused party, their producing of a law for them or a discharge, may be said to be instrumental in their own absolution, although it be only the virtue of the discharge given in that doth procure the same: so may faith be said instrumentally to justify us, as it pretendeth for us Christ's satisfaction before the justice of God. And so it is here as in human courts: for although some advocates it may be plead better, and some worse; yet suppose that they all produce the same discharges, and the same laws, in favour of their clients they might all be instrumental in their absolution: and the ground of their aboves would be equal: whereas if their act of pleading, without respect to what is pleaded, were considered it would not be so: even so here and suppose the Mediator to have satisfied, and a proclamation to be made whatsoever sinner be liable to the curse for sin, will accept of Christ's righteousness, and rest therein, he shall be justified. 1. A sinner is induced to receive that offer, which is done by contenting, and submitting to that way, of obtaining righteousness, this is the closing with the covenant, and thus faith is the condition thereof. Then, 2. Suppose him to look to the charge that standeth against him for his former sins, in God's threatened curse, and to satisfy this he giveth in Christ's satisfaction, which being offered to him, for this end that he upon the receiving thereof, may be justified, he by faith resteth on God's faithful word, though Christ repelleth all these charges, by presenting that as his defence, and by the letter of the law of faith, which saith, He that believeth shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death to life, he is absolved. And this is justification, even as he was formerly condemned by the law of works. Here the only, meritorious cause of the absolution and the righteousness upon which the sentence passeth, is the cautioners payment: yet so it is judicially pleaded. In which respect, we say that faith is instrumental. And though this pleading of it be necessary, and the law abolveth not but when the ground is instructed, yet this pleading or instructing, is not the persons righteousness properly or the ground of his absolution, but that which is pleaded and instructing, viz. the cautioners payment. Which being according to law instructe, is the ground of abolving the debtor from the charge. This is plain even in the dealing of human courts. And the tenor of the way of justification, being holden forth in the word with respect to a judicial procedure in human courts, as is said, it can no otherwise be more satisfyingly cleared.

To infilt a little more then, there is a twofold peculiarity attributed to faith, beside what is given to works and any other grace. That it is the condition of the covenant properly. 2. That it hath an instrumental causality peculiar to it in our justification. By the first, is meant: that believing in
Christ, and the receiving of him, is that which enlists one into the covenant, and giveth right to what is promised, and doth in our having right to God's promises, supply that room, which conditions; do in mens mutual bargains; wherein when one promiseth somewhat on such a condition, the performances of that condition, doth turn the conditional promise into an absolute right to him that hath performed it. And so a condition is that upon which the title to the great promise, viz. God's being our God, doth depend. And faith getteth this name in respect of the place God hath put into this covenant, and to it floweth from his extrinsic ordination. By the second, viz. that it is called an instrumental cauе, the intrinsic manner of its acting is respected: for though it be from the Spirit with other graces, and they be not separated: yet hath it a peculiar aptitude to look to Christ, receive him, apprehend and eat him, take hold of, and rest on him, &c. which no other grace hath. For it is in the new creature and inner-man some way proportionably as it is in the outer-man. For though there be many members of one body; yet all not act in the same manner, the hand acteth one way, and the ear another. Therefore, so it is in the inner-man, there are many graces which are members thereof, yet have their peculiar way of acting, whereof these are mentioned, are attributed to faith: for which often it is called the eye, the hand and the door of the renewed soul, because by it Christ is apprehended, and received, and admitted thereunto.

We conceive this instrumentality is justly attributed to faith, because seeing there must be an application of the righteousness of Christ, and believing faith doth concur, or is made use of as a midmost for receiving of him, which is the way by which his righteousness is applied why may it not be called instrumental in our justification, as it is instrumental in receiving of, and resting on his righteousness, by which, and for which we are justified? And thus faith is not our receiving but, the means by which we receive, as the eye is not our seeing, nor the hand our gripping of any thing; but the organs, or means, whereby though some men's faith be more strong, and others more weak, yet all apprehending the same satisfaction of Christ, there is equal sharing in justification: which could not be, if faith did not concur instrumentally in the use making of Christ's righteousness even as of the only immediate evangelical righteousness as it respects our justification: because if faith be considered in itself, and not as with the object apprehended by it, it is not equal even in those that are justified.

4. See it in miraculous faith: as it concurreth for attaining of a particular benefit; so doth having faith attaining of justification: for, that there is an equal influence of both upon their respective affects, cannot be denied. Now that miraculous faith might be said somewhere to concur instrumentally for health is clear: for it is said that some had faith to he healed to receive virtue from Christ, &c. Which others had not and accordingly the effects, are attributed both to their faith and to Christ's power; therefore, it may be so here, viz. justification may flow from faith as the instrumental cause, and from Christ's righteousness as the meritorious.

5. In the ordinary similitude of marriage or solemn covenancing, it may be seen: for actual confenting, or the hand that writeth the name, may be said to be instrumental in the closing of the bargain, or, in attaining the privileges that follow thereon, and the hand hath another influence than the foot or eye, although those also be necessary, yet it is not confenting or subscribing simply but such and such in reference to such objects and covenants even as it is the tongue its speaking truths, and the reaching forth of discharges simply that are instrumental in mens courts for obtaining absolution; but it is the speaking of such pertinent truths, or producing of such suitable discharges that cometh under that name: and this is all we intend, when we say that faith concurreth instrumentally, even to hold out the immediate cause of our justification, to be Christ apprehended by faith that faith and Christ are both necessary but differently, and so also that the efficacy of all the con-
The occurrence of faith may be from Christ the object, from which it is not to be separated when it is said to justify.

The other thing peculiarly attributed to faith, is, that it is the condition of the covenant of grace, properly: which can be said of no other grace or work. This is to be understood as is above expressed, viz. that faith is that which on our side is called for, for constituting of us covenanters, and giving us right to the great comprehensive promise thereof, that God may be our God: and upon the performing of which God hath promised in it, may be expected as is before said.

That faith is thus the condition peculiarly, and not works, nor any other grace, beside what is said after ward upon repentance, may thus appear, 1. Because faith only hath that peculiar aptitude of receiving God’s offer and returning of our engagement: and so, for making the bargain mutually to be closed: and faith cannot be conceived to be exercised: but the bargain must be conceived to be closed, and that that person to be in covenant: therefore the exercised thereof must be peculiarly the condition. 2. If faith be that which peculiarly rideth marches, between the covenant of grace and the covenant of works and curse; and a believer ever so be freed from the curse because he is a believer and doth rely on Christ, then faith must be peculiarly the condition of the covenant of grace: but the former cannot be denied and is clear, John iii. 18. 36. 3. If works concur in the fame causality with faith, then it must either be works thereafter: but it can be neither: not before one be in covenant, because such works cannot be accepted: nor Secondly after because then they could not be the condition upon which we are admitted: for so we would be accepted before the condition be performed. If it be said, that the same reasoning will incline faith because if faith be the condition, then it must either be faith before we be in covenant, or after, &c. Answ. It followeth not: because its faith neither before nor after our entry, but that which enters us, that is the condition and it cannot be conceived before nor after, being a instantaneous act, as lemma containing in marriage is not before nor after, as it constituteth marriage, but instantly. Here, still observe, that when we speak of a condition, we speak of that condition whereby one is admitted within the covenant, and not of any thing that may be implied to be performed by one admitted, already to covenant, because that must be the condition of the covenant properly that intiteth one to the privileges covenanted: but what entereth one into this covenant, doth intitle him to the privileges covenanted: therefore it must properly be the condition: and faith being that, is therefore alone to be esteemed. Which which we may further urge, thus either being admitted to the coven ant, one is freed from the curse, and infected in all the privileges of the covenant or not: it cannot be said, not; because that were to make one a covenanter and not a covenantor: and one cannot be conceived to be in covenant with God, but God is in covenant with him actually, as a wife marrying of a husband doth actually flate her in what is the husbands, therefore faith being that whereby we are entered into covenant, as is granted, must be properly the only condition. Again either by faith we are instanted in the covenant of grace upon the very instant of believing and so justified, or one may be supposed to be a believer and to be in the covenant of grace, or, to be in the covenant of grace, and not to be justified: both which are absurd: therefore faith must be the proper condition.

If it be said here that justification is a continued act, then we urge, 1. If instantly upon believing one be justified and freed from the curse, and infected into friendship with God, then it cannot be a continued act, but the former is true as is said; and to lay otherwise, would overturn the nature of the covenant. 2. If justification be a continued act, then our being received and admitted into covenant as to a right unto the saving blessings promised therein must be a continued act also: for these two must stand and fall together, viz. To be admitted thus into covenant, and to be justified; for who are thus in covenant, are justified; and who are justified, are...
thus in covenant: but the last cannot be said, viz.
That the act of our being admitted, or whereby we
are entred into covenant, is a continued act: because
1, So none living could be said to be in covenant
with God, nor account themselves to be God's, or
claim God to be theirs: which is absurd. 2. So one
that is a believer, might be said to be under the
curse of the covenant of works; which is contrary
unto that freedom pronounced unto believers: for
if they be not under grace they are still under
the covenant of works: and if under grace, then in the covenant of grace. To say here that
God continueth to justify, will not remove this: be-
cause justification must continue only, as their admis-
ting or the act of their admission into covenant, may
continue; but it cannot be said that they continue in
being admitted into covenant, or that by a continued
act, the Lord is still admitting them, or that they are
continuing to enter, as it inferreth non-admission, or
not entry, or an imperfect admission; but as it suppos-
est the perfection to be entered and to continue so it
must therefore be so in justification. 3. If a believer,
so is he, that he is a believer, hath a shield against all
challenges, and a righteousness that can abide the
trial in justice, then cannot justification be a con-
tinued act, because of justification be not instantaneous
and immediately perfect, it must either be upon ones
not believing in Christ, or because of some defect of
the righteousness, that faith pretends, and so faith
were not a sufficient shield; or it must be, because
the word doth not pronounce him just upon the
ground of that righteousness: which were also absurd
but the former is true, a believer cannot be conceived
to be such, but he hath a compleat righteousness in
Christ; and by being in him hath a sufficient answer
to justice, upon the first instant of believing, as the
whole series of the gospel doth demonstrate, he that
believeth shall not come into condemnation, &c.
Therefore must he be upon the first instant justified:
for if it were not a perfecting, it could not be said
that he had an actual righteousness, but only that it
were a perfecting.

Further, we may argue against works concurring
with faith thus. If works be a condition of the
covenant: then it must either be works as begun, or
as preserved into: but neither can be said: not the
first because it is granted, that preserving in holiness
is not less necessary than entering thereinto: not the
second because preferment is a mercy contained in
the covenant, and if we may say so, promised to us
upon condition of our believing and entering coven-
ant: it cannot therefore be the condition of our enter-
ing the covenant. Again many have not actual
works, and yet may be saved: therefore works cannot
be the condition. If it be said, that such have
postponements, and engagement unto works: that
cannot save this: because this opinion doth differing
works and the necessity of them from faith properly
and strictly taken: yet to them, that which is
justifying, doth receive Christ as Lord, and so implic-
eth this engagement: and therefore if that definition
of justifying faith were true, and thus ground also
granted; that engaging is sufficient, then also were
faith properly, that is strictly taken, the condition
of the covenant according as the understood it: and so
there were no necessity to add or mention works as
distinct from it, or to press faith to be the condition
as more largely and improperly taken: and so in
some respect there were no difference: for this far
none denyeth but that actual engaging to Christ and
to holiness is necessary: because it is impossible to
conceive one elosing with the covenant, but he be-
cometh, it is factum engaged who doth cleave: or thus,
that which is the condition to one, must be to all
at age: for of such we speak, but actual works can-
not be the condition to all, because some may be fav-
ed without them as suppose which is not impossible
actual concurring to the covenant and engaging to
holiness, were the last act of a person before death,
either can they say that engaging to holiness were
the last act of a person before death, neither can they
say that engaging to holiness were in this case suf-
ficient, and that is here intended: because, works are
spoken of as the condition, as they are distinguishing
from faith as it is taken by them to be the accepting
of Christ as the Lord as well as hath been said. See more of this on repentance.

But beside all that is spoken, these two mainly and in the way of our accounting works a condition of the covenant, or of justification, in the same end of causality with faith; because it obscureth the reference of the works, and the covenant of grace, if so, works, should be still the condition of the covenant of grace. Now the apostle doth directly oppose these, the righteousness of the law faith on this way the man that doth these things, &c. And the righteousness of faith is held forth as opposite to that, and so cannot be said to consist in doing works, Rom. x. 5, 6, Gal. iii. 12. If it be said that he excluded legal works, or law righteousness, which are not allowed by this opinion; but doth not exclude evangelick works, which may well stand with grace.

Anfw. 1. The apostle's opposition is not made to exclude one kind of works, and take in another but simply to exclude all which may come under the expression, do this. And hence faith itself, as it is our work, hath ever been excluded in this respect. 2. If we look to works in respect to the covenant of works, even so works have no proper merit, nor proportion unto the things promised, of themselves, but as it is determined, and condeemned to in the covenant, and by virtue of God's promise made thereunto: therefore it is called a covenant of works; but in respect of the formality of the condition thereof, viz. doing that is the righteousness which we ourselves do. Tit. iii. 5. And in this respect to work to one day and to work twenty years; or paying of a thousand talents, and one penny, doth not differ.

3. Faith is opposed to works as the condition of the covenant, or of justification, not as considered in itself but with respect to its object Christ, and so we are thus to conceive the opposition, works inherit in us, and performed by us, are called for in the covenant of works as the righteousness thereof, and is the only ground upon which we can expect to be justified by it: again, by the covenant of grace, Christ's righteousness, without us received by faith, is only admitted as a righteousness and ground of justi-

cation: that faith is so understood, in Rom. 10. 5, 6, and Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12, &c. Is evident: for the righteousness spoken of, Rom. x. 3, 4. Which is the righteousness of faith, and is opposed to our righteousness, is Christ, the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe, who was stumbled at by the Jews, &c. So it is also in that other place, Gal. iii. as the scope manifesteth, viz. Faith as making use of Christ, his becoming the curse for us. And it is observable that in both these chapters the difference of the conditions of the covenant of works and of grace, is intensified, to plead the necessity of a righteousness without us in opposition to our own; and so faith must be the condition of the covenant of grace, as it affecteth or refereth on that.

The second thing that mainly diffuseth from that opinion, is that it doth propose something in ourselves as the immediate ground of our justification before God, under that title of being our evangelick righteousness: for if we concur in that same causality with faith, then our believing properly must be accounted our righteousness, and not Christ's by faith taken hold on: because these two are inconsequent v. z. faith and works, in a proper sense, to be our evangelick righteousness, and Christ's also. For, suppose one to be charged at God's barr for sin, the one way Christ is represented, and the other way the man's believing and obedience. If it be said, that when we mention believing or faith, it cannot but respect Christ. Anfw. 1. Then there is no difference; for, we acknowledge faith correlative taken to be our righteousness. 2. Then also works cannot concur in that manner; for, they cannot so respect him: which is all that is intended.

If it be said, that Christ is our legal righteousness, that is, that by him we have satisfied the covenant of works, he having paid in our name; but faith and obedience are our evangelick righteousness; that is, as he hath procured a new grant of life, upon the same terms in the covenant of grace, and so as by performing thereof we may come to have right to what he hath purchased in satisfying the first covenant. Anfw. 1. This misrepresenteth God's way of cove-
wanting, who hath not appointed our paying of a
small rent as it were a penny to be the the ground
of our right unto Christ's purchase; but seeing Christ
became cautioner in our name, to pay the debt; he
hath appointed the debtor's claiming of, and submit-
ting unto his payment, to be the terms upon which
he shall be absolved, as was at the entry to this
discourse observed, and is clear from Philip. iii. 9.
where the righteousness of faith which is our evangelical
righteousnesses, and opposed to works and to be found
in Christ, are one; and the one is explained by the
other.

3. This way doth make a covenant to be a mid-
or way for attaining of another righteousnesses for
justification beside Christ's; and so doth make two
righteousnesses in justification, and one of them to
be the midsts for attaining the other, whereas the gos-
pel-righteousness is but one in itself, by faith appreh-
ended and made ours.

3. Altho' this may seem not to exalt works by
giving them any merit; yet it is impossible to ac-
count them even to be our evangelick righteousnesses,
or a condition of the covenant of grace, but there
will still be a readiness to heighten them above their
own place, which derogateth to the way of grace that
is laid down by faith in Christ: for, it is easy to ex-
ceed in reference to any thing in ourselves, consid-
ered in itself; whereas when faith is only respected, as
it apprehendeath Christ, it cannot be so considered;
for, it not only merits nothing, but it excludes all merit,
and all boasting; and therefore the Lord hath thus
wisely ordered that all may be kepted from boasting,
even of faith.

4. We may answer, if by legal righteousness be
understood that which may be satisfying to the law,
so Christ indeed is our legal righteousnesses; yet so as
by the gospel only we have access to him, and have
a promise of being accepted through him, without
the receiving of which by faith, he is not a legal
righteousnesses to any: and so he is our evangelick-
righteousnesses also: and thus our legal rightousness
and evangelick, are the same; for there is but one
charge to a finner, which only can be answered by
fleeing to Christ: and so, he is our legal-righteousness
as the law's charge is satisfied by him; and he is our
evangelick-righteousnesses, as that mean of answering
the law, is to us proposed in the gospel, and for us
upon the condition foresaid accepted by the same,
without which Christ had never been our legal-right-
eousnesses, and the dividing of the two righteousnesses,
doth suppone, that there may be a legal-righteousness
in Christ, to such as may actually never partake there-
of, and we are afraid that some such thing may oc-
casion this distinction whereas God's way in the gos-
pel is to provide a righteousnesses for such as were
given to Christ, by which they may be actually justified
and ii. 11. And if Christ be not this gospel-
righteousnesses, what can it be? for, it is by him we
are freed from the curse of the law, which is the end
wherefore this gospel-righteousnesses is preached. And
it is by putting on him that even the gospel holdeth
forth justification. But if we consider the law-right-
eousnesses strictly, as it requireth personal holiness, or
satisfaction from the very party; so Christ is not our
legal-righteousnesses; and in that sense it cannot be
pleaded for: it must therefore follow, that he is our
gospel-righteousnesses, seeing no other way but by the
gospel we have access to him. And therefore
that distinction will not hold here: for, Christ
is either our legal righteousnesses, that is, the right-
ousnesses which the law holdeth forth, and accepteth of
itself; or our evangelick-righteousnesses, that is, the
righteousnesses which the gospel holdeth forth, and
which by it is accepted; but he is not the first: Ergo,
he must be the second. And so faith, properly taken,
cannot be our evangelick-righteousnesses, seeing Christ,
and faith properly taken, without relation to him,
cannot both be so accounted. Again, if faith pro-
perly taken, and that largely, be our gospel-righteous-
nesses, upon which we are justified, then it is either
faith, including that respect to Christ, or not; but
neither of these can be: for, if it respect and include
Christ, then it is what we say, faith with its object,
and not faith properly; and so not faith in that same
causality with works, which is affected: if it respect
not, nor include Christ, then is there a righteousness

4 A
and ground of justification, wherein Christ is not comprehended, which will found no way like a gospel-righteousness.

If it be said, That he faith procured faith in that large sense to be accepted?

Answ. 1. That makest a new covenant of works as is said. 2. That is not to make Christ to be our immediate righteousnesses, but only to have procured that much work should be accepted, and the former covenant mitigated, but not in its nature changed. And so, 3. It homologateth popish doctrine, which we hope is far from being intended by the maintainers of this opinion. That overturneth the imputation of Christ's righteousnesses as our immediate righteousnesses, which is enough to make it be shunned: for if we lippen to such graces and duties as abstraced from Christ and without resting on him, that is, to be found in him, but in them, for these two are opposed Philip. iii. 9. and so they act a righteousnesses that will never quiet the conscience, and which the gospel will never own as an evangelick righteousnesses, rest on it who will.

If it be said, Cannot faith then, properly taken, be in any respect counted a condition or ground, of right?

For Answ. In sum we say, 1. That faith at most is but the condition on which Christ becometh our righteousnesses, or is imputed to us for our justification, and to faith itself properly cannot be our righteousnesses. 2. We say, that when faith is called the condition of the covenant, or our righteousnesses, it doth not imply that it is properly imputed, but it is said to whom and upon what terms Christ's righteousnesses is imputed, or how a sinner may have access to be justified by it. 3. We say that faith, when it is called the condition, is ever to be taken strictly, that is, it receiveth Christ, and that by manner of acting, is differed from all other graces and works. And so, 4. We say, that it cannot be conceived under this consideration, but as looking to Christ's righteousnesses as the object thereof, even as we cannot conceive a content, which constitueth a marriage without respect unto the party consented unto, and his offer, or declaration of his will preceding, without which no consent could be constituted to marriage, or be a ground of claim to any of the goods, or privileges of such a person, or as we cannot conceive looking to the brazen serpent, as the condition upon, or mean by which health was gotten, but with respect to the object thereof, viz. the serpent; and the ground and warrant preceding, viz. God's appointment, without which, a look, considered simply in itself, is not so to be esteemed.

If it be urged further here, That if faith properly taken be the condition of the covenant of grace, and that hath proceeded in the room that works had in the covenant of works, Then faith must be our evangelick righteousnesses, because works then were our legal righteousnesses and that upon which our right to life did stand; but the former is truth, he that said, Do and live, faith now, Believe and be saved, Ergo, &c. Answ. 1. This will say nothing for faith largely taken, as comprehending works; but for the most for faith strictly, taken, as contradistinguished from them; And so there will not be that same kind of cautious in both, but the contrary. In this condition, faith is never to be taken, without implying the object Christ, or without respect to its proper aptitude, for receiving of him, and to believe and thou shalt be saved, implieth still this, receive Christ and rest on his righteousnesses, or submit to his righteousnesses and accept of him for that end, that he may be righteousnesses to thee, and thou shalt be saved. It is impossible to conceive it otherwise, at least rightly. Now when upon believing, justification doth follow, and the person is declared just, it cannot be said that the act of believing properly is imputed, and that upon that account he is declared just; it is rather Christ's righteousnesses believed on, that is imputed to him, and upon that account he is declared just which is the very terms of the covenant of redemption, whereby the sinners sins are imputed to Christ, whereupon he as cautioner, is sentenced and made sin, that his righteousnesses may be imputed to us, and so we upon that account made righteous, and that in him, and not in
ourselves, as it is 2 Cor. v. 21, which implieth that even our evangelical righteousness whereby we are absolved, is in him, and not in ourselves, as the fin for which he was sentenced, was in us, and not in him. There is this difference betwixt the two covenants, as was said, The one is a fervile covenant, to say, so, and must have what is engaged in it performed, before one have right to what is promised, and so works were in covenant of works, the condition upon which the law was expected; and without the actual performing of which, there could have been no pleading for it. But this, viz. the covenant of grace is a conjugal covenant, therefore is not the condition thereof in all things to be squared by that. Besides works were the very material righteousness upon which justification was founded in the covenant of works; but to say of faith, as taken in itself and without respect to Christ, that it was so the condition now, would be absurd, Christ being the whole strain of the gospel hitherto to be reckoned upon before one can be justified. And yet even this would not confirm any way what is said of the joint concurrence of grace and works in that same kind of causalitv with faith.

If it be further said, May not faith properly taken, be called the condition upon which Christ's righteousness becometh a sinners, and is imputed to him?

Answ. 1. This confirmeth what we say; for if faith be the condition upon which Christ becometh our righteousness, then it is Christ who is our righteousness, and not faith strictly and properly taken, much less largely, as comprehending all other graces; for if it were our righteousness properly, there needed no imputation of Christ's after our believing, except it be said, as some papists say, that it is imputed to make up our defects, and to make our holiness acceptable, and it were our faith and works that should be justified by Christ's righteousness, and not our person, which is contrary to scripture. 2. This is upon the matter, the same with what we said, as was hinted. For suppose a debtor to be purged, he pleadeth abolution, because his cautioner hath paid and he produceth the discharge given to him wherein

that is acknowledged, his pleading and so producing of that discharge, may be some way called the ground that giveth them right in law to have that payment of the cautioner's imputed to him, yet his abolution floweth from the complex busines, not of his pleading simply, but of the cautioner's payment, and the laws accepting of that defence and imputing it to him and so from all these together his abolution floweth. Just so is it here, our justification floweth from Christ's satisfaction, being accepted on by us, and imputed to us by God. And therefore, Thirdly, Though faith properly be the condition upon which Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, I had rather call it the mean by which it is apprehended, followeth not, that therefore faith, properly taken is our righteousness and as such is imputed to us, and account to it, seeing still this presupposeth the imputation of Christ's righteousness, in order of nature to intervene betwixt our believing and our justification. And therefore that his righteousness imputed must be properly our righteousness seeing we upon account and considered as such, viz. as having Christ's righteousness imputed to us, are justified, and upon that righteousness imputed, justification is immediately grounded. Fourthly, All this doth say nothing of faith largely taken, as comprehending all godly duties: for though faith strictly taken, be necessary for having right to Christ's righteousness or having it imputed to us, yet are not actual works so, by any means, but through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, we are first accepted, and then bring forth these good works; which sheweth that they do not go before that imputation of Christ's righteousness, or our justification, but that rather they follow thereupon. For if we cannot do good works till we be sanctified, and if none be sanctified, but such as are justified, and these two cannot be separated, not for a instant of time, for it cannot be laid that a man is sanctified, but not yet justified, aut contra. Then it will follow, that a man is justified before he hath actual works, it is of such we debate, and not of habitual seminal holiness, for he may be, and is sanctified before he can have them, much more ere he
persevere in them. And so consequently, actual good works cannot concur to justification as faith doth, or be the condition thereof: but the former is true and clear; therefore let us the latter also; which is the thing that was in question. Lastly, We say if faith properly and largely taken according to their meaning, or yet strictly be imputed to us for righteousness. Then either Christ's righteousness is not imputed, but our faith only, or Christ's righteousness and our faith properly taken also; but neither can be said. Not the first, viz. that the righteousness of Christ is not imputed to us, but faith 'only', that I suppose is not intended: neither can the latter be said, viz. That faith is imputed to us for righteousness and Christ also; for then, Christ is either imputed for our total righteousness and faith cometh not in, or as a partial righteousness, and that is absurd. Again, either his righteousness is imputed to us before we believe, and so before our faith can be imputed, which is false. For that would make Christ's righteousness to be ours, before we were in covenant internally: or it is imputed to us after we believe; and so after our own faith is imputed to us and accepted for righteousness, but that cannot be, for then we would be righteous before the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is absurd. Or Lastly, both must be imputed together, which also cannot be; for if both be imputed together properly, then both in the same sense of causality, or in divers senses. The first cannot be said, for that would make both meritorious which is disclaimed. If the last be said, then it must be so as the one is imputed to us for our legal righteousness, viz. Christ's satisfaction, and the other as our evangelical, viz. faith, But 1. That is already the thing spoken to, and doth divide Christ and our gospel righteousness. Or 2. It turneth to this, that Christ is the thing that satisfieth justice, but faith is the ground or mean by which we come to have title to that satisfaction, which is the thing that is granted, and we suppose is the thing that by some is intended. And in sum, that to which others give the name of the instrumental cause. And if so, there needeth not be contending for words; for both are acknowledged viz. that by Christ's righteousness, only is the meritorious cause, we are justified, and that there is no right to plead justification by that, except by faith, or upon condition of believing, by which actual right to Christ, and by him justification is obtained.

Further, It cannot be said, that they are imputed jointly: for then, 1. Either that imputation must be in an instantaneous act at the first believing or exercise of faith; and to justification must be an instantaneous act also; which they will not grant: because the faith that is imputed according to them, is faith and the exercise of holiness preserved in: for which cause, justification to them is a continued act. 2. It must be instantaneous, but not imputed till faith and holiness be preserved into: and by this neither Christ's righteousness nor faith is imputed to the person nor can be accounted in friendship with God, or to be in Christ, or righteous, till his life be closed: for he cannot be accounted so till he be justified; and he is not justified till these be imputed to him for righteousness:

or, 3. That imputation must be a continued act, from the first closing with Christ till the end. But how can that be? For, it is hard to conceive the act of the imputation of our faith to be continued, but more hard to conceive the imputation of Christ's righteousness to be a continued act: for Christ's righteousness, at the first is perfect, and is to be imputed to the believers; if therefore one may be called a believer, it is to be imputed to him instantly. Imputation being a judicial word and act, it supponeth an instant sentencing of such a righteousness to belong to such a person, as it were, and to be accepted for him: for if he hath not perfect right, there is no legal imputation to say so: but if it be perfect, then it is an instantaneous act. 3. If it be continued, then it is continued as if at first it were not a perfect imputation or perfectly imputed; but that were to deny that it is not imputation. If it be continued as perfect then it is supposed to be instantaneous, and last: and what was said for justification, doth hold here. Indeed if the meaning be that the gospel doth continue to impute righteousness, even after faith,
till the believer be in heaven, and to account such a sinner just by virtue thereof, that is truth; but that speakseth the changed state of a sinner, upon the account of an imputation and justification already: so indeed the word of the gospel continueth to pronounce believers justified upon that account, and that imputation in its virtue never ceaseth; but it cannot, be said that the word doth continue to justify as justifying denoteth the changing of a person's state, from a state of enmity to a state of friendship; even as an abhorréd rebel, or debtor, once pronounced free by virtue of such a person's intercession, or cautioner's payment, doth continue to be declared free, that is, his abolution continueth for ever; but properly the act of freedom, or abolving doth not continue, but is instantaneous upon the production of such rights.

To shut up this, we may illustrate the way of justification, which is more clearly expressed in the gospel under these expressions, believe and thou shalt be faved, by comparing it with the more obscure and typical expressions used under the law for it is certain the substance is the same; and what is our legal righteousness was theirs; and what was their evangelical righteousness, is ours also. Now the terms or expressions of the Old Testament run thus, Lev. i. verse 3, 4, &c. When a man sineth, he shall bring his offering, &c. and he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make an atonement for him, &c. In which words there is an express condescending upon the Lord's side, to propone something as a righteousness for a sinner, which was to be accepted for him; yet I suppose no Christian will say that it was the external sacrifice itself, that was to be accepted for such, nor that it was the act of the faith of the offerer alone, that was so accepted; for then there needed no sacrifice, but it believed to be the thing typified by that sacrifice, viz. the sacrifice of Christ, looke! to, apprehended and pleased by the faith of the offerer that was so accepted. Yet the external sacrifices in the Old Testament are expressly said to be accepted for a sinner's justification or as an atonement for him as faith is said to be accounted for righteousness in the New Testament.

Repentance is much called for in these epistles, and that with peremptory certification of coming wrath if the same prevent it not, as we may see. Chap. iii. verse 5. in the epistle to Ephesus, who look like a people real in the work of God, though under some decay. It is also called for from Pergamos, verse 16. Yea Jezebel had a door of mercy opened to her upon supposition of repentance, verse 21, 22. This also is required of Sardis, Chap. iii. verse 3, and of Laodicea verse 21. For clearing of which places, and other truths concerning repentance, it may be enquired once for all. 1. If repentance be simply necessary for preventing of wrath and obtaining the pardon of sin? 2. In what respect it is necessary, and how it doth concurre thereto? 3. If to a believer's recovery after his sin, the exercise of repentance be necessary? 4. If so what kind of repentance?

For understanding of all, we would permit, that repentance may fall under a threefold consideration. 1. It may be considered as somewhat previous to the exercise of faith and pardon of sin. This is properly legal sorrow and is a common work of the spirit, which may be in one, whose sins will never be pardoned; it is therefore not of itself gracious, although the Lord may sometimes make use thereof for a sinner's humbling and awakening before his conversion; this is not the repentance that is preferred here.
pardon, but also the intimation thereof, so it is a melting of heart, and self-loathing that floweth from felt love, as the promise of the covenant is, Ezek. xvi 63; and xxxvi. 31. This is the melting of heart, spoken of in that woman, Luke vii. who loved much because much was forgiven her, ver. 47. Neither is this that which is principally intended here.

3. We may consider repentance as a work of sanctifying grace, arising from the fesse of by past sin, and hope of future mercy, whereby the heart is both affected with indignation in respect of what is past, and warmed with desire and love in respect of what it expecteth, and so differeth from the first, which ariseth from apprehended future wrath; and from the second, which floweth from felt received mercy. This repentance goeth along with faith and the exercise thereof, for the attaining of the hope for remission, with a thorough impression of the freeness thereof in respect of the persons felt sinfulnes. That is the sorrow after a godly manner, which is spoken of, 2 Cor. vii. 11. and it is that which is principally intended here and in other places where repentance is required in order to remission of sin.

In answer then to the first question, we say, that repentance, understood in the last sense, is simply necessary for the obtaining of the pardon of sin, so that without it no reconciled sinner can expect peace with God; which we thus make cut, 1. From several places of scripture and first by these places, the command of repentance prefixed to the obtaining of pardon, and preventing of wrath; and that by way of certification that if it he not, remission is not to be expected, as Acts iii. 19. Repent that your sins may be blotted out: which doth imply that without this the blotting out of sin is not to be expected; otherwise the propoing of the blotting out of sin could be no great motive to press the exercise thereof, which is the apostles scope: as, aiso Acts ii. 38. Acts viii. 22. And so in all other places where repentance is pressed as a mind for attaining of that end.

2. We may add these places where the connection between repentance and pardon is more peremptorily enforced, as Luke xiii. 2, 3. Except ye repent ye shall all alikeways perish: than which nothing can be more clear; Prov. xxviii. 13. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forfaketh, which is upon the matter all one with repentance, shall find mercy.

3. If it is confirmed from such places as ground the cause of peoples ruin upon their not repenting, as in Levit. xxvi. Amos vi. Ezek. xviii. Rev. xvi. &c. and many such places, it is clear where this they repenteth not, is given as the cause of God's continued quarrel against them.

All these considerations we will find in these epistles, where the Lord doth not only require the exercise of repentance by command, but doth threaten judgement, except repentance prevent, chap. ii. ver. 5, 16. and 22. and it is particularly marked to be the ground of his continued controversy with Jezebel, ver. 21. that she did not repent and so chap. iii. 21.

In the second place this may be made out, if we consider the promises of God's covenant, in which remission of sins is subjoined to the exercise of repentance as necessarily antecedent; so that without it, there is no access to any promife of pardon. See first, Levit. xxvi. 40. 41. 42. If they shall confess their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant, which doth presuppose confession, and the exercise of repentance and the humbling of the heart, to go before the application of the covenant. And lest it should be thought a legal covenant, it is expressly said to be the covenant with Isaac and Abraham, which cannot be denied to be of grace. The like also may be gathered from the 1 King. viii. 47. Where Solomon expressly covenanteth for pardon on these terms; and 2 Chron. vii. 13. The Lord doth expressly allueth to these articles. Yet this is a covenant of grace, being a covenant for obtaining of pardon through faith in Christ Jesus, whereof praying toward the temple and mercy-feat, was a type: and it is expressly laid to be, upon the matter, God's covenant with David; which cannot be denied to be the all covenant of
grace with that comprehended in the gospel, being the mercies sworn to the fathers Abraham and David, are the same mercies that are now conferred upon believers. And although there were some peculiar promises made to Abraham and David in respect of their own seed, and some other things; yet these peculiar promises were not the grounds of their own justification, much less are they to be pleaded by any other for that end. Now the covenants and, as it holdeth forth remission, and its spiritual promises, must be common to all. It may be confirmed also from 1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, God is faithful to pardon, &c.; which supposeeth there is no engagement, to speak so, upon God's faithfulness to pardon any sinner but him who repenteth.

In the third and last place the necessity of repentance may be confirmed if we consider the qualifications of such persons as God pronounceth pardon unto in his word; it is not to sinners as sinners simply, but to left sinners, that is, sinners in their own eyes, such as are weary and loaded, such as are broken in heart, grieved, wounded, &c., as appeareth from Isa. lxi. 2. and else where. All which qualifications shew the necessity of repentance in a better that may except pardon. It is true both repentance and remission are Christ's gift; but in this method, he giveth first repentance, and then remission. Acts vi. 31. And though he came to call sinners, yet doth he call them to repentance, as that which maketh way for their getting good of him.

From what is said, we may gather these two conclusions in opposition to the doctrine of the Antinomians. The first is, that repentance is no legal duty unbecoming for a minister of the gospel to preach, or a professor thereof, to exercise with respect to the obtaining of pardon; and that is not only to be looked after and to be pressed upon the account of the faith of sins being already pardoned. Secondly, it followeth from this, that remission of sin is no immanent or eternal act of God; but is a transient act, and that after the committing of the sin; for if remission presuppose repentance it must also presuppose the sin to be committed because repentance doth presuppose that, and therefore it cannot be from eternity. This opinion of sins being remitted from eternity, doth stand and fall with the former to it; of the needlessness of repentance for the obtaining of pardon; and therefore the overturning the one, is the overturning of both. It is true God's purpose and decree of pardoning sin is eternal, as all his decrees are; but this actual pardoning of a sinner is no more from eternity, than his creating or glorifying men, yea, in the same decree, he hath proposed the giving both of repentance and pardon, in the method laid down.

If it be said, that thus it will infer, 1. That there is no difference betwixt the elect in respect of their estate before repentance, and reprobates. And 2. That it will infer some change to be in God, if he should behold sin in a person immediately before his repentance, and not thereafter; both which say they are absurd. For answer to the first we say, that if we consider an elect person before conversion with respect to himself, and to the law and covenant of works without respect to God's purpose, there is indeed no difference betwixt him and a reprobate; because they are both as impenitent unbelievers without the covenant, without hope, and dead in sins and trespasses, as is spoken even of the elect, Ephes. ii. 1, 2, and 12, and both of them are under the curse, seeing the law doth indifferently curse all that have sinned, and are not by faith in Christ. This is no absurdity; but contribute exceedingly to the humiliation of the elect, and to the advancement of grace. Again, if we consider the Lord's purpose, there is a great difference although it is his purpose, it doth make no real change except in the manner, time, and method in which he hath purposed it to be.

To the second we answer, that this doth not infer any change in God's will, as if he now willed that which he would not before, more than to say, his will changeth when he glorifieth a person which he did not actually glorify before, although he purposed indeed to do the same. It only proveth, that there is a change wrought upon the creature, who is glorified, by that same unchangeable will of God which did before in the world decree, that in due time to be done; 'tis it is here, in time he pardoneth and maketh
done; so it is here, in time he pardoneth and maketh a change upon the creature state, by that same will and in the same manner as it was decreed; and this is no absurdity: because according to the rule, although God cannot change his will; yet he may will a change upon the creature; et Deus non posset mutare voluntatem, potest tamen velle mutationem.

There is more difficulty in answering the second Question, viz. in what respects repentance is necessary, for obtaining the pardon of sin, and how it doth contribute to the obtaining thereof? As Antinomians give too little to it, on the one hand; so on the other, Papists, Socinians, and Arminians, give too much. To guard therefore against those extremities, we say, against Papists. That repentance is not necessary as having any efficiency in it for the expelling of sin, by the incurring of a contrary gracious quality; as light doth expel darkness; for, remission of sins being to them the infusing of habitual grace, and repentance a part of that inherent holiness, in this respect they account repentance necessary as a part of all our formal righteousness by which sin is expelled, and the person constituted formally and inherently just; this indeed is an absurd overturning of the nature of true remission of sins, which consisteth in God’s not imputing the same to us or in his blotting them out, and altering the whole strain of the gospel.

2. We say that repentance doth not concur for the obtaining of the pardon of sin as any material cause disposing the soul for the receiving of a gracious quality, for the expelling of sin; or as being a prerequisite matter to God’s working thereof in the soul. This we reject as absurd upon the grounds foreclosed for though we acknowledge the soul of man to be the object whom God doth pardon, yet pardon being a judicial act of his grace it can admit of no material cause.

3. Neither doth repentance concur for the obtaining of pardon by way of merit as if there were any congruity or condivinity therein for obtaining thereof. This marreth the freedom of forgivenes and encroacheth upon Christ Jesus his office who is the alone immediate and meritorious cause of our being accepted and obtaining pardon.

4. Repentance doth not concur by way of satisfaction as if the grief that doth accompany it upon our sensitive part within, where satisfaction or recompence for the offence committed against God, and so had influence, as it were to procure the easier terms from him in which respect they do place whippings, floggings, and such like, as satisfactions without, concurring for the remission of sin, at least in its temporal punishment, as this doth within. This also we abhor as derogatory to the alone satisfaction of our Lord Jesus who by his once offering of himself hath perfected for ever them that believe Heb. x. 14.

5. Neither do we establish a sacrament of penance, thereby instrumentally to communicate remission of sins that is, habitual grace, as they understand it, by the power of the keys, in the priest’s absolution, and that ex opere operato; this we disclaim as being with any warrant in the word and certainly cannot be imagined to be the thing called for in the foretold scriptures.

These ways are indeed pleaded for by the Papists, who thereby do overturn the whole nature of repentance, remission of sins, and the covenant of grace; and do enervate consolation of poor penitents as may be further spoken to from Chap. ix. but are disclaimed by us in doctrine, and ought to be adverted to in practice, lest the doctrine of the necessity of repentance be abusing beyond that which is warrantable. We have for that cause disclaimed these afflictions explicitly; as also, that thereby many and almost all Antinomian arguments and calumnies may be answered and removed, who have nothing infer in their mouths and writings than this, that the presuming of the absolute necessity of repentance is a point of popery, a marring of the freedom of grace, a crying up of inherent holiness, and such like; which are most unjust, as is said.

The Socinians and Arminians, do also acknowledge the necessity of repentance; and although they give no proper causal influence upon the remission of
fins; yet do they miscarre in reference thereto, in these respects, which we also disclaim.

1. Albeit, repentance be necessary; yet it is not necessary as any per-requisite qualification to be performed by us in the strength of our own free will. This were indeed to makenature a flarer in our conversion, and to give it occasion of boisting, contrary to the scope of the gospel, which doth exclude that. It is indeed we who repent formally, and our will and soul is the subject wherein it is wrought; and to say, Christ is formally the penitent, we abhor; yet it is by the strength of grace working in us to will and to. Phil. ii. 13. That do repent, and that our wills are enabled to elicit acts of true repentance: so that if we will consider these acts of repentance, as they are acts simply, and are in Categorina actionis, they are our acts, and performed by our wills, as the next formal cause producing them. But if we consider them as such, that is, as gracious, and acts of having repentance in Categorina qualitatis, they are not for us; but do proceed from the grace of God alone, sweetly and powerfully determining the will in the bringing forth of them.

2. We say, repentance hath no moving efficacy in it, so as to be an external impulsive cause, or ratio movens, why God should forgive sins, as repentance, and repenting of wrongs committed, have influence to move provoked men to forgive, and pity them that have offended them. This seemeth plausible like to men, who cast the way of grace in a mould of humane and natural reason; and inadvertently in practice may be fallen into by many, who, though they declaim a meritoriousness in their repentance, yet are ready to conclude some prevailing persuasive efficacy to be in it. Which appeareth by this, that when they are satisfied with their own repentance, they more confidently expect pardon; and when their sensibleness in repentance droth up, they are ready to question it, as if there were some weight in their repentance of itself to prevail with God, and persuade him as it were to pity: This, I say, is not to be admitted: because God's will, being absolutely pure, simple and sovereign, is not capable of any motus from any cause without itself: and forgivenes being an act simply of grace; and ordering alone in all its manner of proceeding by his sovereignty, there can be no reason moving him thereto be imagined, although he want not reason in his acting, as they say, Datur ratio voluntatis divina, sed non ejusdem movens. This also would propose the most high and holy one, as some way having passions to be wrought upon, like unto us; and would obscure exceedingly the freedom and sovereignty of grace, which hath always its rise in his own bosom: therefore it is affected by divines in this case, that properly it is not our repentance that maketh our sins, either actually to be remitted, or yet to be remissible, but God's grace alone: for if grace had not ordered the connection between repentance and remission, upon grounds laid down by itself, no sinners could have expected pardon, nor would their sins have been remissible even upon supposition of their repentance, more than if there had not been repentance, if such a supposition may be made.

3. We say, that repentance doth not concur for the obtaining of remission of sins, as it is a piece of our own new obedience, and of the condition of the covenant of grace, and so now to be imputed to us with faith and the other graces for righteousness, instead of perfect holiness which was the condition of the covenant of works; as if now, God in the pardoning of penitents, their sins should respect Christ's imputed righteousness as the immediate cause making them acceptable to him, but the very acts themselves of faith, repentance, &c. and so the covenant of works will be man's performing of all holy duties according to the commands perfectly; which covenant being now broken, and man made incapable by sin to perform the condition thereof, this opinion supposeth Christ's satisfaction to have procured which yet Socinians deny, as any procuring cause of a new covenant upon these terms, that sinners who are short of perfect holiness, and yet do believe and repent of their sins, should be excepted; and these acts of believing, repentance, &c. should
be accounted to them by virtue of that covenant, as if their obedience had been perfect. This way is not sufferable, because it shuffeth out Christ's imputed righteousness from being the next immediate and meritorious cause of our justification; and continueth the covenant to be in substance a covenant of works for its form: although it place no condignity of merit in those works; yet by this it is still some work of ours that is the ground of our defence before God's justice; and so cannot be admitted; for even faith itself, in this case, cometh not in to be considered, but as it uniteth with its object, viz. Christ Jesus in the promise as hath been said.

These ways which are more gross, being disowned so that there is neither ground to charge us with Popery nor Arminianism for our asserting the necessity of repentance we come now to show positively in what respect it is necessary.

1. We say repentance is necessary not only by necessity of precept, but also of needs, necessitate et praecepti et mediis; that is, not only as a duty laid on by God; but as a mean appointed by him for attaining that end: viz. remission of sins: in which respect a penitent, or repenting sinner, may be said, to be using the means how pardon is attained, and to be in the way of obtaining it, which cannot be said of a sinner that repenteth not. For altho' repentance, as absolutely considered in itself, doth not make a penitent any nearer unto remission; yet it being considered in respect of God's contrivance, and of the order which he hath laid down, and the promise which he hath subjoined to it, it may well be called a way, and mean for attaining to pardon.

2. Beside this, there is a kind of congruity and suitableness in this order which God hath laid down, by subjoining the promise of pardon to it, thus it is more suitable that a penitent sinner should have pardon, than an impenitent: because he is more congruous object to speak to for grace to shew itself gracious upon, than if there were a continuing in security. Neither had this congruity any causality or merit in it; but only doth shew God's wife contrivance in appointing a mids suitable his end, which is the glorifying of his grace; and the making of himself to be precious to the sinner.

3. Repentance concurrent in the obtaining of pardon, by qualifying the sinner in reference to the promise, wherein pardon is proposed: which is not to be understood, as if this qualification were a thing previous to a saving work of God's grace, or as if it did dispoze the subject for receiving of any inherent quality: Or Lastly, as if there were any merit in it to commend the person so qualified unto God for the attaining of pardon; these things we have already rejected; but it may be said to qualify a person in these two respects. 1. That it putth one within the reach of the promise, which speaketh pardon to none but to such who are so qualified; and thus it qualifyeth the person merely with respect to the promise, and the qualification contained in it: and so a true penitent sinner, may be said to be qualified for remission and may take hold of the promises that make offer of the same, which no other, not so qualified, can do: because the promises are peculiarly holden forth to such who are so qualified. It qualifyeth the sinner in reference to the promise as it doth dispose him to accept the offered salvation freely and to rest upon Christ alone for that end. Thus it qualifyeth for obtaining of pardon, as felt poverty qualifyeth a proud beggar to receive willingly an offered alms, and to be thankful for it: neither is the aim the less free, that it required one sensible of poverty to receive it; but it is rather the more free and acknowledged to be so, when it is conferred: even so it is here.

There is one thing more questioned even among orthodox divines, that is, if repentance may be accounted a condition of the covenant with faith; and if in that respect it be necessary and do concur for the obtaining of pardon? Answer. That we may not digress long in this we shall lay down some alterations, after we have permitted this distinction. A condition may be taken more largely for any thing required as an antecedent for obtaining the thing promised: in this sense, there may be many conditions. 2. It may be
taken more strictly and properly, for that upon which
the closing of the covenant dependeth, and that which
as such cannot be considered but as implying the clos-
ing thereof. 3. A condition may be taken, as it looks
to some consequent following the close and, is
virtually implied therein. As for instance, in marriage
there are several things necessary, as the hearing of
the proposal, the believing historically the truth of
the thing heard, an effect of it and a desire to have
it, with a loathfulness to offend the party proposing it,
there are supposed to be requisite and necessary in
one that is called to marry that she should forget
her kindred and her father's house, and cleave to the
husband, and so forth. Yet none of these resolutions
or qualifications are; but the parties to accept the
offered match; upon the terms proposed. The ac-
tual and positive solemn declaration whereof, in the
approved way, is that which formally closeth the
match, and entitleth the party to accepting the
husband, which none of these former qualifications
did; after which there followeth the performance of
marriage duties ; the obligation whereof was contained
in the marriage contract. Yet cannot they be account-
ed properly the condition of the marriage-covenant;
because the performing of them doth presuppose the
marriage; just so it is here there are some things
that in a large sense are pre-requisite to the closing of
the covenant or at least do go along with it as
conviction of sin, repentance, historical faith, desire
of peace and union with God, &c. Something viz.
faith doth actually clothe therewith; some things
follow thereon, as duties to be performed by one in
covenant, as the duties of holiness and bringing forth
the fruits of it, &c.

Now to come to our assestions, the first of them is
this. If we take a condition largely repentance may
be called a condition of the covenant, as sensible
poverty may be called a condition upon which aims
is given, or as the forsaking of the father's house and
cleaving to the husband, may be called the condition,
of the marriage, as conviction may be called a con-
dition of the covenant, because it is supposed.

Yet Secondly, We assert, that if we take a condition

strictly and properly, repentance cannot be called the
condition of the covenant, but faith only, in that pro-
per strict sense: because,

1. In the opposition of the two covenants of works
and grace, faith is put in opposition to works and
repentance is not so formally opposed, Rom. x. 5. 6.
&c. faith in that place is to be understood properly
as distinguished from other graces of repentance, love,
&c. because it is that faith which doth peculiarly jus-
tify in opposition to works, and as contradistinguishes
from them.

2. Because that which is the condition of the cov-
enant of grace, and doth succeed to the condition of
the covenant of works, must be something laying hold on
an external object without a man, viz. Christ's right-
eousness : for the performing of the condition must be
the ground of our expecting the thing promised;
which only Christ's righteousness, laid hold on, can
be reckoned to be. But repentance cannot act thus
upon Christ's righteousness by taking hold of it with-
out a man's self, but it acteth upon an object within
himself, viz. upon his own sins, in turning from them
to God, which yet it doth but imperfectly; and so
cannot be opposed in reckoning with God, in place
of the condition of the covenant of works, therefore
repentance cannot be properly the condition of the
the covenant of grace, nor yet any thing that is
merely inherent in us, and doth not act upon Christ
whereof more was said formerly.

If it be said that faith is an inherent grace no less
than repentance : the answer is easy, viz. That faith
is not considered merely as an inherent grace, when
it is called the condition of the covenant, but as it
unites to Christ, and closeth with him offered in the
gospel; even as in a marriage-covenant willingness and
contentedness to marry such a man, although it be
an act of the will; yet as it is an act of the will, it is
not considered as the condition of the marriage-knot,
but as it relateth to a proposed match, and is the ac-
tecting. And hence though love respect to the party
and other things be necessaries to marriage and in a
large sense may be called conditions thereof; yet are
they not properly the condition which constitutes
a person married to another, because they act not so as to receive and close with the proposed offer.

3. Repentance is not that which formally constitutes one a covenantor: because one is not a covenantor as he is a penitent, but as he is a believer: for the immediate satisfying ground of some claims to the covenant, is because by faith he hath received the offer; and therefore such he hath right to the covenant: it would not so follow from repentance viz. upon this formal consideration, he exercise repentance, therefore upon that consideration he is a covenantor. It is true it is an evidence of the former because a penitent is a covenantor but his being, a penitent is not the ratio formalis of his being a covenantor; only it supposeth him to have by faith closed with the covenant. For we may consider repenting as abstracted from formal closing and covenanting, although we cannot separate the one from the other: but we cannot consider believing as acting on its object, but we must consider it as closing with the covenant. Therefore repentance cannot properly be the condition of the covenant as faith is:

4. That which is properly the condition doth of itself, upon its fulfilling, give one a title to the things promised, and doth become the ground of a right unto them. It was so upon supposition of fulfilling of the covenant of works, and it so in all covenants; but repentance cannot do so: therefore &c. If it be said, although repentance cannot do it alone, yet faith and it may do so together. And seeing by this opinion faith is admitted with repentance jointly to be the condition of the covenant, that argument cannot hold, because it is not said that repentance is the only condition. Anv. The argument doth shut out repentance from being accounted any part of the proper condition, that if repentance cannot jointly with believing in Christ be put as a piece of our righteousness before God's throne, then it can be no part of the proper condition, because the proper condition hath a ground in all covenants to plead for the performance of what is promised, and the absolving of the party fulfilling the same, upon that account. But the former cannot be said of repentance, for our repentance can no ways be alleged before God's justice as our righteousness. Ergo, &c. This may be made out thus, if repentance be taking as any part of our righteousness, then it must be either as a grace inherent in us, or as it acteth on Christ's righteousness, but neither can be said: not the first because no inherent grace is to be admitted in that respect, in whole or in part; not the second, because repentance hath no such faculty of acting on Christ's righteousness, as hath been said, and therefore cannot be said to concur so at all.

5. If receiving of Christ's offer, be the formal and proper condition of the covenant alone, then repentance cannot be any part of the proper condition thereof, because it is not by repentance, but by faith that we do receive him; but the former is true: receiving and closing with Christ by faith, is the only proper condition thereof. Therefore, &c. Beside what is said in the former discourse, this appeareth thus, If receiving of Christ, by faith doth only formally entitle one to the covenant, and all the promises therefore as such, then it must be formally the proper condition, because that entitling to the thing promised, is the great character of a proper condition; but faith only is such. And therefore is the righteousness of this covenant called peculiarly the righteousness of faith, and not of repentance, love, &c. Because faith giveth a title to the righteousness covenant, which repentance doth not. And because in performing of the mercies covenant the in the way of grace, greater weight is laid on faith, than on repentance, or any other grace. Again, that faith is the proper condition, may appear thus, because it is properly and expressly proposed as the condition. Acts viii. 57. It is said to be the Eunuch, If thou believest thou may be baptized; and Acts xvi. 30. 31. to the savior, when the question is expressly proposed, What shall I do to be saved? Believe saith Paul and thou shalt be saved. So answered the Lord, John vi. 28. 29. This is the work of God to believe, &c. Neither can it in reason be objected, that as these places do propose faith, so other places do propone repentance as the condition, as Acts ii. 38. &c. For it
cannot be denied, but faith doth otherwise act of Christ's righteousness and the covenant than repenta-
cence can do, and therefore faith is acknowledged
to be principle. Whereas if that objection hold, re-
penance and works would be equalled with it. We
therefore take it thus where repentance is proposed,
there the whole way of turning to God more gen-
erally is proposed. But where faith is proposed, that
which more properly and peculiarly doth state our
interest in God is proposed, as the consideration of the
formal actings of these graces will clear, and is wholly
denied by none.

That must be the proper condition of the coven-
ant which, doth intitle God to the person, as the
person to God. For the covenant being mutual,
that which giveth man a right to God, and bring-
them within the compass of the covenant, must
constitute them to be Gods, and give him as it were
a right to them by virtue thereof; but it is not re-
penance that giveth God formally a title to a soul
but it is receiving of him by faith, and submit-
ting to his righteousness. Therefore it must not be re-
penance, but faith, this is the proper condition
This is seen in a marriage-covenant. For that in
the womans condition, upon her part, which doth
entitle her to her husband, as well as her husband
to her. Now, it is not repentance that giveth up
one to Christ as his, as is clear, but faith, &c. that
delivereth up a person to him, and is that whereby
one taketh him and confesseth to be his. And there-
fore it is faith that doth entitle Christ to be his.

Ergo, &c.

7. If all these works were the condition of the coven-
ant, then entry into the covenant were a suc-
cessive work, and not instantaneous, but this is ab-
surd. Therefore not these but faith alone is the con-
dition of the covenant; for if in an hour; yea, in
an instant at a sermon, a man may have his heart
opened to receive Christ, and by that have a right
to baptism as a covenantor, then it is not successive;
but the former is truth, Ergo.

8. If these works were the condition, and not
faith only, then upon supposition of faith could not

the sacrament of baptism be administered; but it be-
hoveth to have Antecedence to it, not only the
purpose, but the actual performing of these works;
because, baptising supponeth the accepting of the
covention; what therefore entitleth one in profession,
must, when it is really done, be the condition of the
inward covenanting.

9. If faith be the proper condition, then repentance
cannot be so; because faith is not a condition of the
covenant merely as it is a grace, but as it is peculiar-
ly qualified in its manner of acting. Now repentance
not being qualified with that manner of acting,
cannot be a part of the proper condition, &c. be-
cause if so, then were graces of different actings
admitted to concur in the same capacity and man-
er of acting, contrary to their natures.

2. If so, then not only repentance but every grace, and all
good works, would be accounted parts of the proper
condition of the covenant, as well as repentance and
faith, if there were no peculiarities in faith's acting
respected in this. And though this may be counted
no absurdity by some; yet to such as plead only to
join repentance with faith, it may have weight: and
to others we propose these considerations. First,
That the evidence of light doth confine the ac-
knowledging of faith to be eminently the condition
beyond all; yea, that it may be called the only con-
dition of the new covenant, &c. Because it is the
principal condition, and the other but less principal.

Because all the rest reducible to it, as necessary an-
tecedents or means, &c. to Mr. Baxter, Theol. Thes.

&c. and the formal and essential acts of this faith are
acknowledged to be subjection, acceptance, consent,
covenanting, and self-reigning. Now, if faith be the principal condition, and that as acting
so, in which respects no other grace can act, then
certainly faith hath a peculiar property here, and that
not as grace simply, but in respect of the formality
of its acting: which doth confirm all that is said.
And thus faith, is not the principle condition, as
being only so in degree, like a chief city among many
cities, but in respect of a different manner of acting.
and an excellency to say so, that is in it in that respect, such acts being peculiar and proper to it, which are the proper characters of a proper condition: and if so, seeing all other things mentioned are acknowledged as necessary antecedents or means, implied duties, &c. why should there be a contending about words, and a new controversy stated for the nature of a condition when the church is almost suffocated with controversies already? Secondly, if works be the condition equally with faith, then our being accounted covenanters must follow actual holiness, and till then none are indeed covenanters: which is absurd, as was formerly said: for so none could otherways have right to anything in the covenant. If it be said there are feminal and in purpose at the entry, that will not answer it: because it is not the purpose, but the actual performing of the condition that giveth right. Beside, if a purpose, satisfy for a condition in these, then either feminal faith or a purpose thereof is to be admitted also; which is absurd: or if actual faith be required, and but other conditions in purpose, then it is actual faith and not the purpose that is the proper condition of the covenant. Thirdly, if these graces and good works be the condition of the covenant, then it is either in respect of their particular acts, or of preserving in them; but neither can be said. Ergo, &c. Not particular acts: because the scripture hangeth the prize on overcoming continuing to the end, &c. and not on acts. Nor can it be perseverance: because so, no benefit of the covenant could be pleaded till it were ended: for it is the entire condition, and not a part thereof that giveth title and right, but it is absurd that none should have right to any benefit before perseverance be ended, whereas perseverance, is a privilege that a covenant may claim. These may indeed be called somewhat conditions of obtaining the possessions of the great benefit in the covenant but not of the covenant itself; and are duties implied to be performed by a covenantant, but cannot be conditions upon which he is admitted. And though somewhat to this purpose, was said formerly, yet the matter being to like there is no hazard nor prejudice from this conincidency.

Affert. 1. Although, in strict speaking, repentance be not the proper condition of the covenant; yet as to the naming of it a condition, or not we conceive there is no great ground of debate; and if the matter be well guarded, the expression may be suffered, otherways it is no strife about words. We conceive that the guarding of the matter doth require. 1. That these errors both of Papists, Armenians, and Socinians formerly mentioned be carefully eschewed, and that by giving it the name of a condition we do not fasten upon it any of these senses, especially the last, to which it is most liable.

2. This would be guarded, that repentance be not shuffled in as a piece of our righteousness or that which we make an immediate defence and shelter against the justice of God: of which somewhat hath been formerly spoken.

3. This would be granted that repentance be not accounted to be a condition in that same capacity and formality of acting as faith is; because that would either confound the nature of these graces, or wrong the way of the gospel, wherein ever some thing peculiarly is attributed to faith.

We come now to the third thing proposed that is, if repentance be necessary to a justified person for obtaining the pardon of sins committed after justification, as well as before it. To which we answer shortly, that the scripture doth hold forth the same necessity in this case, as in the former. 1. Because there is the same order in the commands that are given, and the promises that are made to them for obtaining pardon, as may be gathered from the epistle to thehe in Ephesians, who may well be supposed to be believers and the ground is general, in this epistle to Laodicea, ver 16. Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten, faith the Lord, be zealous therefore and repent: where repentance is put in as necessary mids for removing God's rebuke and quarrel, even from them whom he loveth. 2. The promises made to believers, run in the same terms. 1 John 1. 9 If we confess, God is faithful to pardon, &c. Where John keepeth the same method in reference to pardon, even
then he wrote to believers; and putteth himself in the roll. 3. Experience doth also confirm the same as we may gather from David, Psal. 32. 3, 4. While I kept silence, my bones waxed old, &c. But I confess unto thee and thou forgettest me, &c. In which place, this connexion and order is clear. Neither can it be said that David only obtained the sense of pardon. 1. Because he himself doth account it pardon, and such happiness as doth proceed not from the imputation of sin. 2. Because, Rom. iv. the apostle maketh use of his experience for the describing and confirming of justification itself; which could not have been, if the place had spoken only of the declaration thereof. And it cannot be otherwise, seeing the law curseth every sinner, and the gospel abhors none but the penitent. It may be gathered also from Nathan’s word to David, 2 Sam. xii. declaring his son to be pardoned after his acknowledging which supplication it not to have been to before that time. So also it may be gathered from the Lord’s dealing with Job’s friends Job xiii with whom the Lord was angry, till they humbled themselves before God.

Neither can it well be objected here that this may hazard the preference of the faiths, supposing that some of them may die without actual repentance. For if the doctrine and nature of the covenant betwixt God and believers, doth include a twofold impossibility, 1. That a sinful believer can be pardoned without repentance, because the Lord hath appointed that order and method, and that wisely and graciously for the securing of believers from sin, for the humbling of them under it, and for directing of them how to be freed from it, and there is need of this: least believers being in a great part corrupt, should abuse God’s goodness.

The other is, that it is impossible for a justified person to die under sin without repentance. And these two do not cross one another; because the first is conditional; no justified person having sin if he repent not, can be pardoned; the other is absolute, viz. No justified person can die under sin without repentance; because they are kept by the power of God to salvation, 1 Pet. i. 8. And he who hath ordered the end, hath also in his covenant ordered the means necessary thereunto; so that they cannot but be again renewed unto repentance. And it is in this, as betwixt election and effectual calling; the no elect can be justified, till he be effectual called; so that if it were possible he should die at age before effectual calling, he should not be saved; yet it is impossibly impossible that any of them can die before effectual calling: so must it be here in respect of the renewing of faith and repentance.

It will be difficult to clear the fourth thing, viz. What kind of repentance, to speak so, is to be accounted simply necessary for obtaining the pardon of sin; because sometimes persons are not soon satisfied with the degree and kind of their repentance; sometimes again, even believers after foul slips are taken away without any sensible like work of repentance for the same. It may be questioned therefore upon the former suppositions, what is to be accounted repentance? In answer to this which we shall first lay down some advertisements concerning repentance, in the general; and then some distinctions of the same: from which the answer may be easily formed.

1. It is no premonitory degree of repentance that is required as simply necessary; it is sincere repentance, being its native fruits, that is to be acquiesced in.

2. This sincerity of repentance is not to be judged only by the sorrow, horror, or grief that sometimes do accompany it, nor by the continuance thereof in its exercise; because repentance may be true where little of these are; and it may be unsound where much of these is sensible, and that for a long times continuance, as experience doth confirm.

3. The sincerity and sufficiency of repentance therefore, is to be tried mainly by the rise and effects thereof, &c. viz. if respect to God’s honour affect the heart with the sense of its sin; and if it so affect, as sin becometh hateful, the person is humbled in himself and brought to esteem of, and put a price upon God’s grace in Christ Jesus, so as to be in
love with the same. This is properly turning, and
doeth comprehend the essential of repentance, what
ever degree of sorrow be.

Thee advertisements being laid down, we would
now consider some distinction of that repentance
that is necessary for pardon, especially in the regen-
erate, as they are, or may be held forth in several
expressions, by several persons.

Distinct. 1. Repentance is either expres and
explicit, that is, when men both know such things to
be sins, and themselves to be guilty of them, and do
exactly acknowledge the same, and are affected with
them, or it is implicit, when men are generally af-
fected for sin, although they be guilty of some things
which they do not know to be sins, or know not them-
selves to be guilty of the same. Of such fort may be
the polygamy of several godly men, which is not
altogether to be justified, at least in respect of the ex-
tent thereof in all, as to be so ordinary to have so
many wives, to have them of such conglamity, as
fitters, &c. of such fort may be the errors which were
maintained by many of the godly in the primitive
times concerning meats, days, &c. which not being
known by them to be sins, cannot be laid explicitly
to have been repented of, yet that they were impen-
tent, it cannot be laid. Under this also come in many
matters of fact, which are forgotten, not observed or
considered, as appeareth from Pial xix. Lord purge
me from secret sins. The last is to be accounted
necessary to pardon, viz. that they be penitent; but
the first, viz. that repentance should be explicit with
respect to every particular sin they are guilty of,
this is not to be esteemed necessary in this absolute
sense.

Distinct. 2. Repentance is either, actual and that
for particular sins, as when Peter repented of his de-
nial, and David of his murder, &c. or it is interpre-
tative and virtual, as when a man is heartily affected
for such a particular sin, and for the corrupt,
inclination and body of death that is in them, that is
the seed of all, although there be some particular sin,
which is either not known to him to be such, or is
not actually in his mind, and so cannot be particularly
cause it is still defective, even in what it might attain whereof we possibly shall say something elsewhere.

Dift. 4. Repentance may be considered as prevalent, and taking up the whole man; and this it carried with it a suitableness in a man’s affections and actions, as may be seen in David, Ps. 1水墨. or it may be considered as in the renewed part, which may be lamenting sin, and in its own condition in respect of the tyranny of the body of death, even while it is kept in bondage. It cannot be denied but in this respect Paul was exercising repentance, Rom. vii. when he allowed not that which he did and was prevailed over by the law of his members, and no question he was looked on as a penitent upon that account. And therefore not the first of these, but the last, is to be accounted, simply necessary. This also is to be seen in Ephraim’s bemoaning himself, Jer. xxxii. 18.

Dift. 5. We may also consider repentance as it is known to be such before men, or to the person himself by a palpable recovery, such was the repentance of David, Peter, &c. Or we may consider it, as it is known to be such to God only, without such sensible evidences to others, or it may be, any sensible change to the person itself, yet there may be a real repentance indeed before God. This may be laid of Solomon, of whole repentance and pardon we cannot doubt, as also of Aia’s; yet hath the Lord left them in his word, under such a cloud, that their change hath not been, at least very discernable; for we find these high places, that were built by Solomon, continuing unremoved for many generations thereafter. Which doth certainly shew that his repentance, hath not had so palpable a change before men, as that of Manasses had. And this is ordered by the Lord in deep wisdom; partly, for a chastisement of their backsliding; partly to terrify others from the way of declining, and partly to make all men sober and sparing to pass sentences upon the state of others however the condition may look before men, when they are removed. For the Lord will have the sovereign and infallible decision of their state, vii.

whether they be penitents and believers or not, left into himself alone: who hath an insensible way of getting faith and repentance, and also of recovering and renewing the same, when he pleaseth.

If it be further moved, how at the first exercising of repentance and faith, a man can be said to be justified, that is, accepted as righteous and pardoned of all his sins; seeing his sins after justification are not pardoned until they be committed and repented of?

Anfw. Both are true; for the future sins are not actually pardoned till they be committed and repented of; yet is the man a justified person and in a justified state, having a ground laid in his justification for the obtaining the pardon of these sins that follow, so that they shall not overthrow his former abomination. For God’s covenant hath both fully in it, yet in due way to be applied. And it is as if a company of rebels were subdued, and by treaty they are pardoned, changed from that state of enemies to be natural subjects, and privileged with their privileges so that if they fall in after faults as subjects may fall in, yet are they never again counted enemies; nor is their first freedom cancelled; but they are dealt with as native subjects, falling unto such offences; and have privileges that strangers have not, nor can plead in the same faults; one of which privileges may supposed to be, that they shall not be rigidly fallen upon although their guilt deserve death, but they shall have means used to reclaim them, and these such as cannot be but effectual, and that upon recovery, they shall be pardoned of these faults, and be preferred from the deferred punishments. It is by the treaty of grace and justification, the believing sinner is translated from the state of an enemy, to the condition of a friend, this is unalterable, he cannot afterward but be a friend. Yet because a friend may ingrave and fall to his benefactor, therefore by that treaty, it is provided that there should be a way to forgivenes by virtue of that covenant, yet so as there should be a new exercising of repentance and faith for the commending of the way of grace. And so
HAVING now gone through these epistles, we may see how wisely and seriously our Lord Jesus, the prince of pastors, who hath the tongue of the learned given unto him, doth from heaven speak to the condition of these churches, to whom they are directed. Wherein we may have an excellent copy, according to which ministers ought to carry themselves in discharging of their trust. We conceive therefore it will not be impatient to shut up these epistles with some general directions concerning the way of ministers making application to hearers, which can hardly any where else, more clearly, fully, and together be gathered. And although every thing may not be particularly pitched upon, which is necessary in preaching, that not being the spirits intent in the place; yet we are sure, that as his prosecuting of the respective cases of these churches is very comprehensive; so it cannot but be worthy of imitation.

1. In general we see that ministers in their application ought to conform themselves to the case of the church and persons to whom they preach; to erroneous people, or such as are in danger of error more convincingly; to the secure, more sharply; to the afflicted and tender, more comfortably, &c. as may be seen in our Lord's dealing with these churches.

2. Ministers ought in their doctrine to apply themselves to all sorts of persons, viz. to rulers, and people, to hypocrites, and openly profane, yea to the good, and these that have most tenderness; reproving all, convincing all, as there shall be cause. So that neither hopefulefs of profiting some that seem to be deliberate, nor preposterous affection to these who are tender and affectionate, ought to mar this manner of dealing. And this we see our Lord Jesus doth threaten profane and grosse erroneous Jezebel upon the one hand, and backsliden, though godly Ephesus upon the other. Sometimes it is more difficult freely and faithfully to reprove one that is godly, or to withstand one Peter, than to threaten or contend with many that are profane: and yet both are necessary and profitable for edification.

3. This universal application to all sorts, would yet notwithstanding be managed with spiritual wisdom and prudence, so that every one may get their own allowance. Hence the Lord doth threaten the secure and stubborn, that yet he excepteth these who are not defiled; and so comforteth the faithful, as the profane may not have a ground to take the same contention with them. This is a main qualification, of a minister of the gospel, rightly to divide the word of truth, and not follow all applications promiscuously and in heap together in any auditory, without such discriminating expressions as may guard against confusion thereon, especially as to these four.

1. That a tender soul may be so strengthened and confirmed as a secure person may not be more hardened; and that a prelumptuous hypocrite be so stricken...
at, as an exercised soul be not wounded. When both the good and profane are in one fault, the one is otherwise to be reproofed and restored than the other, and we see Ephesus is more tenderly dealt with than Laodicea, according to the rule Gal. iv. 13. The faults of believers would be so reproved, as with thefe their state, and what is commendable in their practice, be not condemned and rejected also. But that there be intermixed commendations, or approbations of what is approveable, least godliness suffer, when the fault of a godly person is reproved, and least the sentence go beyond the matter’s intent which is not to condemn the person, but to reproves the fault, as the Lord doth tenderly deal with in the case of Ephesus and Pergamos. Times and cases would be distinguished also: and where outward affliction, or inward exercise have seized on a person or people, reproves would be more pitying and gentle, than when there is outward prosperity, and a readiness to settle in a formal discharge of duties, as by comparing the Lord’s dealing with the churches of Ephesus, Sardis, and Philadelphia, and his dealing with Sardis and Laodicea, is clear.

4. This application would be pathetick, pungent and weighty, according to the manner presed, for it may have weight upon the confidences of hearers. It is a main piece of miniferial dexterity to make a plain obvious ordinary reproach weighty in application so as the matter may look serious like to the hearers, and they be convinced that he is in earnest; and for this cause, his convictions, reproves directions, &c. would not rest in the general; for the Lord is particular in all these epistles. 1. In mentioning the sins that he reproved. 2. In giving the evidences of them to shew that he beateth not the air; and the more to bear in the conviction, in the application. For as general truths will need their proofs, so will particular applications leave their conscience shift their challenge. He reproves the heart by chopping at inward fins, viz. falling from the first love; thou art I am rich &c. thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead, &c. It is a main part of searching doctrine, to repel the answers that a heart may have within, against the power of godliness, though they be never expressed; and this is a main property of the word, to be a decerner of thoughts. Heb. iv. 12. And thus John did with his hearers Math. iii. 9. Think not to say within your heart, &c. 4. The Lord himself in his expressions serious, that the conscience and inner-man may be carried along with in giving heed to the words spoken to the ear, and that the outward-man, may see the scope of the word preached, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, &c.

5. Application would rather be squared to the edification of the hearer, than simply and only regulated by the doctrine that it riseth from: for sometimes there may be seemingly flourishing application, when a minister speaketh in the prosecuting of some truth, and in the prefing of some point with respect to the matter that he is handling, which is in itself good; and yet it may be little useful to the hearers spoken unto, as not being pertinent to them. Our Lord here conformeth his application to these he writeth unto: so such truths ought to be infilled on, and pressed, as befit the hearers.

6. The matter infilled upon, is divers; sometimes reproof, sometimes exhortation; sometimes it is in reference to corrupt doctrine, sometimes to the inward spiritual state, &c. Which sheweth, that a minister would not be addicted to, nor always dwell upon one thing; but would sometimes convince gain-sayers, and clear truths, sometimes preach practical things, and that of divers sorts; because faith and practice is the end of preaching; and clearness in, and acquaintance with truth, maketh hearers solid, and well grounded in both; besides, that in numerous audiences there are varieties of conditions, which call for variety of edifying doctrine.

7. In his striking at errors, we find, 1. That he doth not insist on questions of a more remote concernment, such as many were in these times; but on the other side that are in their nature more gross, and in their consequence more hurtful. 2. The errors that he toucheth, were such as were presently troubling the church, and these churches in particular to whom he writeth. Old buried errors are not fit matter for ordinary preaching. 3. He pursueth these errors as
most grofs and abominable things, to make them odious and abominable unto his people; and for that end, compareth the promoters thereof unto Balaam and Jezebel. It was regretted by holy Mr Greenham, that none by their trifling way of confuting error, made it but ridiculous, whereas they ought by earnestness and gravity, to have made it hateful.

8. His practical matter is near the power of godliness, viz. marking the spiritual declination of the sinner, pressing the exercise of repentance, and the performing of holy duties upon all; and with all, most searchingly and convincingly striking at hypocrisy, presumption and self-confidence, as in the epistles to Sardis and Laodicea. Thereby showing what doctrine specially ministers should infest on in congregations: and if we look to our Lord's practice while in the flesh, we will not find him more frequent on any subject than this, viz. that the way to heaven is narrow, that many were first that shall be last, that hypocrisy should be guarded against, &c. as his parables of the tower, foolish virgins, marriage feast, and many other instances, do demonstrate.

9. The Lord doth not infest upon the most high sublime and obscure things, either in his doctrines, reproofs, or directions, such as are the more obscure questions of the schools, or the most spiritual experiences of grown Christians, although this last, being well timed, hath its use; but he preffeth the most plain, obvious and uncontrovertible duties of religion: viz. repentance, self-examination, faith, zeal, &c. it is a great and main part; yea, the very life of application, to fir up to the practice of acknowledging duties, and to refrain from confessed sins; for, as mainly the life of religion lieth in the practice of these, so the most powerful preaching, is, in the pressing of them. We may to this purpose see also in the sermon of our Lords, which is recorded by Matth. in his v., vi. and vii. Chapters, how familiarly he con- defendeth to expound the law, to direct in the exercise of prayer and fasting, and the other duties, both in the first and second table; wherein certainly he is still pressing spiritual service.

10. In all these, the Lord doth followeth the application, as he may imprint it on the conscience, and leave some profitable fruit by it: and, in a word, he convinceth, exhorteth, reproveth, offereth counsel, &c. as they may be edified by it, and every word may gain its native end. Therefore we see when he convinceth of, and reproveth for sin, he doth first point out the particular sins wherein he chargeth them. Secondly, he doth aggrivate these sins by shewing the guiltiness of them. Thirdly, he proffeth weighty and sad threatenings to scare them: and the more severe and self-confident they be, as in the epistle to Laodicea he doth the more sharply rip up their incontinence, and the more emphatically and significantly express his abhorrence thereof, and their hazard thereby. Again, when he exhorteth to duty, he doth, 1. Make the duty plain, that it may be known what he calleth for. 2. He giveth some helps for furthering of them in the performance thereof, viz. the remembering of what is past, or their examining of their own way, watchfulness and adversity for the time to come, and such like; which are both in themselves principal duties, and great helps in all the practice of holiness. 3. He preffeth these exhortations to duties and motives, which comprehend the prejudice of neglecting them, and the advantage that cometh by the performing of them. Again, when he proffeth the offer of the gospel, and inviteth to believe, as to the church of Laodicea he doth, 1. Open their sinful, dangerous and hypocritical cafe, and battereth down the ignorance self-confidence which they had in their own formal profession. And, 2. He proffeth the right remedy, viz. himself and his benefits, his imputed righteousness which can only cover their nakedness, &c. 3. He cleareth the terms upon which that gold and white raiment is obtained, under these expressions of buying opening, hearing, &c. And, 4. He doth most sweetly, and yet most vehemently press it: partly, by condensing friendly to counsel and intreat; partly, by making his offer large, free, and particular to any man that will open, &c. and partly by urging his all weightily and roughly with a Behold, I stand;
as if after he had made the offer, and had knocked, he were now taking instruments, in the conscience, of hearers; thereby, as with a nail to fallen his invitation upon them; and lo, pressuring their closing thereof, or otherwise affuring that he will leave this instrument upon record against them.

11. We find, whatever the case of the people be that he speaks unto, the upshot and scope of his message, is, ever to persuade a closing of the treaty between him and them. Therefore, when he chargeth with sin, he leaves not there, but commendeth unto them repentance; and giveth a promise of welcoming of them upon that condition: when he quarreleth for hypocrisy and deadness in profession, he propoundeth Christ, and advizeth to accept of him; when he exhorteth to duty, as to repentance and zeal; yet, even then doth he propound Christ's righteousness, as the only sure and cover of their nakedness as in the last epistle is clear; whereby we may see, 1. What a preacher's scope should be, and where at he should aim in conviction, reproof, &c. and where he should leave his hearers, viz. at Christ's feet, who is the end of the law for righteousness. And it is not unprofitable, even explicitly to make that the use and close of all. 2. We may see, that the law and gospel should both be preached and pressed together, and that so, as the one seem not to encroach upon the other. And especially this would ever be clear, that the weight of our peace with God doth not lie upon duties when they are pressed, but upon the righteousness of Christ. As it is a great practice in a Christian, to give law and gospel their due place in practice; so it is a main qualification of a gospel-minister, rightly to rid marches between the law and the gospel. This maketh so much insetting in the epistles to the Romans, Galatians, &c. to keep justification by faith in Christ, clear and distinct from works and duties, even when they were most pressed and practised. And it is no less dangerous to professors to rest on duties, than to omit them: and therefore the necessity of being denied to them in the point of justification, and of resting upon Christ alone, is to be cleared and pressed by preachers, as a most necessary and fundamental thing.

12. For this cause, the nature of the covenant, and justification by Christ, are especially to be cleared where a church is formal, that is, free both of error in doctrine, and gross scandals in practice, and resting there: wherefore we see, that in the epistle to the church of Laodicea which is charged with neither of these our Lord doth most especially insist on this: for, the beating down of error, and banishing of gross profanity, are but, as it were, the taken in the outworks of the Devil's kingdom; therefore where there are gained, the main batteries are to be directed against self-righteousness, hypocrisy, presumption, self-confidence, &c. that the soul may be brought to receive Christ in earnest, and zealously and seriously to study holiness, without which a formal profession will be but as a stone of stumbling.

13. We see that our Lord Jesus putting together an entire mould of the whole doctrine and practice of godliness, giving, as at one view, a fight of our natural sinfulness and hazard, and of the way how these may be remedied; so that when he propoundeth any quarrel, he leave no off till he propound also the remedy, press duty, and close with some encouraging conditional promise. This is also profitable for a mixed auditory especially at solemn times, and other occasions, wherein people are usually most serious and attentive to give together a view of the doctrine of the gospel; so that when a conviction is pressed, and the hearer is made somewhat hot, he may have some present discovery of the way which he ought to take; and that he may either be informed, or, at least, be put in mind of as much of the gospel as may be a ground of his peace, if it be improved, though he should never afterward hear any more. This we see was the apostles way in their occasional sermons in the history of the Acts, wherein the sum of the gospel is usually comprehended, and the Lord himself doth so with Nicodemus, John iii. And though there be difference now in some respect, where the gospel is ordinarily and daily preached, so that this is not necessary to be done always explicitly, as if they had never heard the gospel before.
and although it becometh a minister to draw his doctrine from some particular text, yet considering that the generality of hearers, are very ignorant of the series of the gospel, and others are weak, and inadvertent even in things which they someway know, and considering withal, that a minister have occasion by way of reason, use, mean, motive, question, or otherwise to hint a view of the gospel almost from any material doctrine, and without any just imputation of impertinency, we conceive that generally and usually it is expedient to follow this manner; especially on the Lord’s days which are fit for gospel doctrines, people being for that end, set apart and sequestered, from their ordinary business, and when the body of the most ignorant people are gathered together. This way certainly by God’s blessing, would look more like a mean of conversion, and hath in experience been ordinarily found so, than when now one point, and then another, are distinctly handled; and so the one is either forgotten by the most part, before they hear the other, or at least not so warm to them, although they have the knowledge thereof. And these things being the text of the Bible; to lay for and the great subject and errand which ministers have to instruct on; it ought not to be accounted grievous because of nauseating and loathing of them from the frequent mentioning of them seeing to the people they are profitable and safe, as Phil. iii. 1, 2. and even loathing would, in the manner of proposing the same thing, be guarded against; that itching and curious ears get no occasion of contemning the gracious gospel, and few would be able to discern that it is so.

14. In these epistles, there is divine stamp, bearing forth an efficacy in the manner of presing all these things. And we will see, 1. Authority in what is spoken. 2. Evident plainness and clearness. 3. Seriousness and vehement earnestness in pressing what he preflieth. Indifference and coldness in speaking of weighty things, is most unfitting in a minister.

4. There is love and affectionate tenderness to them to whom he speaks; yea, even in the sharpest rebukes, he prudently intimateth the same, that he be not mistaken. Ministers have gained much, when hearers are convinced that they seek their good in the sharpest words, And their way would be such as, without affectation, may evince that in the consciences of hearers. 5. There is much (O how much!) Wisdom in his premitting commendations, in his differencing the guilty from the innocent, in his choosing such threatenings and motives as may gain most upon these he dealth with respectively, and not using the same to all.

15. His title of speaking, is sweet and heavenly, yet plain and familiar: it hath a sweet flateliness in it, and is far from trivial expressions, which may make the matter spoken weightless; yet is it plain and equitable; because now he is speaking to edification in practical things, therefore doth he abstain from the dark manner of expressions, which afterward he useth in the following prophecy. But, 1. His plainest words are most significant, manly, and opposite.

2. The titles that are given to himself, are stately: weighty expressions and titles of God, and of Jesus Christ, become the preaching of the gospel well; and are useful to keep up the reverend estimation which hearers ought to have of him. It is suitable usually to name him so, as at the mentioning, it may appear that the heart is affected with the excellency that is in him; and that the man doth not speak of that glorious majesty, as of other subiects: even as ambassadors should give honourable titles to their matters.

3. The similitudes are pertinent and grave, serving more to illustrate the matter and make it plain, than to please the ear and tickle the understanding, as the comparing of Christ’s righteousness to gold and raiment, and the closing of the covenant, or believing in him, to buying, opening, &c. which manner is useful to people: and that way of speaking in parables, was much used by the Lord, who also interpreted them to his disciples, to make the significancy thereof the more to appear. 4. He doth ever express heaven by some notable borrowed and various expression, thereby to commend the same: because it is a great advantage to have hearers in love with it; partly, because more proper expressions will not
always so clearly, fully, and to the life, suit, and hold forth the thing that is to be spoken of; whence it cometh to pass, that sometimes there is an allowance granted to use borrowed expressions in such cases.

16. We will find an orderly method in all the epistles. There is indeed no affected curiosity, neither are there any philosophick terms made use of; yet, method being useful in itself, to clear the matter, and to help hearers to conceive and retain what is said (and so, subservient to edification) our Lord doth also condescend to that way. Therefore, in general, we see all the epistles have. 1. A preface; 2. A narration; 3. A conclusion; as if he had purposely cast them in one mould. More particularly, we see, he beginneth them all with this, thus faith he, &c. Thereby to evince it to be his word. A main thing to be adhered to, as the foundation both of preaching and application, that it may be made out, at first, to be warranted by the Lord; and so to be his word, as if he himself were speaking. 2. He propoundeth in them all, some lately stile and title of himself: which is also a main thing to be adverted to in preaching, that at the entry, both ministers and hearers may be affected with the majesty of him, who is master of the ordinances, by some serious, grave, and weighty instruction, thereby to dispose both for the more fit speaking and hearing. 3. He doth begin at these things which are more general, and belong to information, as in letting them know their case, and his thoughts of them: then he cometh to particulars. 4. In particulars he premitteth clear discoveries and convictions of sin, to exhortations, to duties, and offers of the gospel: and he premitteth exhortations to motives, whereby he prefixeth them. And lastly, he closeth with what is most pathetic and affectionate; either in way of threatening or promise, having that weighty admonition added, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, &c. And so he beginneth by working them up to some serious composed frame of spirit, and closeth with some affectionate impleting of the thing upon them in the most pathetic manner. Although this here, be most application, yet we conceive that this order of

proposing what is more general and doctrinal, and which serveth to the clearing of the judgment in the first place, and the subjoining of what is more convincing, pathetic, and affectionate which is done by way of use and application in the last place, that thereby hearers may be dismissed with some impression of the thing, this order we lay may be well gathered hence. And indeed it is the most native genuine order, first to inform the judgment, and thereby to make the reader way to work upon the confidence, will, and affections. To this purpose see Acts xiii. how Paul doth there proceed and close ver. 30, 39, &c.

17. In all this the Lord's way holdeth forth his great design of gaining them to whom he speaketh; so as it satisfieth him to exonerate himself, to speak for him, in doing of his duty; but he is zealous to get his message received, and in sum, to get them served. Therefore weightily doth he follow it, inviting, exhorting, preying and protesting, as unwilling to be refuted. This indeed is a fountain qualification of a preacher, to be travelling in birth till Christ be formed in hearers, and so to preach to them, as hungry and thirsting for their salvation, and not having only before him the proposing of some profitable matter, or the handling of some point exactly, nor not only his own exonation, and the justifying of God by making the hearers inexusable, but a single serious desire to have them gathered and espoused to Christ, that the proud may be humbled, the hypocrite convinced, and the word made the supper of life unto life unto them according to their case. This I say is a fountain qualification, from which many other qualifications do flow, it being famed in any minister, but it putteth an edge and weight upon the word in his mouth, as the want of it maketh the most part want favour, and in the finest words often to have but little weight.

18. We may gather here, that a minister should hold forth the authority of the ordinance and word, and of him in whose name he speaketh, and ought to take it upon him, not from suppoled weight in himself, or addition to it by his gifts: but upon this
account that it is the Lord's message. Thus sayeth he, &c. being that which giveth himself confidence and boldness in the delivery thereof, and which ought also to make it have weight upon others; yea it followeth from this, that whatever a minister be in himself, and whatever his thoughts be of himself and of his gifts; yet being called to carry the Lord's message, he ought so to carry it in, as not lessen the matter, authority, by his fainting and discouraging apprehensions of his own inability and unworthiness, and by his heart's and languid way of speaking, but to speak as the oracles of God ought to be spoken, and as having weight in itself for the vindicating thereof, although he be weightless; and that therefore there ought to be an eye to him for weight thereto, and a thorough clearness that the thing which is spoken in the name of the Lord, is his truth and message, without which there can be no great confidence in saying, Thus faith the Lord, and with which a minister may boldly and authoritatively speak.

19. As preaching would be undertaken and begun with an eye to God; so both in the carrying on thereof, and in the expecting of fruits thereby, the weight would be still left upon the Lord. And ministers would beware of attributing any efficacy, either to the warmness of their own frame in speaking, or to their liberty in preffing any point, or to the plainness and weightiness in their manner of proposing or preffing the same, as if that had any influence as from them to give the word weight and authority upon hearers, but till the efficacy would be acknowledged to be from the holy Ghost, therefore is that word always at the close, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the spirit faith, &c. Whereby as at the entry the instrumen is laid by, and the Lord's authority held forth as only to be acknowledged by Thus sayeth the Lord, so in the close the minister even when in the most affectionate temper and frame, is to leave what is spoke, as weighty only upon this account, that is the spirit who speaketh, and who only can make it effectual; and the more singly this be done, the more weighty will it be; and thus weighty preaching differeth from the most powerful rhetoric that can be. See somewhat to this purpose, chap. x. verie 4.

20. In the general, we may see that application is the life of preaching; and there is no less study, skill, wisdom, authority and plainness necessary in the applying of a point to the confidences of hearers and in the preffing of it at home, than there is required the opening of the same profound truth. And therefore ministers would study the one as well as the other. Much of these epistles is delivered in the second person, I know thy works, I counsel thee to repent, &c. for this end, that they might know it was them particularly that they meant. It is much for ministers to get the word levelled at hearers, so as to make them know, that it is they who are reached; and that it is not only these at first it was written to, or these to whom Christ and the apostles did immediately preach that this word belongeth, but that it equally belongeth to them, even to them who now hear it. Hearers are often ready to shift-by the most particular words, much more when they are most shortly and generally touched. Hence preaching is called perfwading, beleeching, entreatings, or requestings, &c. All which import some such dealing in application. Which is not only a more particular breaking of the matter, but a directing it to the confidences of the present hearers. And in this especially doth the faithfulness, wisdom, and dexterity of the preacher, and the power and efficacy of the gift appear. This is to fulfil or fully to preach the word of God, a very significant and much used phrase Rom. xvi. 17. Col. i. 25. 2 Tim. iv. 7. a thing also defiderated in Sardis chap. iii. or to make a full proof of the ministration, that is, when a minister extendeth himself, to the uttermost in his pains, affections and exercise in his gift, as to beat the yondermost of the peoples edification; and as it is Acts xiv. 2. to speak fo, as as many may be made to believe; an excellent copy whereof is in Paul, Colos. i. 28. 29. Whom we preach warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, whereunto I also labour,
friuing according to his working, which worketh in me mightily, and first Thess. ii. 10. 11. ye are witnesses, and God also, how holyly, and justly, and unblameable, we behaved ourselves among you that believe as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children. We conceive therefore, that it would conduce exceedingly to make application weighty upon the confidences of the hearers, if ministers after the more general part of their doctrine, and at their entry to make application thereof, should pause a little, and by some serioius and grave adverteiment put the people in mind, that even this word so applied, or to be applied, is the word and message of God to them in particular, and is necessarily requisite to the office of a pastor as the former general opening of the truth was. For hearers are often ready to take more liberty in shitting of application, as if what were even so spoken warrantable, were not equally the Lord's word with the general truth opened up: Thus we see Paul, after his opening up of general truths, Acts xiii. when he cometh to make application, putteth his hearers to it by this word, verse 26. men and brethren, to you is the word of this salvation sent. And as it is the main part of a pastoral-gift dexteriously to feed by application; so are they the most thriving Christians, who are new born-babes, drink in the word so applied, and take it home to themselves, and their own confidences, as they do receive the general truths by their judgments. Which followeth, that both ministers and people have the greater care to be watchful and solicitous concerning this main mean of edification, viz. particular application.

LECTURE I.

CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. After this I looked and beheld, and a Door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, come up hither, and I will shew the things which must be hereafter.

2. And immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3. And he that sat, was to look upon like a Jasper, and a Sardine Stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an Emerald.
led in their beginnings, were but in perfecting, and in some respect, might be said to be to come thereafter upon which grounds, the whole book was called a prophecy, chap. i. iii. And so when this book is divided into two parts, the things which John saw, that is the things that were in his time, are comprehended under one expression with things that were to come. Again when it is divided in two sorts of things, as in chap. i. 10. Things to come are taken more properly, and strictly, as comprehending only such things as were for the time to be fulfilled. And this is the reason why sometimes it is divided in two, sometimes in three parts, yet both to one purpose.

Secondly, The great subject and matter of all that is coming, is comprehended in this word, I will shew the things which must be hereafter; which is not to be extended to all events that were to fall out in the world, but to chief events that were to fall out in the church, as concerning her thriving, persecution, &c. and what was to befall the enemies thereof to the end of the world. Also it is to be observed, according to the former advertisement, that we are not to fix the beginning of these events at the time of John having this prophecy revealed to him, but are to begin with the gospels, and the first preaching thereof unto the gentiles after Christ's ascension, which we conceive is comprehended under that expression, the things which John had seen, chapter i. 10. as was laid.

Thirdly, The prophetical part of this book, is ordinarily divided into six visions, or six prophecies: for when it is divided in seven, the first three chapters are accounted one. Now whether we call them visions or prophecies, it is not much upon the matter: for every vision comprehendeth a distinct prophecy; and contrarily; so that it will come to the same thing. When they are accounted seven, they are thus reckoned. The first vision, is in chapters i. ii. and iii. The second, is in chapters iv. v. and vi. The third is in chapters vii. viii. ix. x. and xi. The fourth vision, is in chapters xii. xiii. and xiv. The fifth, is in chapters xv. and xvi. The sixth, is in chapters xvii. xix. and xx. And the seventh, is in chapters xx. xxi. and xxii. to the end of what is prophetical. But of this division, we will speak more particularly, chapter xii. lecture 1.

Fourthly, These visions or prophecies, that are to come, are again to be distinguished in principal prophecies, and such as are expiatory only: we call these principal prophecies of things to come, that are principally and primarily such, that is, which hold forth distinct matter in themselves, not hidden forth in any former prophecy of that kind, and so, in respect of the matter contained in them, and time which they relate unto, they differ one from another. Of this sort are the prophecies of the seven seals, chap. xi. of the seven trumpets, chap. viii. ix. x. and xi. and of the seven vials chap. xv. and xvi. For these have a dependency one upon another, carrying the prophecy of the estate of the church on from John's time unto the end of the world; and yet neither of them do express what hath been contained in any of the other. Again, we call these expiatory prophecies, which contain no new matter, nor relate to any other time different from the former prophecies, but are expiatory of the same things contained in some of these principal prophecies under other types and expressions: of this sort are, the third vision, chap. xii. xiii. xiv. which is expiatory of the first two principal visions of the seals and trumpets; and the two other visions, that are from chap. xvii. to the close, which is expiatory of the vials, especially of the last three: for, the first of them explaineth the fifth and sixth vials, in the 17. 18. and 19. chapters. The second, is expiatory of the seventh vial chap. 20. 21. &c. So that in sum, there are three principal prophecies set down in one form, viz. of seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials; and again, other three that are less principal and expiatory, which are expressed by other types, according to the division formerly laid down: of which more may be said when we come to that 6. chapter, already referred, unto.

Fifthly, The form of this book, as to the manner of God's revealing these prophecies, would be observ-
ed: for to make things the more clear and plain to
John, that which was to come, is represented to him
in visions, as already acted; and for this end, John
in the spirit is brought to heaven to behold this com-
edy, to call it so or tragedy: for it may be called a
comedy, in respect of the godly, whose affaits have
a sad beginning, but a joyful close: but in respect of
the wicked, it is a tragedy; for they have a seeming
sweet, and pleasant beginning, but a sad and sorrow-
ful close. And because the Lord thinketh good to
represent these things to John in this manner, there
are several things in the progress of this prophecy,
which are brought in for this very end, as the speak-
ing and acting of several persons and parties, divers
interludes and songs, &c. which are not so much
for the bringing forth any distinct matter or pro-
phesy, as to make up that form wherein the Lord
thinketh fit to reveal this prophecy; for preventing
thereof of excessive and too curious to find out
mysteries in these things beyond the scope, we would
take notice of this advertisement, which we may
more particularly consider in these instances.

First, To all these principal prophecies there are
some things preparatory wherein the Lord setteth
forth his majesty and glory, thereby torouse up John
and others to carry the more humbly and reverently
in the search of these prophecies; such is this part
of the vision, chap. iv. v. which is preparatory to the
prophethic part following. For in them, the Lord
as it were representeth the place where this great co-
medy is acted, describeth the actors, and showeth the
nature of the things which are to be acted; but these
preparations are not properly prophetical, as the
visions themselves, which hold forth the things that are
acted are; yet the allusions which may be gathered
from such representations in their general strain and
scope, is not to be detupled.

Secondly, We will find plain, words of doctrine mixed
in with the darkest prophecies, as Blessed are they
that die in the Lord, blessed are they that keep their
garments clean, &c. In which and such like words,
there is plain doctrinal and comfortable meaning,
the Lord thereby sweetening the darker prophecies
and giving his people somewhat to feed on in the
search of these, as was once formerly hinted; yet
from the scope of such sentences, and their being in-
serted in such places, and such like, some light may be
gathered for the understanding of what is pro-
phetical before them.

Thirdly, There are some interludes of songs and
playings upon harps, mentioned in several places,
which are not properly prophetical in themselves,
but as circumstances in a parable, they are brought
to make the intended mould of this book complete,
and to make a connexion between the parts and pro-
phesies thereof. These indeed are not to be abstrac-
ted from or extended beyond their particular scope
respectively, yet are they so wisely expressed by the Lord,
that even they may be subservient to the understand-
ing of the matter contained in the principal prophecies to
which they belong. Of this same nature we take
the representations of divers parties as actors in this
comedy, to be as sometimes angels, sometimes bea-
ts sometimes elders, &c. which no doubt, is wisely done
by the Lord and wanteth not signification, yet we do
think that deep mysteries are not to be from expres-
sions except something in the current strain of the pro-
phesy, evidence the same to aim at such things as
at the least part, of their scope.

Fourthly, We will find also many expressions bor-
rowed from the old Testament, and from the manner
of the prophets therein, especially from Daniel, Eze-
kiel, and Zechariah; yet often these expressions are
set forth a different thing from what was principally
intended by them under the old Testament as by
considering the particulars in the progress, will be
clear.

We come now to the preparation to the first pro-
phesy in the fourth and fifth chapters; which also
in some respect may be called preparatory to all the
visions that follow. It hath two parts. The fourth
chapter holdeth out the majesty of God the Creator,
and expresseth his praise considering him as such.
The fifth chapter holdeth out the glory and majel-
ty of our Lord Jesus Christ the mediator and redeemer. This is not to be understood as if the Son were not honoured in the fourth chapter with the Father, or the Father with the Son in the fifth. That cannot be seeing they are one God; and the honour that is given in both chapters is divine. But the works of creation and redemption, being the grounds upon which all creatures, especially the redeemed, are obliged to praise God, and the great evidences of his manifold glory, therefore both of them are explicitly spoken to, and the Lord under both these considerations, taken up; thereby to express him to be the more eminently and singularly glorious. So when the ground of the praise is given in the iv. chap. ver. 11. it is, Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory, and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Again in the fifth chapter, the work of redemption is mentioned, as we may gather from verse 9. and 12. yet 10, as both are put together in the same thanksgiving chap. v. ver. 13.

In this fourth chapter, beside some circumstances, making way to the vision we have these three principal things, 1. A stately description of the majesty of God, who is described in his own appearance, as sitting upon a throne like a jasper and sardine stone, &c. verse 3. which doth let forth, to speak to, the posture wherein God appeareth to John, thus stately in majesty. They are excellent expressions and yet they come far short of the thing they represent, but they are the furtthest that men can win to, viz. by things known, to express or someway to conceive an unconceivable thing. We have a description of his train and attendants, set out at large from the beginning of the 4. verse to ver. 8. wherein God is described from the royal attendants that wait on him, and the excellent and stately way he is waited upon. 3. From the midst of the 8. verse to the end of the chapter, we have a description of the glory of God, from the work and exercise that these attendants are about. For verse 8. it is said, They go not day and night, saying holy, holy, holy, Lord God, Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And these expressions of all the glory they gave him, are set out in several circumstances to the end.

The scope is to set forth to John, and all the church the majesty of God, the giver of the Revelation, the creator of all things, he that guideth all this world, and ruleth his church, and at the entry, to put an impression of the Majesty of this God upon John, and upon all that should read and hear these things that follow. For which end, he began with such visions to Ezekiel, chap. i. to Isaiah, chap. vi. and to John chap. i. of this book.

To come more particularly to the words; there are in the first and second verses, four circumstances that make way to the vision. 1. After this, that is, after the first vision spoken of in the first three chapters; for though it is like as chap. i. verse 10. John had all this revelation revealed to him in one day from the Lord; yet the Lord gave him some breathings between visions, First, Things present, and then things to come, being revealed to him; which is one cause why the prophecies and visions of this book are distinguished from each other.

The second circumstance observable, is, the Lord's giving access to John to see what he saw. Behold, a door was opened in heaven; What is meant by heaven here, whether the church militant, which is often in this book, and in scripture called heaven, or whether the third heaven spoken of, 2 Cor. xi. 2. we shall not infilt on it. What John saw, was concerning the visible church, and for their behove and advantage. But it is like, the place where John saw these things in vision, was even that which we call heaven literally, God extraordinarily making way to him, to look in where his glory was manifested; and it is called here an opening of a door in heaven and there shewing him things to come concerning his church, which were afterward to fall out; yet this is now shown to John in vision, as if it were for the present time acted in a kind of comedy before him. And therefore may either be supposed to be revealed to him in heaven, or in a trance represented to him, as if it were there. And it agreeeth best with the scope, that it be thus understood viz. that
heaven should be in this manner opened to John and things revealed to him there, which he was to reveal to the church.

The third circumstance is, the voice which he heard, and what it said. And the first voice which I heard, &c. that is, the former voice which I heard, chap. ii. ver. 10, 11. The voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, which said there, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; that same voice speaketh again, and reneweth John's commission to come and see, and write; and the voice biddeth him come up hither, and he will shew him, &c. to tell that a heavenly mind is a great furtherance to acquainstance with the mysteries of God, and earthly mindedness is a great hindrance and obstruction; and then he proleth what things he hath to shew him. Things which must be hereafter. So in the explication and application of this revelation, we are not to look back to the four monarchicals but Christ's way to his church in the days of the gospel, according to the first general which we premitt.

The fourth circumstance is, ver. 2. And immediately I was in the spirit: Whereby it is like there was some interval between the excry of spirit he was in, chap. i. ver. 10, and this excry of spirit he is now in. And it is the second way how our Lord Jesus fitteth John to receive these following mysteries. Firstly, He carrieth up his affections, and maketh him heavenly, and then ravisheth him in the spirit, whereby as chap. i. 10, in an extraordinary way John is, as it were, taken out of himself, put in an excry, impressions of things to come made on his spirit, and palpably and visibly made discernible to him, in a spiritual way, as if he had seen them with his bodily eyes.

We come now to the vision itself. And in it we have, 1. God's throne, to speak it, set forth. 2. Himself sitting on it. 3. A description of his glory as he sitteth upon it.

1. 'Beheld a throne was set in heaven'. These expressions: for God needeth not a material throne, neither hath he any such in heaven, but as among kings, Thrones are used as seats for judgment, and for places where they appear in their royalty; so the same similitude is borrowed here, to set out the sovereignty of God in heaven, and in earth and in his church, especially his gospel church which is called his throne, Jer. iii. 17. for in it he hath an absolute dominion and government as a king on his throne. It holdeth out, 1. Not only God's greatness and power: But 2. His absolute dominion and sovereignty: which is further holden out, in the second expression, one sat on the throne: the throne is not empty, but hath one sitting on it, acting and exercising that power. Such words are frequent in scripture, Psa. i. 4. The Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men. It expresseth what is meant by his throne, viz. his absoluteness and sovereignty in government, and his justice and severity, being angry with the wicked every day. God in his glory and excellency is holden out, as sitting on his throne, ver. 3. In other sort of robes than ever were seen on the greatest that ever were in the world; He that sat on the throne, was to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine-stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald: these are expressions not of his form, for he is purely spiritual and inconceivable, but borrowed to set forth his splendour and glory; and because that which men usually think most excellent, is gold, and precious stones, mentioned for reassembling of his glory: the first is a jasper, an exceeding precious stone; it was one of these precious stones that was put in Aaron's breastplate, Exod. xxvii. 20. And it is among these stones wherewith the foundation of the walls of the new Jerusalem are said to be garnished, Rev. xxii. 19. And because one stone is not sufficient, even but to reassemble the glory and splendour of the majesty of God, there is another added, viz. the jasper stone: which is also precious as the former was. These being unknown to us, we shall not infilt to describe them; for the scope is clear, viz. to point out this, that God is admirably and inconceivably excellent even to excellency, that all the most precious things in earth, being
put together, are but poor shadows, and infinitely disproporsionable resembances of that excellency which is in him.

A second thing whereby this glory is set forth, is And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. In Ezek. i. Where the same description is almost in the same terms, there is a firmament, a throne one sitting on it, and a rainbow; as the appearance of the bow that is in the clouds in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about: the scope in both places is to shew the glorious majesty of God who as he hath a throne attributed to him improperly to express his sovereignty, so hath he this as a cloath of flate over his throne, thereby to shew how far his sovereignty and majesty is beyond the greatest monarch's on earth: for he only hath immortality, and dwelleth in a light that no man can approach unto, whom no eye hath seen, nor can see, Tim. vi. 16. Therefore is justly called the only potentate, verfe 15. All others being but slaves and worms in comparison with him. And that this bow is compared to an emerald, it was a more glorious thing than that rainbow in the clouds, which is visible to us. This rainbow, chap. x. verfe 1, is said to be upon his head; whereby it would seem that it is something which he doth as it were account his crown and diadem of glory: It is like, that respect is here had to that covenant, which the Lord made with Noah, that the waters should not overflow the earth, whereas this rainbow was given as a sign and seal for the confirmation thereof, Gen. ix. 13, and the mentioning of it here, and chap. x. is not to relate to that particular promise that the earth should not be drowned, but is to relate unto the covenant of God's grace through Christ Jesus with his true church, for when it is called a bow in sight like unto an emerald, it pointeth out an excellency beyond the ordinary rainbows: and so may be thought to relate to a more excellent covenant, and indeed considering that this is an eminent piece of the Lord's glory and as it were a crown we can apply it to no other thing. In reference to the scope in these places, it doth hold forth, 1. That this glorious God, who is the Creator of all, is a God who hath condescended to covenant with his people. 2. It holdeth forth, that this gracious condescending of his to enter in covenant with them, is a main part of his glory and majesty, which he accounteth to be a crown unto him. 3. It holdeth forth, that as the Lord doth not reveal his glory to his people abstracly, but in the way of his covenant, so, his people cannot win to the comfortable thoughts of the majesty of God, nor ought to look on his glory, but as under that relation. 4. And more particularly, it is added here, to confirm John in this, that though the church was to meet with many persecutions and trials at first from heathens, yet should she not be overwhelmed with the same, more than the earth can be overwhelmed again with water; and though after that, Antichrist and enemies within, should trouble her by errors and heresies yet, should she also be kept from being drowned by them; and therefore when the Lord beginneth the conolatory part of the second principal prophecy, and cometh to comfort John against the trials of Antichrist in the beginning of the x. Chap. He doth there again appear with this bow upon his head, to shew, that he is no less mindful of his covenant with his people, and of their preservation from being overwhelmed by enemies, than he is of that promise which he had to Noah in the place formerly mentioned.

From the scope, observe, The great necessity and advantage that there is for all that would know God to be rightly instructed what God is. It is the first lesson that all, whether ministers, or others should learn, to have right thoughts and impressions of the majesty of God, and a right conviction of that glory that is in him.

2. As this is requisite to the uptaking of God's mind in any thing, so it is particularly applicable to this book; there can be no uptaking of the mind of God in these mysteries, till we be rightly instructed what God is, and have the impressions of his majesty on our hearts. 1. Because, it letteth out his abolsute-ness and government over his church, whether in the
times of bodily perfection, or of prevailing error in all these, God sitteth on his throne governing.

2. That the faith of God's people may be confirmed in expecting the performance of the promises to them and the execution of the judgement here pronounced on their enemies, notwithstanding of many intervening difficulties; the eyeing of God's aboluteness and dominion, maketh for this.

3. The looking on God's aboluteness is necessary at the entry to the part of this book, to stay our curiosity, and the needless vain searching that curious spirits may decline to, and to go a whoring from the scope, and turn aside to vain jangling, whereby they obscure rather than clear the meaning, we close this, wishing this impression in our medling with any part of God's word, and especially in medling with this prophecy.

Obfer. 3. Where God is rightly seen, he will be seen exceeding stately and glorious; O so wonderful whom nothing can resemble, whom no tongue can express nor eye behold, nor heart conceive. What were it to imagine thousands of mountains of the most precious stones imaginable, and thousands of suns shining in their brightness? These are inconceivably short of God, and the glory that is in him; what an excellent happiness will that be to dwell with this God for ever? To behold his face, to see him as he is, and to be capacitae to speak so, to know him, as we are known of him? Wonder and admire at him, whose glorious in holiness, fearful in praises doing wonders, terrible in majesty, and in all perfections past finding out; to him be praise for ever, Amen.

LECTURE II.

Verse 4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thun- derings, and voices; and there were seven lamps of

fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne were four beasts, full of eyes before and behind.

7. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8. And the four beasts, bad each of them six wings; about him, and they were full of eyes within.

These verses hold forth the second thing int the chapter, viz. the glorious attendants of this great God, who sitteth upon his throne as great sovereign of heaven and earth. Great kings have their thrones, and their cloaths of state; the Lord is beyond them in both these: they have also their inferior judges and nobles, and counsellors waiting on them as also others to execute their orders and decrets; the Lord is brought in here as more eminently furnished with glorious attendants and instruments to execute his pleasure than any that ever was heard of.

Before we proceed, one thing is needful to be cleared, viz. whether the scope of this vision be to represent the glory of God, as it is manifested to the church triumphant in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect? or whether it be intended to express the glory of God, as shinning in his ordinances in the church militant? Ans. We conceive neither of these is to be excluded, but both may be well included: for to consider God as manifested in his glory in heaven, agreeeth well with the scope; as aiming thereby to impress the reverence and awe of the majesty of God upon hearts: yet we say, that this is not only intended: noor is the other to be excluded; because I. It also agreeeth well with the scope, which is to let forth events concerning the militant church, and for that end to represent as it were, a theatre and actors for bringing about these events, whereof the majesty of God is supream governour, &c. Now, it conduceth more to the scope and cometh nearer what is intended to conceive this representation as holding forth
God's glory and way in his militant church. 2. It is also usual in this book to express the visible church under the title of heaven, and things done in it, by similitudes of things set forth as acted in heaven, as in the progress, we will see. 3. This preparation being confinatory against the coming trials of the church for which cause the Lord appereareth with his bow about his throne, it will agree best to that part of the scope to apply it to the militant church, by which his glorious presence therein, his nearness thereto, his care and protection thereof, &c. will most manifestly and comfortably be set forth. 4. There is a resemblance between the Lord's precious presence in his church and that which is in heaven: for he hath a glorious glory in heaven; and what is more immediately manifested in heaven doth some way shew by his ordinances among his people. 5. If we consider all the attendants mentioned in this, and in the following chapter particularly, verse 10. we will find it necessary to understand this, as respecting the church militant; because some are spoken of, who are redeemed and are to reign upon the earth. Whence we conceive it is not unfitting to look upon this representation as expressive of God's glory in his militant church: which is represented by heaven and the practice of perfected saints there to shew unto them, while here a copy of their duty in praying and thanksgiving and its doing the will of God in earth as it is done in heaven.

We come to consider more particularly this description of the Lord's excellent train and attendants. First, verse 4. There are round about the throne four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, and they had on their heads crowns of gold. By elders here we conceive are understood the true professors of the militant church in the days of the gospel; for in the Song chap. v. 9. and 10. We will find that they are such as are redeemed such as by that redemption are made kings and priests, as all believers are, chap. i. verse 6. and to reign upon earth which sheweth that they are members in the church militant: and they being followers of the four beasts and priviledged but with such priviledges as are common to all saints it appeareth that they are no officers or guides but private professors. They are called elders for the dignity which they are advanced unto beyond others, to be, as it were, elders and governors in God's house in a spiritual sense in which respect they are called kings and priests chap. v. verse 10. or as the word is usually taken in the New testament. They are accounted for special ministers and servants having a nearness to God, and to share of his glory which none else in the world had; and thus the Lord's people are called his ancients, or elders, I. xxxiv. verse 23. They are laid to be twenty four in number; which we conceive to be a definite number for an indefinite: it may be there is an allusion to the twenty four courses that David appointed for the service of the tabernacle, 1. Chron. xxv. xxvi. 2. &c. To shew that the ministration of the New Testament is no less glorious. Also seeing the church in old was reckoned by twelve tribes, who it is like had their twelve princes as elders and governours anfwerable to that number; so twenty four is mentioned here, to shew that the church in the days of the gospel shall be extended to a double and greater number of saints than was at that time; but on these we shall not insist, seeing the general may be safely refted in. Again they are laid to be clothed in white raiment: which sheweth that, their innocency is their greatest glory, or their most stately robe and the greatest badge of their dominion: for white raiment signifies either Christ's imputed righteousness or their begun sanctification, as we heard chap. iii. verse 4. And often elsewhere in this prophecy. The first thing spoken of these elders, is, they have four and twenty seats, or thrones upon which they sit, and on their heads crowns of gold: both which are to shew, 1. The settled and secure happiness that these possess beyond all others in the world. 2. The spiritual dominion that they have begin in them here over their lusts and spiritual enemies: in which respect they reign even on the earth, chap. v. 10. and 3. It is to give a type of the glorious dominion that is laid up for them in heaven, when they having been sinners at the judging of the world, shall be set down upon one throne with Jesus Christ as was promised chap. iii. verse 21.
In verse 5. We have the second thing whereby this flattening is expressed, And out of the throne proceeded thunderings, and lightnings and voices: it is an allusion to God's manner of giving the law Exodus, 19. Whereby he appeared so terrible that even Moses did exceedingly fear and quake; and Deut. xxxiii. 2. It is said that from his right hand went a fiery law: the scope is to shew, that though God appear without great outward splendour and terror in his ordinances, in the days of the gospel; yet is there in his church and glory whereby the mightiest may be terrified and confounded: in which respect the church is terrible as an army with banners, Song vi. 4. and 10. and the witnesses chap xi verse 3. and 5. though prophesying in sackcloth, are said to have fire proceeding out of their mouths, and to bring on many other dreadful plagues. By this he would teach men to approach to him with fear; for he is a great God and to be had in reference of all that are about him Isaiah, xxxi. 7.

There is also a third thing observed in that fifth verse, and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God: by these we understand the Holy Ghost in his manifold and various operations as we heard, chap. i. verse 4. and by comparing chap. v. verse 6. It is clear: for these seven spirits are the horns and eyes of the Lamb, that sheweth both the omnipotence and omniscience of the same; and they are sent forth into all the earth, which could not be if the spirit were not infinite and immens, and so cannot be understood but of the Holy Ghost. Whereby the way, we may perceive the absurdity of the application of Doctor Hammond on this place formerly mentioned, who doth apply these seven spirits, as representing the seven deacons of the church of Jerusalem. These operations of the spirits are compared to lamps, because of the shining light that floweth therefrom to the church: they are lamps of fire burning, that is to point out that the saving operations of the spirit have heat, and purifying efficacy with their light to warm their heart with love to God, and to consume and eat up the dross of corruption that is in the same: therefore it is said of Christ, Matt. iii. 11. That he should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire: which last word expresses the nature and efficacy of the former. They are called seven lamps, or spirits, because though there be but one and the same spirit, yet there are diversities of gifts, and differences of administrations and operations, as it is 1 Cor. xii. 4. 5. &c. of which we spoke chap. i. Lastly, these lamps are said to be before the throne to shew that as kings have their thrones and courts lighted with lamps and torches, so the Lord hath his church lighted by his spirit, and hath the operations thereof as it were so placed, as thereby light may be given to his church and elders that are round about him: this is a special part of the Lord's flattening, and of the church's glory, that his spirit is there: and by him it is covenanted to his church for their good unto the end of the world according as the word is Isa. lix. 21. As for me this is my covenant with them faith the Lord my spirit that is upon thee, and my word which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, faith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever.

The fourth thing marked as before this throne, is in the beginning of verse 6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: A sea is a great vessel for containing of water, called a sea for the signification thereof, as 1 Kings vii. 23. It is said that Solomon made a molten sea for the temple of the sanctuary: The end thereof was, that therein the priests might wash their vessels and also themselves, in their approaching unto the altar: this was both for great use and ornament in that legal service, and also, was typical of Jesus Christ, by whom we and our sacrifices are accepted in our approaches to God. By it here, may not unfitly be understood the blood of Jesus Christ in its efficacy, which doth really in the church, which was buttypical performed by that sea in Solomon's temple. Certainly all circumstances will agree well to confirm this: For it agreeeth well to the scope, to shew the glory of God.
in the church; for it cannot be denied but this blood is one of the special ornaments thereof: Hence, Heb. xii. 23. and 24. when we are laid to come to the heavenly Jerusalem which doth there express the militant church it is also added, that we are come to God the judge of all, &c. to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; and that excellent society is closed with this sweet expression, and to the blood of sprinkling, &c. which intimateth this to be a main comfortable part of the glory and furniture, to say so of the gospel-church. 2. Seeing the gifts of the Spirit are mentioned immediately before in their sanctifying virtue, it is not unuitable that the justifying virtue of the blood of the Lamb should be understood by this, as joined therewith; for they go well together; therefore chap. xv. 2. This sea is said to be mingled with fire: which is to understood of this fire of the Spirit here placed with it. 3. This will agree well with the reason why it is called a sea, viz. to shew the fulness thereof, and the greatness of the efficacy of the same. 4. It is before the throne, to shew that God hath provided that blood to wash sinners, that they may approach unto Him with boldness, as may be gathered from Heb. x. 19. and withal, that there is no approaching to Him but by the same. Lastly it is said to be of glass like unto crystal: which we conceive is not to express the brittleness thereof; for the mentioning of it to be like crystal contributeth nothing to that, but to express its excellency and fitness to contain and preserve what is clean and pure, in which respect it is of an excellency, beyond that of Solomon's which was but of brass. Yet it may also signify how reverently and warily it ought to be made use of, lest by proud presumption that blood be trodden under foot, and defiled, which is so tenderly preferred, as is in a sea of glass. This interpretation we think is agreeable to the scope, and also not inconsistent with that which is spoken chap. xiii. verse 4. Of the faints their standing on this sea after their victory over the beast, which may well be understood to be the washing of their robes, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb, as the expression is chap. vii. verse 14. which also relateth to the same persons, and in the same condition: for there is no obtaining of the victory over the beast by any, nor maintaining of the same, but by having footing upon Christ by faith, which will make the faints indeed to sing as victors and conquerors over all, which is confirmed by chap. xii. verse 11. They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, &c. I know it is ordinarily applied to the world and its brittleness, which hath a feigned and application not un-useful; yet considering that this is mentioned as one of the ornaments which wait upon the Lord in His church, and as a singular evidence of His glory; and considering that it is placed before the throne, even in that same room which the seven spirits of God have; as also considering that it must be conceived to be within the guard of angels, mentioned, chap. v. verse 11. We conceive in cannot agree to the world, taken as distinguished from the church, especially considering, that its being resembled to a sea of glass, and that of common glass, but that which is crystal, is not to aggrege the brittleness thereof, but clearly to commend and set forth its excellency, as being something more than an ordinary value. Beside this word sea, in this place, doth not look to these raging waters, which are called sea, as contradistinguished from the dry land the mistake whereof may be the ground of this usual application but it expresseth a great vessel made for use and ornament, and accordingly made use of in the houses of great men, and was particularly mentioned among the ornaments of the temple and ceremonial worship, as was formerly marked, and especially for washing, or bathing thereunto. Now these considerations will by no means suffer it to be applied to the world, as expressing the vanity and worthlessness thereof; neither will there be any just analogy found between the two, whereby the one may be found to resemble or to be resembled by the other.
beasts are mentioned immediately after the sea of glass, it sheweth, that by the sea of glass must be understood something that tendeth to the commination of God's presence in his church, being it is placed in the midst of the other comminations; for that these beasts are mentioned to set forth his glory, can not be questioned. The word rendered beasts, is in the original Zoa, and might be well translated living creatures, as it is, Ezek. i. and io. or living wights: By these are not understood angels, as in Ezek. i. and io. because, chap. v. io &c. they are among the redeemed, and verse iii. are expressly distinguished from the angels, who are said to be round about them, and indeed their following doth consist being compos'd with that of these living wights, or cherubims: Ezek. i. there will be found a great difference. Nor Secondly, by them can be understood any of the glorified triumphant church, because the reasons that were given when we spoke of the elders; for they reign upon the earth, chap. v. io, and the scope is, by them to express something of the church militant. We conceive therefore by these beasts to be describ'd, are understood the ministers of the church in the days of the gospel, as being distinguished from professors, who are called elders, and as being describ'd like angels, to shew their eminency in some respect beyond the other. For, 1. These beasts or living creatures, for some of them are like men, chap. vi. 3. 5. 7. 3. They are describ'd as these cherubims or angels are, Ezek. i. and ye he being such angels as are members of the militant church, they must be understood of the ministers of the gospel seeing these are ordinarily describ'd by the title angel in this prophecy; it is therefore the more likely that they are describ'd after the manner of angels even as they get their name. We will find all the particulars of the description to be pertinent and applicable to them. 1. They are said to be beast's or living creatures, to shew a particular activity and fitness that is communicated to them even beyond others. 2. Their number is four: which is less than the number of the elders or professors was yet sufficient to carry the Lord's message to all the four corners of the earth; and as it were; to be upon all sides of the Lord's throne for the edification and oversight of his people as the tribes of Israel march'd with four standards on all the quarters of the ark. 3. They are said to be full of eyes before and behind: they have not one eye, but many eyes, because they have many to watch over, and many ears to give them warning of. They have eyes before, that is to shew their dependence on God, who being the great leader and captain that goeth before his people these that are under-guides have their eye on him for direction in the way that they ought to lead their people in; and thus their eyes are before; 4. They are mentioned before their eyes behind, to shew that ere the give any direction to the flock that follow them, they will look to the master for his orders, and to have their eye upon him, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, for observing of their directions.
fame throne with the Lord as being nearer to him in respect of their service, and as being of more eminent dignity: because they are ambassadors for him and act in his stead, and in his name, and by virtue of the same authority. 2 Cor. v. 20. They are round about the throne: also which is not to be understood as if they were to speak to without the circle of the throne: but it is to shew the Lord's wise way of disposing his ministers unto all quarters for his churches edification: so that all of them are not together or upon any one side of the throne but they are disposed by him upon all quarters thereof for edifying of the elders, or his people set out by them, which are round about the throne, as we formerly heard.

In the seventh verse we have a more particular description of the seventh shapes of these beasts, which is the fifth thing by which they are described: the first beast is like a lion, the second beast like a calf: the third beast had a face as a man; the fourth beast is like flying eagle. By this diversity of forms, so shapes, is set forth the diversity of gifts and furniture, which the holy spirit useth to dispence unto the ministers of the church, as 1 Corinthians: xii. 4, 5, &c. and hereby the Lord sheweth that as private Christians may be more eminent in some graces than others so ministers are some of them eminent in one gift, some of them in another as the Lord mindeth to make use of them; as we may see by comparing Barabas, the son of Colson with Boanerges the son of thunder, yet all these gifts are for the good of the one body of the church, that there may be no schism or defect in the same, as it is 1 Corinthians: xii. 25. In the description of these cherubims or living weight, Ezek. i. every one hath all these properties and perfections, as their description cleareth; because the scope is there to describe holy cherubims; but here being applied to ministers of the gospel, not one of them hath all these properties: yet all of them jointly have them all; which sheweth that though the Lord furnisheth not every minister eminently with all gifts: that yet he useth to furnish ministers jointly qualified with what gifts are needful for his churches good: so that what one wanteth, another hath, that the hands, and the eye may acknowledge the have need of their foot, &c.

More particularly the first beast is said to be like a lion; which doth express the zeal, undaunted courage and boldness wherewith some ministers are eminently furnished in carrying on the work of the Lord, especially in difficult times. Thus were the apostles furnished, and many others in aftertimes who have adventured boldly upon such hard work, as hath made the world to think them mad in such undertakings, yet have they been carried through the same. And from this we may see how our zealous reformers have been set a work to pursue reformation against so many difficulties, viz. that it hath been by being made partakers of this lion-like spirit. The second beast is like a calf or ox. Which though he be not so bold in attempts as the other, viz. the lion; yet is useful for his dureableness and service. By this are set forth ministers furnished with patience, humility, and painfulness in labour, and submissiveness in suffering, which is also no little gift. And as the former prove profitable to the church in respect of their zeal and boldness, so do they with their patient and constant drawing in the Lord's yoke even under the crosses. This is not to be understood, as if the first wanted patience, or the second courage; for their is a zeal and boldness in suffering as well as in doing; and if boldness have not readiness to submit to the crosses, it will not be approved. But the meaning is, that some ministers who have patience and endurance, are yet to say so predominant and more eminent in the exercise of their zeal and courage, and others who are stout and courageous also; yet in God's providence, are called to vent the same in suffering, so as their patience and painful laboriousness appeareth to be predominant in them. The third beast hath a face as a man. This setteth forth such as are furnished with reason, prudence and wisdom, in an eminent manner, for managing the affairs of his house; which is not a human natural policy, but a gift of wisdom and discretion bestowed by God upon them, as it is, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 10. And by this wisdom and prudence, they edify and build the church.
as others that are observably more zealous and courageous. Though they seem not to keep the same manner of proceeding in all things with the former, yet in the same end pursued by them, and the same rule is observed in pursuing of it, and the same spirit acteth in them all. The fourth beast, is like a flying eagle. This sheweth the deep reach and inight wherewith God hath furnished some in his mysteries of the gospel, as also a spiritualnes in their gift and strain beyond others whereby hearts may be drawn from this earth to the pursuing after things that are above. Of these we may have occasion to speak, chap. vi. Only now we see how widely the Lord, fitteth his servants for his work, and doth usually time and trieth such and such qualifications in ministers according to the state of his church. It is ordinary for some to apply these four beasts to the four evangelists; but there is no ground for it. Besides, John being one of these evangelists, cannot be thought to invite himself to come and see, as all these four beasts do, chap. vi.

In the eight verse, these beasts are further described. A third part of the description is, And the four beasts had each of them six wings about them. This is borrowed from Isa. vi. 2, 3. &c. where the seraphims are so described. By which it further appeareth, that ministers the angels of the militant church, are represented by these beasts; these wings shew their expeditiousness and readiness to obey God's will. And further from Isa. vi. we may gather the reasons why they are called six. First, Because there is need of two to cover their face, who are admitted with such nearness with God. This signifies the impression which they have of the holy majesty of God, and that godly fear and reverence that ought to be in ministers in their going about holy things. This is commented in Levi, Mal. ii. 5, that he feared God, and was afraid before his name. Secondly, The use of the other two wings, is to cover their feet, whereby is expressed the tenderness which they had of their own sinful infirmities: this is well becoming a minister in his ministerial duties, to be walking with fear and with humility, as being sensible of his own

infulness and the great disproportionableness that is between God and him. This is Paul's word, 1 Cor. iii. 1. I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And it is certain, that where the first, viz. the right impression of God's holiness there this will be also. Thirdly, The last two wings are for their duty, for with two they are to fly. Here, is a good contempt of ministers when minsters walk under the impression of God's holiness, and of their own infirmities, and are not as if they were more indisposed, but made more fit for his work, and cheerful and ready in the performing of their duty. If the first four wings be not in exercise, the two last will not be very fit for their work; and it is spiritual wisdom to keep all these in the right place.

The seventh qualification whereby these beasts are described is, They were full of eyes within. In the sixth verse, they are full of eyes before, which respecteth their dependency upon God, and full of eyes behind, which holdeth forth their watchfulness over themselves, in that they so look to others, as they do not overlook themselves, but are seriously reflecting upon their own inward condition. So they are good ministers: and they are also good Christians, in their own private walk; and their also being good Christians, in having respect to their own spiritual thriving is no little qualification for their discharge of ministerial duties, and for their being admitted to so great nearness to the throne of God. Ministers that have but eyes behind them, to look upon the ways of others, and have not eyes within them, to consider themselves, are but in a great part blind guides, as Christ speaketh to the Pharisees Matth. xv. 14. This having of eyes within, as well as eyes without, is expressed by the apostle, 1 Tim. iv. 16. In that precept take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine, and Acts xv. 29. Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, &c. Ministers that look to others, would take their retirings to look upon themselves, least they become strangers to their own condition. And what is spoken of ministers here, is a duty well becoming every Christian.
Lecture III.

Verse 8. And they rest not day and night, saying bow, bow, bow, Lord God Almighty, which wast, and art, and is to come.

9. And when those beasts gave glory, and honour, and thanks to him, that sat upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever.

10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him, that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11. Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy blessee they are and were created.

In this part of the chapter, we have the third part of this manifold description; wherein the majesty of God is set out by the great work and task that his attendants of his, viz. these four beasts, and the four and twenty elders have. And that is the work of praise, whereby both in their places concur to have him exalted. In the latter part of the 8. ver. the four beasts begin, and in the three verses following the four and twenty elders go on.

In the elders praise we may consider these two:

1. The uninterruptednefs thereof. And they rest not day and night saying, &c. this is to shew, 1. The matter of their praise that doth still continue, they are furnished so with grounds thereof. 2. It is to shew their diligence and seriolness in leaving no opportunity of praise pass for praise being an affirmative duty we conceive that this practice is to be expanded according to the precepts of rejoicing alway and praying evermore. 3. It may more especially let forth the diligence and seriolness that the minifters of the gospel are laid to be furnished with according to the word, Isa. ixii. 6. "I have set watchers upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night," &c.

The second thing in their praise is the matter thereof, which is the ascribing to the Lord three of his glorious and essential attributes. The first is, holiness, which is thrice repeated, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, &c. This becometh to be taken from I. vi. 3. where the seraphims begin their song with the same expression. This sheweth, 1. How infinitely and unconceivably, holy the Lord is, when once mentioning his attributes is not sufficient. 2. It sheweth that no attribute of God, will have more impression upon a tender minister that is near him, than his holiness; this affecteth the very angels, and the more near any is admitted to him, the more will this affect them. 3. It sheweth that minifters ought to be angel-like in their speaking of God, and that it is a main part of their task to hold forth his excellency to others. The second attribute is, the Lord's omnipotency, Lord God Almighty, &c. By which the Lord is conceived as infinitely above all, and able to do all things, as Job iv. 4. and it is both a notable ground of praise in reference to God, and a comfort in reference to his people, who have him, who is able to do above what they can ask, or think, Eph. iii. 20. covenanted to be their Almighty God, even under that same consideration, Gen. xii. 1. The third attribute is, his eternity, in these words, Which was and is, and is to come. Whereof often hath been spoken, and it is here mentioned to advance the glory of God infinitely beyond all created idols who have had their beginning and are going on unto a decay, and will ere long come to be destroyed. But the portion of Jacob is not so, who in all the terrors of the world, continueth the same and of his years there is no end.

After this followeth the praise of the four and twenty elders. The beasts go before, because they represented the ministers and guides as we said. In these three things should be observed. First, The time of their praise, ver. 9. Secondly, Their practice, ver. 10. Thirdly, Their verbal expression or song, ver. 11.

The time of the elders praise is, And when they,
beasts gave glory, honour and thanks to him, that fat upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, they fall down, &c. In which words we may see, First, What the works of the beasts is. This is set forth in three expressions. 1. To give glory to God: this is their acknowledging of the majesty that is in him. The second is, honour. This respecteth the relation that is between him as Creator, and his creatures, who having their being from him, and standing in that relation to him, ought by that way, to honour him. The third is, thanksgiving; which looketh to further benefit, freely received from him, by which there is an engagement put upon them: to be thankful; which here they do acknowledge to be due, when they can do no more.

The first thing in these words, is the rise of the singing of this praise of the elders, viz. it is when the beasts give glory and honour. &c. Which is the shew, 1. The orderliness of the Lord's worship in his church, every one keeping their own place. 2. It is to shew that though every one be not a preacher, and in that respect admitted to such dignity and nearness with God as others: yet all in the church have ground, and matter of praise and employment in their situation, sufficiently to express the fame to the commendation of the Lord's grace. 3. It sheweth also the sweet harmony that ought to be between minister and people, by their joining in the same work. And 4. It sheweth the great influence that ministers example faithfulness and diligence will have upon the quickening and upbuilding of people to their duty for when the beasts begin, then the elders follow; and it is like the silence and dumness of many ministers, may also be the cause why many congregations are silent and dumb in this respect. And this may be a reason why ministers are expressed by this title of living weights, or living things, as was formerly observed because not only they ought to be lively and thriving themselves, but because of their liveliness they have great influence upon others to quicken them also.

The second thing in the elders praise, verse 10, is their practice, set forth in these expressions, (though these four and twenty elders be sitting upon thrones, yet when they, the beasts, or ministers, mentioning the holiness and excellency of the Lord, the word hath that weight, with them as to make them quite their thrones, and fall down before him that fat on the throne: this is to shew, 1. Their high esteem of God, from whom they cannot be too sile. 2. In sheweth their humble estimation of their own grandeur, and their being denied to it, when any thing of the honouring of God cometh in competition therewith. 3. It sheweth their acknowledging all to be from him, and their accounting of it their greatest honour not to sit upon thrones, but to be humble before him, and to have him high. The second thing in their practice, is, they worship him, that liveth for ever and ever: this is added, 1. To shew that their falling down is out of no astonishment, or confusion; but out of deliberation to glorify God. 2. To shew that the more humble fall before God, the more fit are they to worship him, and the better progress will they make therein. 3. It is to express the inward adoration of their hearts, as going along with their external humbled condition. God is expressed by this, that they worship him that liveth for ever, even as it was in the former verse, in the beasts their giving praise that thereby it may be seen that they worship no idol, but the living God, in opposition to the heathenish and antichristian worshipping. And also to shew, that they know whom they worship, and are not worshiping an unknown God: Further, it expresseth the reverent impression which they have of him, so that they cannot mention him but with such titles and attributes as prefer him beyond all others. The third thing in their practice, is, and they cast their crowns before the throne: This sheweth further, their great zeal to the glory of God, and their great sense of the immense disproportionableness that is between him and them, their acknowledgment of their having their crowns from him, and holding them of him; and their great and only design to improve that honour and dignity to which they have been advanced, unto the honour of him that lieth upon the throne, from whom they have the same.
And that they account it their greatest dignity if their honour might any way be a footstool for advancing, or extolling of his glory in the least.

The third and last thing in the elders praise, is, their song, or verbal expression, verse 11. when they are fallen down, they say, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are created. Wherein 1. we have their acknowledgement of God's gloriousness, and that praise is his due. 2. The reasons whereby they demonstrate this. In their acknowledgments we may consider both the matter and manner of their expostulation. The matter is in these words, 1. They acknowledge that glory is his due, this floweth from the essential excellencies that are in him. The 2. Is honour; this respecteth the Lord's sovereignty, who by his place, being head and Lord of all, ought to be honored by all. The 3. Thing acknowledged to be due to him, is, power; which is confirmed from the exercising of his omnipotence in the work of creation; as the reason following cleareth. Again, the manner of their acknowledgement is observable: for they say not, we give unto thee glory, honour, &c. but, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, &c. Which is done, not because of their unwillingness positively to ascribe the fame to him: but because their hearts being warmed and affected with zeal to the thing, could not come up as they desired in the same. And therefore as it were they say, aitho' we cannot give thee glory, honour, &c. as becometh; yet thou art worthy of the same, and it is becometh, that thou should have it, and we are so far convinced of the fame, as by this acknowledgement, to put our feal to this truth that thou art worthy to have all praise, honour, and glory given unto thee. And thus they rather express their affection to that work of praise, than their satisfaction in attaining any length therein. In which we have an excellent copy, of a heart affected with God's honour, viz. it is always desirous that he should be glorified, and yet never satisfied with its own glorifying of him.

They give two reasons to demonstrate the justice of this their acknowledgement that God is worthy of all praise; the first is, from his interest in and superiority over all things, by his creating of the fame for thou hast created all things, and for the being the great matter, and supporter of all things in heaven and earth, there being nothing but that which hath its being from him, and these being much power, wisdom, goodness, &c. exercised in this work of creation, and to be read on the creature; it is not just that ascribe glory, and honour, and power to him? And is it not most reasonable that that relation of his should be acknowledged by all? Where we see, that though the work of creation be past many thousand years since, yet may it be, and ought it to be a fresh ground of praise unto the end of the world. Also we see that where the work of creation is rightly considered, fouls will never want ground of praise. And lastly these who are affected with the glory of God himself, will be discerning matter of praise and admiration in all his works and in every creature which will be again turned about to his praise.

The second reason of their praise, is in these words, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Which in sum, is this, not only were all things created by thee, but when there was no tie upon thee to make, thou of thy good pleasure thought it fit to do so, which thou mightest have done in this manner, or in another, by that fame good pleasure of thine, it was concluded to be done as it hath now come to pass, in which there is no other motive, end, or rule in proceeding but thy own pleasure, and the setting forth of thy glory, for which end they are still sustained in the being that they have; and therefore it is most just and equitable that thou should have praise from all thy creatures, which for this very end were created.

This is a strong reason, taking not only from God's creating of all things, but from the end which he sovereignly proposed to himself in the fame, viz. that his good pleasure, which had moulded milde: for his own glory might be accomplished. This will or pleasure of God, doth not only respect the work of creation in general but it holdeth forth his end in the manner of the fame, and in the events and effects that
follow therefore, in all which God's will and pleasure is accomplished, as the word is, Prov. xv. 4. The Lord made all things for himself, that is, for his own glory; yea even the wicked that fight against God and fo bring upon themselves an evil day, whereby the name Lord created for the glorifying of his name in this reason, there is, 1. A clear assertion of the Lord's sovereignty over all his creatures, who have no other rule in the ordering and disposing of them, but his own will and pleasure: for seeing that was the end for which he made them in such and such a manner, there is no ground to enquire a further reason of him in respect of his decrees, but that it was his own will and good pleasure to do. 2. It appeareth from this, that men will never rightly praise God till his sovereignty over them be conceived aright and acknowledged; and that his will and pleasure is enough to stop our reasoning when we cannot come to satisfy ourselves in his proceeding. The want of this, maketh carnal reason to fret, as if the holy one were to be bounded and limited in his proceeding: whereas, if we did consider, that he giveth account of none of his matters, and that it becometh no man to reason with God; Rom. 9. 20. nor the potbellies of the earth to strive with their maker, this would put all to silence. And upon this ground, many bold questions may be answered, as why did God make man mutable when he might have confirmed him in innocency, as he did the elect angels? why was he made so, seeing he foreknew his fall? why were so many created and in such a posture as the Lord knew would bring upon themselves destruction? why are not all saved by Christ? why hath he made an absolute decree of reprobation concerning many? and much like. There can no answer be given but this, even so it pleased him to do, and that which is in the text, for his pleasure all things were created; and this sovereignty of God, which carnal reason so much murmur against, is here a main ground of praise and that whereby he is exalted, as being thereby glorious and infinitely above all his creatures. 3. The asserting of this sovereignty of God, is a doctrine well becoming the church, whatever others think of it, and it is ever comfortable and refreshing to his people, and a ground of song to them, because there can be nothing more satisfying to them than his good pleasure. And we suppose, that the opposing, or fretting at this doctrine of God's sovereignty, will be found to be no great evidence of the disposition of one who is a child of God, not to proceed from the native and kindly respect to God, which ought to be in creatures especially in believers, the acknowledgement and praising of which, is here a great part of the church's work.

The general scope of the vision looketh to these two, 1. To shew something of God. 2. Something in the servants of God.

First something of God. And hence Ob. 1. His absolute and sovereign dominion in heaven and earth which we gather from the similitude itself, he sitteth on a throne and hath all these attendants waiting on him; and from the song, brought in to point at this, as the scope which sheweth the great end God had and hath before him in creating and preserving all things, it is to shew himself glorious from this ground of his absolute dominion over all creatures.

2. Not only is he a stately king on the throne, but he exerciseth his dominion; he hath made all and he suftaineth all for his good pleasure. And sitteth on the throne executing his pleasure; and the world never wanteth a governor, as long as the king sitteth on the throne; and as their is a sovereign God, there is also a sovereign providence in all the world, but more especially in the church.

3. His being well furnished with means and instruments for doing his work, is held forth; therefore he is said to have such attendants, fitted with wings and eyes, and chap. v. 11. He hath ten thousand times and thousands of thousands of angels to execute his commands round about, and before his throne; these glorious spirits wait on directions from him and are ready to do his commandments, in carrying and providing for his church; and he hath also beside angels, his own Almighty power and thundering to execute his wrath on enemies, as well as for the
creating of things: and for carrying on the work of grace, he hath seven spirits to spread the everlasting gospel.

4. The Lord's great shot in all this, is to get praise to himself, and to give matter of a song to his attendants. These four generals are clearly held out in the chapter, however we expound the words. And it is comfortable that his praise, and our song are so joined together that what is of the one is also matter of the other.

Secondly, Something in the servants of God, is holden forth however we look on thee bees, and elders. 1. Their nature and qualifications are here holden out and how they are fitted with eyes before and behind, and within each of them with fix wings and with several shapes, some being like a lion, some like a calf, some having a face as a man, some like a flying eagle: in which their furniture for their work and their activity in it, and their humble, serious, watchful and speedy manner of going about it, is set out: which should be a pattern to believers how to walk in all commanded duties, and pieces of service.

2. There is here holden out the great dignity and happiness of God's servants and attendants however we expound the words that is clear, that to be his servants is a great privilege, they sit on thrones, they wear crowns, they are cloathed, in white raiment, they are all kings and priests to God, chap. v. 10. They are as the angels they attend on him, and have places among them that stand by, Zech. iii. 7. It is the compleating of our happiness to have liberty to look upon God sitting on his throne. The Queen of Sheba faith, that Solomon's servants were blest that got liberty to behold his face, and hear his words but O how much more, happy are they who day and night reft not, but are always taken up in beholding and praising God? For a greater than Solomon is here.

We are here taught what, should be, and as in some measure the great task and work of the servants of God, and of all that intoll themselves under that title and name, that is day and night to be taken up with magnifying of God to be making his praise glorious, Psal. lxvi. 2. Which is to make it illustrious and by a native way of going about it. Again, here is holden forth the manner how we should go about it, viz. With humility and reverence, with cheerfulness and zeal laying all we have before Christ's feet acknowledging all we have received, to flow from him, giving him the glory of it employeth all, so as may most contribute to make him great that sitteth upon the throne.

Lastly, There is the delightfulness, and heartiomenes of this task: though they rest not day nor night it is not a wearisome work; for it is singing: and his laying they rest not, is not to hold out any burden, yoke or restraint laid on them; but to hold out the beddedness of their spirit within, with love and joy that they cannot rest, it is to speak, an eafe to be venting in it praise. There is such joy and cheerfulness from that wine that cometh from under the throne that they cannot hold their peace, but it is their continual refreshment, night and day to be speaking and praising. In a word, it faith this, that it is a good thing to be Christ's servants, and that his service is a sweet work, and it will be known ere long how good a thing it was to be Christ's and servants: and how happy a life it will be, to be praising him. It were good some touches of it were warming our hearts before hand and that we had the proof and experience of it, what it is. The Lord give us to know it.

---

**LECTURE I.**

**CHAP. V.**

Verfe, 1. *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the backside sealed with seven seals.*

2. *And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice.*

4 L. 2
voice, who is worthy to open the book and lose the seals thereof?

3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4. And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the lamb which was slaine from the foundation of the world standeth upon the throne.

6. And he saith unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful: and the Lord God of the spirits of all flesh doth give thee knowledge and wisdom.

7. And he took me away to show me the future events of the four living creatures, and of the twenty-four elders seated on thrones, and a book opened, which was sealed with seven seals:

In this chapter, the preparation to the following revelation goeth on: and in it he who was described in the former chapter to fit upon the throne, is here represented as having a sealed book in his hand, which none in heaven nor earth can unfold but Jesus Christ the Mediator who for his churches good, doth the same, which is turned to be matter of praise, in the last part of the chapter. The scope of all tendeth especially to these three. First, to shew the absoluteness, determinateness, and particularity of God's decrees in all events that concern the church: which within his limits are as it were, written in a sealed book. Secondly, to shew the special office of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being upon his father's secrets doth reveal so much of the same to the church as is useful for her; and that without him there is no access to the knowledge of the same. Thirdly, it is to make way to the more clear understanding of the prophecies following, according to the mould wherein they are revealed: for it could not be understood what were intended by the opening of the first, second, or third seals, &c. were it not that here God is represented, as having a book with so many seals in his hand.

We may take up the chapter in these three parts:

1. There is a vision seen, viz. A book in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, &c. Verse 1, 2. There are some circumstances expressing both the difficulty and possibility of attaining to the understanding of what is written within the same; this followeth unto the eighth verse. 3. From that unto the end, is set down most excellent song of praise, as we shall see in the words.

The first part, viz. the vision of the book, hath four things remarkable in it. As for the throne, what is, and who is that sitteth thereon, we heard thereof in the former chapter; and therefore may now proceed to these four things here set down. First, It is called a book: this is not literally to be understood, as if God had made of books more than he hath material thrones or hands: but as was shewn on chap. iii. verse 5, it is after the manner of men, to shew how particularly and orderly all things are determined by God, as if they were particularly invented and recorded in a book.

By this book here, is not understood God's providence in general, nor yet his special purpose in reference to his elect; but his decrees concerning the special events that were to befall his gospel church. In a word, it is the same revelation: for what is afterward revealed to John, is by opening one of these seals and the last seal will be found to comprehend both the trumpets and vials as we will find in the progress. The second circumstance is that this book is written within and on the backside, that is, in a word, it is all filled up, there is no blank in the same: For known to God are all his works from the beginning, Acts xv. xviii. and no new occurrence, which is so as to men, doth put the Lord to take any new counsel, or to make any new decree for to say to there is no blank in his register, to contain the same, but all things were concluded of old in his counsel, and accordingly in time are brought to pass. Thirdly, This book is said to be in his right hand: which sheweth, 1. That there are none accursed to his counsel but himself; for he took counsel of none. 2. That he himself is matter of his own purposes and there is none that can alter his decrees or change any of his purposes: for the book is in his own hand. 3. It sheweth that which
he hath once in his wisdom concluded, he doth by his power proceed to execute and that so as he cannot be frustrated at his end: therefore he is said to have it in his right hand; which sheweth both his admirable dexterity and omnipotency: that are exalted in executing the same. The fourth circumstance is, this book is sealed with seven seals: sealed; that is, indiscernable and unconceivable to any, as the words following do clear and as may be gathered from Isa. xxix. 11. Although all things be known to God, yet are they unknown to creatures till they be particularly revealed by him or in his providence brought to pass. Again this book is sealed with seven seals; which is partly to shew the exceeding depth of God’s secret counsel, whereunto none can reach, seeing it is not only sealed with one seal; but with seven; and especially this number is to definite, because the following principle visions do so much confute of seven; for the number of the seals of this book doth distinguish the steps of this first principle prophecy. To clear it we must know that in these times their books were not like ours now, but generally were long scrolls of parchment rolled on a stick as we may gather from the writings of the Old Testament: in respect of which form one part of the scroll might be rolled up, then sealed: that another part rolled up and that likewise sealed and so forth till there might be seven parts, and seven, several seals: and therefore the opening of the first seal, would not admit one to read that part of the scroll until he came to the second, and again there were no reading of what followed until the second were opened, &c. Of this sort is this book mentioned here for chap. vi. we see that the opening of every seal giveth some new vision and that there is no understanding thereof till all the several seals be opened.

The second part of the chapter, which concerneth the opening of the book: and maketh way for expressing the honour of the Mediator followeth in the next five verses. Wherein First There is a proclamation made to find out some fit person to open the same, verse 2. Secondly, There is a disappointment, verse 3. Thirdly, there is John’s exceeding great heaviness and weightiness thereof, verse 4. Fourthly, There is confusion against the same, First intimated, and thereafter seen, verse 5. 6. 7.

The proclamation, verse 2. Is in these words, I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? This proclamation is not made as if here were an expectation to find any creature by whom this might be done: but by putting all creatures to it, and thereby declaring their insufficiency, the greater way is made for the glory of Christ, the Mediator, the performer thereof. The party proclaiming, is an angel: for even these admire God’s way with his church, and desire the unfolding of the same. It is a strong angel to shew the concernment of the thing proclaimed and that even the most excellent angels cannot it their happiness to be serviceable to God in the affairs of his church; also it maketh the thing proclaimed more observable. By comparing this with the, 5. and 6. verses, we, may see that by beasts, are neither understood any of the host of angels, in general, nor some special angels as some alledge of a more eminent degree, for they are opposed to this strong angel, who yet must be understood to be of eminency among them. Again the matter proclaimed is observable which is not, who is able to open the book, &c. but who is worthy or meet to do the same? And this upon the one side, is to put a dash upon all creatures as being unworthy and unmeet to pry into God’s secrets immediately and on the other side it doth exceedingly commend the mediator, who alone is found to be such. This is done with a loud voice that thereby the mouths of all creatures may be stopped and that this singular worthines of the Mediator and this his peculiar privilege might bee afterward found to be the more unquestionable.

A second circumstance, is the answer of this proclamation, or the effect which followed upon it; which may be gathered from verse 3, and no man in heaven, nor in the earth nor under the earth, was able to open the book, nay nor to look thereon: This is plain, and sheweth that not one of all the creatures even of the most excellent angels in heaven, none
of the men in earth, nor devils in hell can reveal
God's secret counsel till it be done by the Mediator:
May they could not look thereon: which is an aggra-
vation; of their dullness and ignorance in that repect
for they were so far from opening this book that they
could not look upon the fame. And if it be thus in
the works of common providence what could all crea-
tures have attained to in the uptaking of the great
mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh,
&c. had not the Lord thought good to reveal the
fame?

The third thing, verse 4. Is John's heaviness, be-
cause of that apparent impossibility, and I wept much
because no man was found worthy to open and to
read the book, neither to look thereon. Which doth,
set forth, 1. That John did esteem the understanding
of what was within this book to be of great worth.
2. That he did exceedingly long to understand the
fame. 3. That he seemed now to be hopeless of attain-
ing this. 4. That this disappointment was sad and
heavy to him. It is not like that it was John's cur-
iosity, which made him thus to weep: but conceiving
the thing to be useful to the church, it did affect him
much to see the fickleness of all creatures, and men,
emptiness in particular, for all their boasting of their
attaining to the knowledge of so great mysteries: yet
there may be some infirmity in this effect, by his
thinking the thing desperate, because it was impos-
sible to creatures, and his overlooking the office and
excellency of the Mediator, who can do when
all other give it over: which is a fault two often in-
cident to believers.

The fourth step is verse 5. Where the consolation
beginneth: for the Lord suffereth not John to weep
long, even though his infirmity had occasioned his
own heaviness. The consolation hath two parts: the
first is by sending good news, or glad tidings unto
John, verse 5. The second is by making him a be-
holder of a comfortable sight, verse 6. and 7. where-
in he feeth that to be performed which was told unto
him.

In these glad tidings we may consider, 1. The
carrier. 2. The comfort. 3. The ground thereof.

The carrier is one of the elders, that is, as was ex-
ounded in the former chapter, some private profes-
sor or member of the church whom in way of vifon
God maketh use of to help and comfort John in
this heaviness and infirmity. And what is here in vi-
fon, may be often really performed in the church.
From which we may gather, 1. That the roulet of
God's servants may have their great fits of heav-
iness and weeping, and their mistakes of his dispen-
sations, and ready to count things much more dele-
rate than they are. 2. The Lord is tender of his
people's heaviness, even when it is out of infirmity,
3. His comforts are feasonably tried, and often then
are they most near and refreshing, when men think
things most desperate. 4. He may make use of an
instrument for the comforting of another; and when
the strong are overmanured with heaviness, he can fur-
up weak professors to prove comfortable to them.
And in the last place, more particularly we may see
that weak professors may sometimes be more comfort-
ed in the use-making of Christ's offices and in exer-
cising faith on him, that great teachers, who by seek-
ings to exercise their right invention, and reason to
justify themselves in things that are dark may have
many disappointments therein and heaviness follow
thereon so long as the Mediator is not employed;
whereas the simple tender believer, that at first looketh
him for answer to all difficulties, may have much peace and cheerfulness.

Secondly, The particular comfort is expressed, weep
not. Which theeweth both that that was not the duty
which John was called unto, though for the time he
did let out himself therein; and also that there was
not such ground for the fame as he supposed.

And because simple directions will not prevail to
comfort those that are heavy. In the third place, he
giveth the ground of this. Behold, saith he, the lion
of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath pre-
vened to open the book, and to shake the seals the-
ereof. Which is in tum, thou mayest be comforted and
lay thy weeping, for though no creature be able to
open the book, yet the Mediator can and will fully
do that business. He beginneth this with a behold, therefore to rouse up John with the glad tidings that he was to tell him, and also to make what was said to be the more to be observed, and the party spake of, the more to be admired. This party who openeth the book, must be no mean person, seeing he doth what no creature in heaven, nor earth could do; and so is contra-distinguished from them. He is here expressed by two titles; the first is, he is the lion of the tribe of Judah: this feemeth to be taken from Gen. xlix. 9. Wherein Judah is said, to couch down as a lion, and as as an old lion: who shall rouse him up? and this is attributed to him. 1. To shew that he is of the flock and linage of Judah, and the very Messiah, or Shiloh, spoken of there. 2. To point out the excellent qualifications wherewith our Lord Jesus is furnished for the undertaking and procuring of the most dangerous exploits, if so his peoples need call for the same. He is indeed such a bold lion as never drew back for a strait; and as none can rouse him up but to their own prejudice. So none can expect otherwise to be dealt with, that rife up against him. The second word is, he is the root of David: this is taken, as would seem from Is. xi. verse 1. where he is called a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots; so that if we look upon Christ as a man and come of David, he is a rod out of the stem of Jesse, &c. or if we look upon him in a more spiritual and mystical sense, as he is God and man, Mediator and head of his church, in this respect he is the root of David, because so David as a member, hath his being from him: in which respect chap. xxii. verse 10 the Lord doth site himself both the root and offspring of David. And this twofold consideration of Christ, is the only way to looke that question which puzzled the pharisees, Mat. xxii. verse 42. &c. viz. how the Messiah could be both David's son and David's Lord. It is said he hath prevailed to open the book, &c. which intimateth many difficulties that the Mediator had to overcome in the executing of his office; and yet with all a most full victory that now this courageous lion by his dying had obtained over them all, so that there could be nothing alleged why he should not possess the privileges that were due to the Mediator.

The other part of the consolation, is by making John in vision to behold the performing of this, verse 6, and 7. Wherein, 1. John's looking is mentioned, and I beheld, sayeth he, that is, having to good news told me, I revived as it were again, and looked to him that sat upon the throne, to see if their might be any hopes of that which formerly I supposed to be desperate. 2. It is marked what he saw after he looked; and because the vision is wonderful, there is justly a pole prefixed unto it. This vision is in general a vision of Jesus Christ the Mediator, whom John saith, to his great comfort and satisfaction to be the performer of that which formerly he thought desperate. And because he is a singular person, he is several ways described in these two verses. First, He is called a lamb; this is a title ordinarily given to Jesus Christ in the gospel of John. And we conceive, it is especially for these reasons, 1. To express Christ Jesus his priestly office, and his offering himself a sacrifice for his people; therefore ordinarily when he geteth this something is added thereunto, as to take away the sins of the world to be slain, &c. as even here in that title of the same verse: which expressions do palpably relate to this sacrifice and offering. 2. It is to shew his mildness to speak so in reference to his people; for although he be a lion in the former verse in respect of his undertakings for them against enemies; yet in his dealing with them, he is more gentle than any lamb, and this is mentioned as one of this high Priest's properties, Heb. vii. 26. that he is holy harmless, or imaculose, &c. which is no little commendation of him to his people. In a word he is a lion to purchase and conquer, and a lamb, in dispewing what he hath purchased to his people. Secondly he is said to be as it had been slain; so is here presented to vision, that it may appear by what means he thus prevailed to obtain such privileges for his churches good, viz. it is by his dying, and rising again, giving his life as is said, for the sheep: and upon this ground John x. 17. it that the father loveth him, that is accepteth
of him; approveth of him in the discharge of the office of the Mediator; and as he is the Son of God was necessarily beloved without respect to this so we ought to esteem much of what Christ hath revealed to us in the gospel, and of what he revealeth to us of the same prophecy; for by his death he made way to have the same revealed unto us. Thirdly, This Lamb is placed in the midst of the throne that is, in the manner in the midst of the four beasts, and four and twenty elders: which is not for nought expressed; but as it doth shew, 1. His dignity and glory beyond them: so 2. It sheweth his presence in the church, upon the same throne with the Father, that thereby his people may be the more bold in their approaches unto God by him, seeing they want not a friend always present in that court. For this end also, he is said to be standing, some way to declare his readiness to execute what may tend to his peoples edification and consolation; for as a painful shepherd, he standeth to feed the flock, Micah v. 12. Fourthly, he is said to have seven horns and seven eyes, and these again, are expounded to be the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth; by these, no created thing can be under foot; for that which is the Lamb's power, or horns, must be omnipotent; that which is his eye must be omniscient; and that which is through all the earth, must be omnipresent; this therefore must be under foot of the third person of the holy trinity, as was expounded, chap. 1. 4. and chap. iv. 5. Here he is called in respect of his manifold operations, seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb, because of that order of operation that is among the persons of the blessed trinity, wherein we spoke in the places formerly cited. The last part of the description recorded here, is, in verse 7. Where the Lamb's advancing, as it were to him that sitteth upon the throne, and his actual taking the book out of his hand to open the same, is expressed, and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne this could not but be a comfortable sight to John, who having formerly given over the case as desperate: doth now see this lovely Lamb proceed so far in the discovering of what was contained in this book. And here we have first the three persons of the holy trinity distinctly holden forth, for their is, 1. One upon the throne with the book in his hand: 2. There is the Lamb: 3. There are the seven spirits of God distinct from the former two, and all these on the same throne. Secondly, We may see the three offices of the Mediator, holden forth here. For 1. That he is a Lamb slain, signifieth his priestly office. 2. That he is upon the throne, and hath horns and power, doth hold forth his kingly office. 3. That he taketh the book to open and to reveal God's mind to his church, is an express evidence of his being prophet.

From all that is spoken, two things are mainly to be observed. 1. That the Lord hath a special overruling providence over all things that concern his church. There is nothing that falleth out, which is written down as it were before the beginning of the world. This is a great consolation to his church, there is no enemy that doth rise up against her, nor any adversary that breaketh out among her members, nor any event that occasionally the fæmeth meets with, but these were fully determined by the Lord before the beginning of the world.

In the second part of the words we see of what excellent worth the Mediator is beyond all creatures in heaven and earth, how great need there is of him and how wretched and miserable we would be without him; all the most glorious creatures in heaven beside and all the fullness of the earth could not give us ground of comfortable worshipping before God, if there were not a Mediator. We may see also, that the great cause of his peoples heartiness is, that he is not acknowledged in their straits. O how excellent a one is the Mediator and O how happy a thing were it continually to be improving him Lord, teach us that: and to him be praise for ever amen.
I. E. C. T. U. E. II.

VERSE 8. And when he had taken the book, the four
beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before
the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden
vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.
9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to
take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou
wrestest slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood
everywhere, and tongue and people and nation.
10. And hast made us unto our God, kings and priests;
and we shall reign upon the earth.
11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels
round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders;
and the number of them was ten thousand times ten
thousand, and thousand of thousands.
12. Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that
was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and
strength, and honour, and glory and blessing.
13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the
earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea,
and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, honour,
glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,
and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.
14. And the fourth beast said, Amen. And the four and
twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth
for ever and ever.

This is the third part of the chapter, and expres-
sbeth the main scope of what went before, viz.
the exalting of the Mediator. This is cast in betwixt
his taking of the book out of the hand of him that
sitteth upon the throne, and his proceeding actually to
open the same, that this singular work of the Medi-
atior may be made the more observable. The occasion
of the song, is in the beginning of verse 8. and when
he had taken the book, &c. that is, when by the
appearing of the Mediator in his office they had ground
to expect the opening up of the within contained
mysteries, then they praise.
The praise itself may be taken up in three parts,
according to the several parties that take part
therein. For 1. The redeemed church begin,
and they sing, in the last part of the 8. verse,
in the 9. and 10. verses. Then 2. The angels follow,
verse 11. and 12. In the third place, all creatures are
brought in joining in this song, verse 13. And be-
cause the redeemed have most interest in, and obliga-
tion to the Mediator, whole praise is peculiarly ex-
pressed here, therefore as they begin, so they close
verse 14.

In the first part, first, the redeemed church are de-
scribed in reference to this work, verse 8. Secondly,
their praise is expressed, verse 9. and 10. In their
description they are called four beasts, and twenty four
elders. Whereof we spoke in the former chapter, and
show that by them, most probably is Holden forth the
ministers and profilers of Christ's militant gospel-
church; and this place doth confirm the same: for,
it they are contradistinguished from angels, verse 11. and
are said to be redeemed and made kings and priests
unto God, which agreeeth to all believers even upon
earth, as chap. i. verse 6. again, their work here, is,
not only to praise, but to pray; for they have vials
full of odours, as well as harps, verse 8. And they are
said to be sharers of Christ's spiritual dominion, and
to be priests to him even upon earth: yea, their spiritual
priesthood will most properly agree to that, according
to the usual application thereof in scripture. Their
redeemed, are said to fall down before the Lamb:
which is to shew their humble and reverenced way of
going about this work of praise and was spoken of
chap. iv. verse 10. Lastly they are furnished for this
work having every one of them harps and golden
vials full of odours, or incense, which are the prayers
of the saints: this sheweth their fitness and readi-
ness for the work: and it is done in expressions bor-
rowed from the ceremonial worship under the Old
Testament, when yet the scope is to express the spi-
ritual worship that is to be given to God under the
New; by harps, are underlaid instruments for
praise, as is frequent in the Psalms; and we will find
the saints in their cheerful condition chap. xv. 2. to
described. This sheweth a warmness and bendedness
of heart, ready to burst out in the praise of the Me-
diator, and to make melody thereby within themselves
before him; which is more acceptable to him, and
comfortable to them, than the sweetness of any ma-
terial instrument whatsoever, as Eph. v. 19. and Col.
iii. 15. where we are commanded to praise with grace
in our hearts, which may well be the thing signified
by these harps. Beside this, they have golden vials
full of odours, or incense. Incense was used in the
ceremonial worship, when the people approached to
offer up their requests to God. Therefore we have
the word, Psal. cxi. 2. Let my prayer be set forth be-
fore thee as incense: vials, are vessels wherein these are
offered; and so vials full of odours, will signify a spir-
tual fittedness with the spirit of grace and supplica-
tion as is promised, Zech. xii. 10 to pour out the
heart to God in prayer, as well as in praise. They
are two notable qualifications of believers; and it is
ordinary both in the old and new Testament to un-
derstand by sacrifices and offerings, the moral duties
of praise and prayer in the days of the gospel. As to
the last part, this is confirmed in the words following,
which are the prayers of the saints. Where two
things are answered, 1. Would we know who the
deaf and elders were who have these vials? It is an-
swered, they are saints, that is, believers, members
of the militant church, according to the usual accep-
tion of the word; and this confirmeth the former exposition
which we gave of these parties. Again would we
know what these odours are which are in the vials?
The text faith, they are the prayers of saints, that is,
these odours represent the prayers of saints which may
either be understood indefinitely, as interpreting what
is meant by odours in the general, and so all the
prayers of all the saints on earth in general may be
called odours and incense; or we may take it with a
special relation to this place; and so the odours here
will signify the prayers of the same saints who had
the vials in their hands; and thus they bring not pro-
perly the prayers of others to offer up to God which
yet were not absurd, considering that these officers
were living saints on earth but they bring their own
prayers, even as by harps is signified their own ex-
pressions of praise, or the praise expressed by them-
selves, as the song following will clear. This there-
fore hath no affinity at all with the popish doctrine
of the intercession of saints departed, which is utterly
robs to the scope of this place. It is to be observed
the how different this phraze is from that which is
attributed to Christ, chap. viii. verse 3, where he
does offereth the prayers of all saints, adding incense
thereunto.

Their song followeth in the 9, and 10. ver. Where
1. Their is the expression of their praise. 2. The
grounds or reasons thereof. Their song is said to be
in a new song; and they sung a new song. 1. Because
the matter was so great and excellent, that no former
expression of praise could as it were reach the same,
for which cause Psal. xi. 3. David faith, he had put a
new song in his mouth, when by a new and singular
mercy, he had given him matter thereof. 2. It is
new, as contradistinct from the more obscure expres-
sions of praise that were under the Old Testament.
Now, the office of the Mediator being more clear,
and he having made himself more known to his peo-
ple, they accordingly express his praise in a new song.
The matter expressed, is, thou art worthy to take the
book, and to open the seals thereof, that is in sum,
thou art worthy to be Mediator, and to execute what
belongeth to that office. This looketh not to be
very much at the first, yet there cannot be more said.
For if we will consider, 1. This expression putteth
him beyond all creatures; for none of them was
found worthy; and so by this, they acknowledge him
to be beyond all. 2. This expression hath in it an
acknowledgement of his worthines and fitness to be
Mediator, and in all things to have the preheminency,
and a name above every name that is named, which
in the greatest conferred glory that is conceivable,
and more than angels and men are capable of, or can
comprehend. 3. This expression impleth their hearty
affection to God’s constitution of him in that office, and
their exulting to see him prosper and glorified in the executing of the fame: which is a thing well becoming a member of Christ's body; and a subject of his kingdom; and is the greatest length they can come at, viz. to be asenters by their acknowledgement of his worth to God's advancing of him to this dignity.

The grounds of the praise follow in three steps, the last being always more particular than the former, and an effect thereof. The first is, For thou wast slain, that is, in the execution of thy office, and in obedience to the father's will thou hast submitted thyself to death, even to a violent death, and accordingly hast suffered the fame, and so thou wast slain. This dying of an accursed death, is the great article and condition required upon the Mediator's side of the covenant of redemption, upon the undertaking and undergoing of which all privileges promised to him therein are grounded, and from this, all the works of redemption flow: therefore here it is made the reason of his worthiness to administer the office of a Mediator in every thing, and why he cannot be thought worthy to do the fame and to be praised by his people, because he was slain and so hath performed what was undertaken by him.

The second ground is, And hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. In this there is a very sum of the gospel and work of redemption, and it is the more particular application of the former ground, and the effect thereof as was said, and this in foran the former reason. We have reason say they to praise thee for thy death, for by it, we that were lost and fold under sin, are redeemed unto God, &c. To consider the words more particularly, we must follow the multitude of redemption as is used among men, and in this case, made use of to help us to understand some what of this mystery of the gospel. And here is implied, 1. That God had a peculiar right to the praise in this song, before ever they become to be fold or mortgaged; so to redeem a thing amongst men, supponeth a man once had had a right to such a thing. Here we take God's right to thee redeem ed, not only to be that interest which he had in them by creation, for that is common, but that which he had from eternity by his purpose and degree of election. In which respect, the elect are called his singularly, and John xvii. 6. Thine they were, thou gavest them to me, &c. Where these that were elected and given to Christ, are in a peculiar manner said to be God's, and this is implied in the phrase, Thou hast redeemed us to God. For it supponeth, that by Christ's purchase as it were, access is made for them again to be the Lord's possession according to his former right.

2. Here is implied, that even these to whom God had this singular right, are before this redemption somehow mortgaged, or as we use to say, sold; and yet do as the former right was not dissolved. For if there had not been some mortgaging alienation, there had been no need of redemption, and if there had been a total dissolution of the former right, there had been no access to redeem. This mortgaging in scripture is clearly expressed to be that spiritual bondage under the law, wrath and curfe of God, even whereby the elect by their sins have inthralled themselves: and because of that, are lying under the curse of God till he be satisfied, and his honour repaired, which suffered by their fin. This is largely expressed, Rom. iii. Epif. ii. and Gal. iii. beside many other places. The tyre which notwithstanding stands betwixt the Lord and these, is that purpose of election; for even then in that respect they are his, as was said, for election being founded on nothing in the creature, but on God's free will, purpose and good pleasure, there can nothing in the creature dissolve the fame. 3. Here is implied that before the elect can be freed from the curfe there must be a price laid down, as it were, in compensation for the fame. This is clearly implied in the word redemption, which importeth some equivalent satisfaction given to the party offended, or to the party for whole behoof, such were justly mortgaged, and without whose prejudice they could not be set free, except an equivalent price were paid; and this is called redemption. Now the party is ended, for the vindication of whole honour the elect for a time are imprisoned, and put under the keeping of the law, &c. is
the Lord; and therefore in reason, ere they can be freed, there must be some equivalent price for his satisfaction, which may glorify him, and vindicate his honour as much as the keeping of them in prison or under the former mortgage; and this is called satisfaction or redemption. 4. The scope of this redemption, is expressed in that word, Thou hast redeemed us to God, that is, that the elect may be admitted unto God's friendship and favour, and communion with him, and to the enjoying of the title that stands between him and them, as freely as if they had never had sin, or had never been under such a mortgage. 5. They express who this redeemer is, Thou hast redeemed us: O blessed thou! This cannot indeed but affect, Thou the Lamb, Thou the lion of the tribe of Judah, Thou the root of David, that hast eyes like a flame of fire, &c. Thou hast redeemed us. Christ is called a redeemer, because when the elect had nothing to free themselves from the captivity and mortgage which they had brought upon themselves when the justice of God, by virtue of the law and curse, to lay no more did call for a satisfaction and price before they could be admitted to freedom, then he undertook, and was content to pay what they were due, either in the same kind, or in the equivalent, that to them, who were as a mortgaged possession, detained from the right owner, might hereafter freely to him again. 6. The price by which he redeemed them, is mentioned, thou hast redeemed us by thy blood. It is wonderful he that was such a person, should be the redeemer; but O how wonderful that he should perform this redemption by laying down such a price as his own blood! And this we may see. First, That seeing the threatening, against sin, include death; That day thou eatest thou shalt die. So the redeemer condescended to undergo death for satisfying that. Secondly, When it is said thou hast redeemed us by thy blood, there is imported a testimony of the singularity of his worth and alto of his love; for no blood of goats, nor of men, nor of mere creatures could make this redemption, for no man can redeem his brother, Psal. xliii. to precious is the redemption of souls, that it ceaseth for ever, viz. in respect of great

redeemers, yet when thou condescendedst to do it, even with thy blood which (Acts xx. 28.) is the blood of God. Thirdly, This redeeming by his blood, doth exprest his death purposely and formally laid down by him, and accepted of by God, as a price and satisfaction in the room of these elect, for the obtaining of their redemption. Otherwise, the whole strain of this scripture will be to no purport, except Christ be acknowledged to be the redeemer, and his blood and sufferings to be the price which is laid down as a satisfaction to God's justice in the room of the elect sinners, that thereby they may be set free. And Christ's blood in this respect, is laid to be a satisfaction equivalent before justice, because by his undertaking that debt, and committing to pay the same, and God's actual executing it of him, the holiness and justice of God, is more gloriously manifested than if these themselves had been kept still in the prison, who were yet never able to have paid one shilling, whereas now the redeemer has paid the uttermost. 7. There is here the object of this redemption, viz. us, Thou redeemest us, and these are to lay to two ways qualified. 1. In respect of the extent of this object, it is not some of one family, city, nation, kindred, &c. but is extended to every kinder, tongue, people, and nation. And this is done to shew the universality, to say so, and extent of Christ's church under the gospel, in opposition to what is under the law, and formerly. Now say they the church is not included within one family, or nation, but the gospel being spread, the elect are gathered in out of all nations, kindreds and tongues: and we who are not of the flock of Abraham, but are of strange nations, have reason to praise for this gospel, and to bless the Mediator who hath purchased it unto us. Again, although this object in some respect hath been extended, to all nations kindreds, &c. without discrimination or discrimination, yet somewhat is added to qualify and restrict the same, that it may be understood collectively of all of every nation language, but distributively of some of these nations, kindreds or tongues. For the redeemed, their song is expressed in these terms, Thou hast redeemed us, out
of every tongue and kindred, and people and nation. And certainly there is a palpable difference between the two, viz. to say, Thou hast redeemed all kindreds tongues, and nations: and to say, Thou hast redeemed us out of every tongue, kindred and nation, whereby the redeemed are contradistinguished from the rest of the kindred, and nation, out of which they are redeemed: and yet it cannot be thought, but all that are redeemed, do concur in this long. Therefore the other, contradistinguished from them cannot be said to be redeemed. Besides this peculiarity of redemption is a particular ground of the redeemed's praise, viz. when they were lying under the curse with others, Christ hath redeemed them from among them. Further all this long doth agree to any person that hath been redeemed by Christ's blood, that they are redeemed are also made kings, and priests. And seeing all cannot praise for this mercy, as experience sheweth, therefore can it be said, that they are comprehended under the former. And if we will remember what was just now said, viz. that redemption doth import a peculiar right to those that are redeemed beside others, viz. a right by election. Then it will follow, that no other can be said to be redeemed but the elect that were given to Christ; and nothing all are not by this peculiar right, for to be God's in this respect, and to be given to Christ, and to be actually redeemed are of equal extent, therefore it cannot be said that all are redeemed.

The third reason, or ground of their praise, which is also the effect of the former, will confirm this: and it is contained verse 10. And hath made us unto God's kings, and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth; so that if it be asked, what are the advantages which they reap by Christ's redemption which make them thus to praise? They answer they are very great, for not only are they freed from the former bondage they were under, and let at liberty, as in the former verse but they are honoured and blessed with many excellent privileges exceedingly commend in four words: 1. Thou hast made us kings: this respecteth that spiritual freedom that the believers have from their former enemies, and that spiritual dominion which they are over them, and that eternal glory whereof they shall sit upon one throne with the Lord Christ. This is a great privilege that all the redeemed who were formerly slaves, shall be made Kings. 2. They are priests: this was also a title and office of great dignity under the law, and by it is signified, that by Christ all the redeemed are honour'd to have access into God's name by him; with hope of being accepted: which privilege is founded upon Christ's redemption, and without this there had been access to no finner to pray a praise acceptably, and with any comfort before God. But now say they we are priests and may offer our own sacrifices: yea now under the gospel, we are not tied to any typical service, nor to one place or temple, nor to seek a priest to offer our sacrifices unto God for us; but we ourselves may approach thereunto him. 3. It commends and sweeteneth this privilege, that they are made priests to our God; which implieth that now by Christ they may worship and serve God as in covenant with them, and is their own God; which doth make all the services they can be put to, very light and easy, and strengthen them against all the difficulties they may meet therein, seeing it is no idol, nor strange God, whom they worship, but their own God who will pity them in their service, as a father pities his son. Lastly, they say, and we shall reign on the earth; which is set down, not only to shew the spiritualness of this kingdom, which being on earth and common to all the redeemed, many of whom have a power being here can be no otherways understood than of his spiritual dominion; but mainly, we conceive it is mentioned here, as the ground of their song, that not only have they a hope of reigning, and being freed from sin in heaven, but that in some measure they are made partakers of the virtue of Christ's purchase in the abiding of their sin and the mortifying of their lives, whereby they are kept from the dominion of sin because they are not now under the law, but under grace according to the promise, Rom. vi. 14. And this is a kindly evidence of the redeemed person and a convincing ground of praise, to a truly gracious
foul, viz. to have sanctification thriving, the body of death born down; and even before they come to heaven, to be looking heaven-like, and to be brought some-way to triumph over their spiritual enemies; thus which, as their is nothing that will be more desired by them, so there will be nothing more acceptable to them, even thus to be privileged and dignified, to reign spiritually on the earth. And we may see, that as this is a great mercy to be sanctified, so it is a fruit of Christ’s death, and floweth from his purchase even as justification doth: in which respect, he is our sanctification, as well as our righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30.

The second company who join in this song, is the angels; who are described, verse 11. and then their song is expressed, verse, 21. They are described, first, by their title and number, they are angels, that glorious ministering spirits, Heb. i. 14. called sometimes in scripture the hosts of heaven; and because of their excellency, the sons of God, Job xxxvii. 9. And they are many angels, the number of them was ten thousand, times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: this is a great number it seemeth to be taken out of Dan. vii. 10 where thousand thousands are said to minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousands to stand before him: yet the expression is put for an indefinite, to show the innumerable company of glorious and mighty angels, which the Lord hath waiting on him as servants and ministers to do his pleasure in any part of the world as it is, Phil. iii. 21. The scope is, to shew how glorious he must be who is thus waited upon. Secondly, The place where they are seen is observed they are round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: by which it seemeth they have the utmost rank of all the attendants, that chap. iv. ver. 4-5. &c. are mentioned and said to wait upon this throne: and we may conclude it thus, upon this throne is the majesty of God, of which dignity the Lamb, and the seven spirits are also said to partake, verse 6. Next unto them are the four beasts, or ministers, upon the several corners of the throne; then are the four and twenty elders, or the professors, round about the throne; and again 2
are at a stand in the Mediator's praise, what must be our unsuitableness in expressing of the same? Then, in the second place, they mention many things which are his due, in seven comprehensive words, 1. power, because he is furnished with authority, and commission, ample and large for the discharge of his offices; in which respect, John xv. 2. he is said to have power given him over all flesh. 2. Riches, that is a royal profession because he made himself poor to purchase feed to himself by a great price. 3. Wisdom, because he hath dealt prudently in the executing of his office, as, Isa. iii. 13. and with great wisdom doth he manage the trust committed to him: 4. Strength, because he hath bound the strong man, and carried away the prize, spoiling principalities and powers in making a show of them openly, Col. ii. 15. 5. Honour this respect, the glory and majesty of his place, who being made head over all things, ought so to be honoured by them. 6. Glory, that is the acknowledgement of the excellency and majesty of his person with the dignity and preheminence of his office, and doth import also his being God, to whom only glory is due. The seventh word is blessing, this looketh to the many advantages that come by him; for that when hearts can do more, they bless him; which implicheth, not only an acknowledgement of his being blessed, but also the ardent desire that they have to have him for as in all the former words respectively. By all these put together, is understood that every thing which may contribute to let forth a person to be glorious, and to make him to be acknowledged such, is in the Mediator.

If it be asked, How the angels come in to praise the Mediator upon this consideration of his being fl., as is expressed in the song? Antw. This is done not as if they were equally sharers in the benefits of redemption with the redeemed: for the elect angels being never under sin, nor at a distance with God, cannot be said to be reconciled by Christ's death, therefore we find, that though both mention him as slain in the song, yet there are these differences, 1. The redeemed do expressly acknowledge this benefit of redemption to come by his blood, and do derive their privileges of being kings and priests, &c. from that as the meritorious caue which is not be found in the song of the angels. Secondly, when the redeemed mention Christ's death and purchase, they look on it as intended for them; and therefore do apply the same in the song, as claiming a special interest therein, and acknowledging a special obligation to ly upon them beyond others because of the same. And therefore they say, who hath redeemed us by thy blood, &c. Whereas the song of the angels is more general. It appeareth then, that though they agree in giving praise to the same object, viz. the Lamb, yet they differ in respect of the particular grounds on which they proceed. The grounds then of the angels praise, may be conceived, 1. To be the excellency of our Lord Jesus Christ's person and office, and the wonderful glory of grace, love, goodness, &c. that kynthia especially in his humiliation and sufferings. And it may be justly looked on as admirable and praise worthy, even to the angels, to see God manifested in the flesh, as it is, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and yet more, that he was content to die for satisfying the justice of God, and vindicating of his glory, 1. Although angels cannot be said to have reconciliation by him, yet according to the judgment of many worthy men, they have confirmation through him, in which respect to them, he is not the Mediator, is head of the elect angels. And though we will not enter upon this particularly; yet we suppose, that there is great accession to the joy of the elect angels by Christ's incarnation and sufferings, as having thereby a more clear discovery of the glory, majesty, and goodness of God, so that in this respect he is said to be seen of them, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and thereby they discern his manifold wisdom in the way of the gospel as it is, Eph. iii. 10. for which cause they sing at his birth, Luke ii. 13, as being glad to be the declaimers of such glad tidings: and no question, may otherwise they are in this delighted and rejoiced, and so have good ground to praise.

3. This suffering of Christ's and his redemption, bringeth with it the salvation of the lost elect who are many; and their salvation being a thing that glorifi-
The third company that praise, verse 13, is every creature which is in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, &c. This looketh to the relooks of creatures that are contradistinguished from the redeemed, and from the angels, called sometimes the whole creation. Which by sin is made subject to vanity, and is laid to groan under the same, Rom. viii. 20, 21, 22. These are brought in, not as if formally they could express praise; but, 1. To shew the gloriousness of this object to whom praise is due. It will well be task and employment to all creatures to praise him. 2. In vieweth some advantage, that by Christ's death sometime is to redeem to them, when they shall be freed from the bondage of corruption, and brought unto that glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. viii. 21. In reference to which, it is said, they groan and travel, as defers of this change, verse 22, and according to this, they may be laid to praise here, as they groan there. The words wherein they express their praise are four, viz. blesting, honour, glory, and power, which were formerly spoken of. There is some dif-
ference in the object of their praise, as to the expression thereof, from thence who went before: for they describe it to him that fitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever, whereas the Lamb only was mentioned formerly. Yet indeed there is no difference: for when the Lamb is mentioned, who is Mediator, God that fitteth upon the throne is understood as dwelling in him. And by this we may see, 1. That the glory and worship which is given to the Lamb here, is divine, and supreme, because its that fame which is given to him that fitteth upon the throne. 2. We may see, that it is the same worship and that whether God or the Mediator be expressed, they are both worshipped in the same act; for it cannot be said that there is any other worship than what the redeemed or angels give in the former verses; nor that there is any different object worshiped here, seeing that it is the same worship which is ascribed in all the song. Neither will any think that he that fitteth upon the throne was less worshipped in the song of the redeemed, and of the angels, where he was not formerly mentioned, than in this. If any say that the Lamb is laid to be worthy to receive glory, &c. which supposeth this to be a communicated glory? Aniw. We may see the inconsequence of this, by considering what is laid off him that fitteth upon the throne, chap. iv. ver. 11, and we may acquiesce in the interpretation thereof that is given. In the last place, when all creatures have done, the redeemed again come in, verse 14. and they close this song: because their interest is most, and their engagements deepest. 1. The four beasts say Amen: Thus the ministers begin. What they say, is in this word: Amen, which is a word that usually closeth prayer, and doth import some clearness of faith and confidence in the thing affirmed, and some vehement desire of attaining the thing prayed for. Here is let down as the expression of hearts, who are indeed passionately desirous to have the Lord's praise gloriously, and yet conceived to be utterly insufficient for the fame, and therefore they close in a manner when they begin, and they are beginning when they close. And all is but rather an adhering to the glory that is given, and
an acknowledging that all is due to him, than a real performing of any thing in their own estimation. In the last place, the four and twenty elders follow, and they have nothing to say, but fall down and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; the breasts lay not much, they express nothing but fall down silent, as being overcome and infinitely outrached by the glorious and incomprehensible excellency of the blessed object; yet is their praise no less acceptable to God than if there were many expressions. Because silence, both in prayer and praise, doth often speak more and louder than great noise of words. And here we may see, that where the heart is inwardly weighed with the convictions of God’s goodness and ones own need, and bendest with love, or overwhelmed in a manner with holy fear and reverence, it can express nothing; yet even then there may be an acceptable worshiping of God. Yea, this silence is marked as the yondmost step, or greatest length of praise that they did, or could attain unto.

Observe, 1. That in our Lord Jesus, and in the execution of his offices, there is much ground of praise, so much as may take up all creatures, and an infinite deal more; and it should be the task of all creatures in heaven and earth to be letting forth his praise: all of these companies say, worthy is the Lamb, &c. It is a wonder, when this is their task, that so few are taken up with it. From the occasion, observe 2. That the opening of this revelation, is a ground of praise: 3. That many excellent things come by Christ’s purchase to the redeemed. These cannot be soon numbered. O! what are beholde to him? Observe 4. That it is praise to Jesus Christ, and it is even almost all that believers come to in the work of praise, to be telling over, to his commendation, what he hath done.

Observe 5. The faith of interest in our Lord Jesus, his purchase is the most kindly motive, to make his folk blest and praise him, that is when they can say, thou hast redeemed us. Observe 6. That as it is a life that hath many rich advantages, so their is no such heart-come life in all the world, as to be among the redeemed; they have an un-interrupted song, and will continue to have it when all others will howl. Obs. 7. From Christ’s taking the book, and opening of it; from his and the redeemed their praise. Observe, Christ doth all we enjoy, all and therefore we should pray for all; it is an easy task that the redeemed have in respect of that which Christ had. Observe 8. There is a sweet content here, no different note, they have all one song, no different opinion, no contradiction, no divided praise, nor prayers, nor farts, no separat ing in this worship of one of the redeemed from another, all concur which is not one of the least advantages, once they will all meet and sweetly agree together. Obs. 9. It is, but a mist at the belt that the saints make at the Lamb’s praise: their praise is but a beginning to it an assent to the work, or a conviction of their duty: when they begin they say only, he is worthy to have it; and when they have undertaking they must sing, who can shew forth all thy praise? Phil. cvi. Therefore here, amen, is the first word, and they fell down silent; praise overmarfeth them, it is the greatest duty: and that praise till they have done enough, they understand it not, it is right in this respect to leave it as we begin. Observe 10. All their song is, worthy, worthy, is the Lamb, as if they said, if we could praise thee, thou, art worthy, to have it, and that is all we can attain to, to acknowledge praise is thy due. Observe, when folks have gone their yondmost in the matter of praise, it is rather to say and think it should be, than any way to retract as though it were. The reason is, because God who is to be praised, is far above all blesting and possible praise, Neh. ix. 5.

Concerning the nature of Christ’s death, or if it be properly a satisfaction.

Beside what observations have been already hinted at and held forth from this chapter, there are two more; which being clear of themselves from the words, and contributing much to the clearing of two concerning truths, in these days not not little controverted; and it may possibly be more in speaking to them as the place giveth ground; the one is, concern-
ing the nature, the other, is, concerning the extent of the merit of Christ’s death. The first observation, is that Christ’s death and sufferings are properly a price and satisfaction for sin, and were purposely offered unto the justice of God, as such. So that when the majesty of God, to say, so was wronged by the sin of man, and when, at least, by the necessity flowing from the established law and curse there behoved to be a satisfaction to justice, before any sinner could be freed from the sentence, then our Lord Jesus did offer himself to suffer in the room of the elect, for the satisfaction of justice; which accordingly was afterward performed by him, and upon that account, accepted by God. The root of this doctrine, is to shew him, that not only Christ’s death and sufferings of many martyrs; and to attribute no more to the death of Christ, is blasphemous: nor in the third place, only to procure to himself this prerogative of forgiving sinners their sins freely; for Christ being God, had power with the father to forgive sins before his becoming man: and even this pretended end, doth implore Christ death to be a price for making of a purchase, seeing it supponeth, that he by honouring God, and doing what was pleasant to him, did procure this privilege to forgive others freely: which certainly doth imply that these sufferings of his had a meritorious and satisfying virtue before God. But these ends of the Socinians, being such as destroy the Godhead and personality of our Lord Jesus, as the second person of the Trinity and being purposely moulded for the supporting of that blasphemy, we need not stand much upon the disproving of them; but we say beyond these our Lord Jesus, his death was purposely intended, by him, and actually by Jehovah as a proper price and satisfaction.

To clear this a little, when we speak of satisfaction, these things shortly are intended. First, That as a man had made himself liable to the curse for provoking of God, and so speak after the manner of men, as most of all this must be understood thereby had wronged the majesty of God by daring to disobey him and to flout his authority; so there is in Christ’s taking off that debt, and humbling of himself to suffer for the

for the vindicating of the glory, of the holiness, justice, and sovereignty of God, and to make thee shine more than if the sinners had been actually put at for satisfying in their own persons: for that the fathers fellow equal, and only begotten Son should humble himself, and become man, and in that nature suffer that the majesty of God should make his sword awake against him, and smite him, &c.: doth much more abundantly declare and set forth the justice of God, that will prosecute his threatenings, and his sovereignty and authority, in that he is obeyed and submitted unto, by such an excellent person, as his only begotten Son, than if either man had not sinned or he as but a wretched creature should have been casten into hell: for by this, justice had never been satisfied, nor had the authority of God been manifested by such a glorious instance as the obedience of the man Christ Jesus. So that we are to conceive of satisfaction, in this matter, as that word used to be understood amongst men, that is, when an injured, or wronged person, is appeased and satisfied in reference to the party that hath done him injury, by the intervening recompence and satisfaction of some other, purposely, by such an equivalent compensation, intending the same. Secondly, When we speak of satisfaction, in this case, it doth respect God’s purpose and intention in designing the death and sufferings of the Mediator for this very end in that covenant of redemption, so that when there was no imaginable satisfaction to be expected from creatures, whereby their might be a vindication of God’s justice, so we might be pardoned sinners; for this very end, the body was disposed and prepared for the Mediator, as it is Isa. iii. 6: The Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all, and in his counsel and decree, did appoint him, who knew no sin, to become sin for others, and thereby as a cautioner to be liable to their debt. Thirdly, This also is intended, that the Mediator, in his accepting of the offer, and in laying down of his life, did purposely intend this to satisfy: for when sacrifices and burnt offerings, &c., could not please God, not satisfy him in this respect, then did the Son willingly un-
undertake with delight to do God’s will, as it is, Psalm xl. 6, 7, &c. And it is, on this Mat. vii. 22. because he undertook the satisfying for our debt; and upon this ground, was their access in justice to exact it of him, though he himself knew no sin. For which, see Hab. iii. 7, and 2 Corinthians v. 21. In the fourth place is it included, that by the Lord Jehovah, the offended party, this death and wailing suffering of our blessed Lord Jesus, was actually accepted as satisfactory and well pleasing him, in the room and stead of them who had offended, so that thereby he, in the order agreed upon, doth lay by quarrels at the offending party, as men do discharge the principal creditor the debt, when the cautioner hath satisfied in his name. Hence the Lord pronounces often, that in his beloved Son he is well pleased, and that he has found a ransom, Heb. xiv. 24. And from that it is, that his death is called a propitiation, as been acceptable to God, when other sacrifices could not be. That in that respect Christ’s death is truly a satisfaction for sin, may from this text thus be made out.

First, If by Christ’s death we are redeemed, and if the effect flowing from his death be a redemption, then is his death under which all his sufferings are comprehended a proper price and satisfaction for sin; but the former is true, therefore, &c. There is a double strength in this argument to make out the connexion. First, in the word, redemption: which as we showed in the exposition of the former, is false all other things doth imply. That sinners by sin are sold and engaged, and the law and curse have obtained a right over them. That, at least, in respect of that established law and curse, that day thou shalt call, thou shalt die: there was no dissolving of that right but by some intervening satisfaction: otherwise the Lord who pronounced it might be thought not to be just in his threatenings. 3. It implyeth, that when men and creatures could give no price, our Lord Jesus did actually undertake, and accordingly did pay, therefore it is a redemption, because it is a freedom that was bought: and he is a redeemer, because he did buy it: and fai-
no moral influence by opening or confirming to them doctrinally the way to heaven! And yet both these may well be capable of efficacy thereof, as it is considered as a satisfaction: now considering that all the redeemed are equally, and in the same respects, obliged to Christ's death for their life, and for that cause do jointly concur in the same song of praise; we must either lay, that none such as have been formerly influenced are faved, or we must lay that they are all faved, without any respect to his sufferings; both which are false and absurd. Or lastly, we must acquiesce in this, that by Christ's sufferings as by a satisfaction, this is procured to them, and therefore consequently, that his death is to be considered as such, seeing no otherwise it can have influence on their redemption. And there being but one redemption, and one way by which it is procured, viz. Christ's death, and one song comprehending the acknowledgment of all the redeemed, and seeing to some it must be a satisfaction; therefore it must be esteemed so, in reference to all others also, who are, or shall be partakers thereof.

Fourthly, This fruit of his death, viz. redemption is peculiar to some of all kindreds, and nations, and is not common to all. It must therefore be considered as flowing from his death, as a satisfaction meritoriously proceeding the same. Otherwise these effects which may follow upon this confirming his doctrine by his death, giving an example to others, &c. are common indiscriminately to all that are hearers of the gospel. For in these respects he is so and doth so to all. This therefore being peculiar to some, as the next doctrine will further clear, must be understood as qualified by the covenant of redemption to be for the satisfying in the room of such and such, and not of both. Which consideration doth plainly bring it to the notion of satisfaction.

Fifthly, There is special emphasis and significance in this, that thou hast redeemed us by thy blood, &c. Which doth respect the excellency of the person who did lay down his blood for making of this purchase, it is thou, who art the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive, and liveth for ever, who art the thonion of God; yea who art God, Acts xx. 28. as was more fully cleared, chap. i. 4. for thou and thy, relate to the person described by such titles in the former part of this prophecy. This doth give ground for this argument, if the purchase made by the blood of Jesus Christ be such as could be made by none, but by the blood of him who was, and is God, then his death and sufferings for that end, must be a satisfaction, and by their merit and efficacy procure the redemption purchased; but the former is true. Therefore, &c. The reasons of the consequence, are because, First, all the other ends of suffering may be in the sufferings of a mere man. Secondly, There was not need of such an excellent price, if the merit and worth thereof did not concur, by way of satisfaction for obtaining of this redemption. Thirdly, This respect to the excellency of the person, &c. from mainly their redemption doth flow, viz. that the person dying, was of such worth; and therefore his death and sufferings are accounted of the great price before God. And Lastly, There is here a clear opposition, thou hast redeemed us by thy blood, that is, thou who art God, hast condescended to lay down thy life, and shed thy blood for us who are of little worth; which doth import, that his sufferings were estimated in the head of what should have been otherwise exacted from them.

These arguments will be the more clear, if we consider that opposition which is made by the apostle, Rom. 5. between our blessed Lord Jesus, the second Adam, and the first Adam, of whom men had their sinful being; for in that comparison and opposition, Christ is not only made the author of life to them that are by faith his seed, as the first Adam was the author of death to those that descended from him; but also and especially in this, that as by the disobedience and transgression of Adam, death was brought upon his posterity, as being procured by the guilt and demerit to speak so, of that offence; so by the obedience, righteousness and sufferings of the other, life and freedom from the dominion of sin is purchased, and that by of way of merit and satisfaction equival-
ent to the former offence. For as by Adam's fall, the holiness and justice of God were wronged, so by the
obedience of the second Adam, they were wonderfully
made to shine. And this being the apostles proposed
to compare these two Adams together, both in respect of the opposite effects that flow from them to
their God, and in respect of the opposite means by
which they are procured, this which is affected must
necessarily follow.

It is also observable, that so exceedingly conformed
the truth as the other, and discover the horridness of
the opposite blasphemy, that the denying of Christ's
death is a satisfaction and the denying of his blessed
God-head, are to be knotted together, that the afflicting
of the one, doth infer the other. Therefore these wretched
Socinians, who deny the eternal God-head and the
personality of the second person of the God-head,
must also deny the merit and excellency of his obedi-
dence in his death, without which it could not be
satisfaction; but on the contrary, the redeemed, who
have the right thoughts of Christ's God-head, have
also this impression of his death, that it is a satisfac-
tion laid down in their name; upon both which
grounds, they praise the song, viz. that so ex-
cellent a person should redeem them by so excellent
a price, as the blood of God: and this doth demon-
strate their engagement to him, that when upon
opposition of the threatened curse, at least, there was
no other that could undertake their debt, or satisfy for
them, but he who was God, that even then he, who
was the Son of God, did undertake the same. We
are persuaded, that all who ever shall share in the
song, shall acknowledge both these truths, and heart-
ily bless the Son of God for making satisfaction by his
blood. And considering the abettors of blasphemy
by this deny, the God-head of our blessed Lord's per-
non, and altogether make void the efficacy of his
righteous and priestly office, so that neither his person,
or his offices are acknowledged by them, which yet at
the two great and solid foundations of Christianity,
therefore they are not worthy to be disputed with,
or accounted Christians; but rather to be joined with
and reckoned among heathens, or the followers of Mo-
met and receivers of his Alcoran. For which cause,
Christians would guard against this most horrid error,
in which being most blasphemous against the Mediator,
and most destructive to their own salvation; for, by these
grounds, they can neither have a redeemer, nor a
redemption. It is reported of Socinians, that 'great
paragon of this blasphemy, by a learned man, viz.
Campan, who writeth that he had it from one of his
disciples, that he privately denied the world to be
made of nothing, lest thereby he should be necessitated
to acknowledge the insufficiency of God's power;
which afterwards was more publickly avowed and con-
tended for by some of his followers. What horrible
things are there, that men's corruptions will not con-
cieve and foster! and what height or depth will not
the Devil drive men to, when he is left to liberty?
These things have ever been abhorred as most detest-
able, even to the very mentioning of them; yet this
horrid blasphemy wanteth not its patrons in this spring,
of error; and therefore, men ought to walk with
more circumspection in reference to the same.

Concerning the extent of the merit of Christ's death, or
if it may account a satisfaction for all men.

The second doctrine that we propose from the
words is, that though the death and sufferings
of Christ be properly a satisfaction to the justice
of God for sin; yet is not this intended by Christ, nor
acceded of by God as a price and satisfaction for the
sins of all men, and for the procuring of redemption to
them, but only for some peculiarly chosen of God,
and by his decree of election separated from others.
It is true, that Christ's death being considered ab-
tractly and materially in itself, in respect of the person
who died, and in respect of the manner of his per-
foming this obedience with so much cheerfulness,
reference, &c. may be, and by divines is said to be, of
infinite value; so that if it had been so intended and
annailed in the covenant of redemption, it might
have been in the former respects accounted, and ac-
tcepted as a price for many more, yea, for all; because
such sufferings, performed by such a person, is equivalent unto, and in respect of his excellency who suffers, beyond the eternal sufferings of mean creatures. But Christ's death considered formally, as a price and satisfaction, with respect to the transact that is made in the covenant of redemption, it must be qualified and understood with respect of the Lord's propounding the terms, the Mediator condescending thereto, and his intention in the undertaking and executing the same, and also with respect to the Lord's accepting of the same as such. Therefore it is not to be enquired here, what Christ's death is in itself abstratcly: nor what it might have been, if the sovereign Lord had thought it good, but it is to be enquired if the Lord's purpose in giving his Son to die, and the Son's obeying the same was to have that death and those sufferings laid down as a price and satisfaction for all. We may that in that respect, it was neither intended by the Son, nor accepted by God as a satisfaction for all, but all for such as he had chosen, and by his purpose had separated himself out of all kindreds tongues and nations; which by the several arguments may be strongly concluded from this place.

Argument 1. Christ's death and sufferings were not intended as a price and satisfaction to buy such as were intended by God, to the Mediator in the covenant of redemption to be redeemed by him, but all and every one were not so propounded. Therefore Christ's death and sufferings were not intended as a price and satisfaction to redeem all and every one. The major of this argument, doth not only appear at the first, to be very reasonable, but doth necessarily flow even from the emphasis of this word redeeming, which doth suppose, First, That being under a kindly relation to God, did by sin fall from the same. Secondly, It supponeth that a man, by sin, is made obnoxious to God's curse, and also that he is unable to escape or expiate himself therefrom. Thirdly, It supponeth the Lord's condescending to think of the redeeming of some from the curse; and for that end, to propound and accept of such a satisfaction, for such persons and on such terms as himself should propouse.

Yet had proposed; and therefore any redemption doth not presuppose the Lord's condescending to admit of such a bargain in the general; and being an act of his sovereignty, there can be no other rule but his good pleasure, whereby either the persons to be redeemed, or the terms upon which, or the time when such a satisfaction is made for such persons, &c. to be regulated; we must therefore look to this propounding of the same, as the foundation whereby all that followeth is to be squared; for this phrase redeeming being borrowed from the manner of men, doth hold forth the Lord upon the one side, as the party offended, making offer to accept of such a satisfaction for such offenders; and upon the other side, it representeth the Mediator as payer and redeemer, accepting of such an offer in all the circumstances thereof, viz. to engage to be a redeemer to such and such persons, to consent to lay down such and such a satisfaction and price for their redemption, and to perform the same in the time and manner condescended upon by the Lord.

And it is the conceiving of this great transact of the elects redemption under this form, viz. as having such an offer upon the one side, and such an acceptance upon the other, that maketh it the name of the covenant in scripture; because it is represented as a mutual bargain, in the manner that bargains use to be transacted amongst men, which yet is done for the helping of us to understand his ministry, and is not to be beyond this scope to be extended. From all which doth appear, that the father's proposal, to lay it, or his intention and purpose, must regulate the whole business of redemption; and therefore must the extent of Christ's death, as it is a satisfaction, be understood according to the same. Hence the Lord Christ doth so frequently assert, That he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work, and give eternal life to as many as God hath given to him, and such like. Whereby it is evident, that the Lord hath particularly ordered the work of redemption according to his good pleasure in the respects formerly mentioned, and that the Mediator's death and sufferings are to be looked upon as regulat-
lated and qualified in respect of their effects, according to what hath been proposed to them. This first proposition we suppose is now clear, and may yet be further confirmed. For it cannot be said, that God intended to have any redeemed but thee whom he did propose to the Mediator. Again it cannot be said, that any were by him intended to be redeemed, whom he did not thus propose in the covenant of redemption, and give unto the Mediator for that end. And in the last place, it must be said, that all whom he did propose in that bargain of redemption, were designed by him actually to be redeemed; otherwise many absurd conclusions, reflecting upon the Lord's furious manner of proceeding in that busines, and upon his wife manner of contriving the fame, as also upon his effectual way of bringing about what he intended, will follow; which without horror cannot be imagined. Therefore it will follow, that the Son's actual bearing the iniquities of such as are redeemed, and the Father's proposing of such and such to him for that end, must be of equal extent.

Now as to the minor proposition of the argument, It is certain, that all and every one were not proposed (much less all indifferently) by the Lord JEHOVAH to the Mediator, to be bought or redeemed by him, and may be made to appear thus. 1. Because the Lord did never intend, that all should be glorified and actually partake of redemption, he having decreed the glorifying of his justice upon some, as the manifesting of his mercy upon others; and therefore it cannot be said, that the Lord did intend such to be redeemed by the Son, or that he did, for that end propose them to him.

If it be said, that though he did not intend their salvation, as he did intend the salvation and redemption of the elect, yet it may be said, that he did intend their redemption conditionally, and to propose them to the Mediator, to be redeemed on those terms, that is, if they should believe. Anfw. Of this we may afterward speak a word, yet here we say, 1. That this doth attribute to the only wise God, a most derogating intention to his own glory. For it cannot be denied but he fore-knew the event, and that such a conditional intention...
those titles, viz. Those that thou haft given me, &c. which are contradiſtinguished from others, as from thofe who are not given to Christ: neither can there be any other reafon why thofe are defigned by fuch a name, but that in God’s purpoſe they were defigned peculiarly to be redeemed and accordingly were committed to the Mediator, and undertaken for by him in the covenant of redemption. Now it cannot be faid, that any other was propofed by God to the Mediator, but fuch as were thus given to him, and feeing it is clear, that all were not thus given to him, for fuch are expressly diftinguished from the paffed-by-world, John vi. 17. Therefore all cannot be faid to be propofed by God to the Mediator, and fo confequently (which is the conclufion of the whole argument) his fhuffers and death cannot be faid to be intended as a price and fatisfaction for the redeeming of all and every one, nor without the intention of the blessed parties contracting, can they be faid to be a price for any. For, the price muſt needs relate to what is propofed to be redeemed or bought this being the feries, the Mediator did redeem thofe for whom he engaged and whole debt he undertook; again he did undertake for thofe and thofe only, who were propofed and given by the Lord to him for that end; but thofe were not all men, but fome few, that were peculiarly given to him, as feparated from others; therefore from the fhift to the laft, it will follow, that not all men, but fome few, that were peculiarly choft by God, and given to Christ, were redeemed by his death, and have thofe fhuffers, intended by the Mediator, and accepted by the Lord JEHOVAH, as a price and fatisfaction for their fins.

Argument 2. Secondly, It may thus be concluded, If thofe that are redeemed by Christ’s blood, be not all of every tongue, kindred, and nation, &c. then all are not redeemed. For thofe are oppofite in this reffect viz. a whole nation, or every perfon of a nation, and fome of them only: But the redeemed are not all of every nation &c. but fome out of all tongues, kindreds and nations, &c. as was cleared verfe 9. Therefore all are not redeemed. And what can be the reafon of this expression here, Thou haft redeemed us out of every tongue, kindred, &c. if it be to diftinguish thofe few redeemed ones of thofe nations, from the great number of the unredeemed in the fame; and thereby to let out the peculiarity of God’s love to them whom he hath redeemed who hath defigned this benefit to them, when he had passed by others to whom he was no les oblig’d, or rather to whom he is more oblig’d in refpect of any thing in men? Alto by this expression, there is a clear difference put between the long of the redeemed, which is acquainted upon Christ’s death, and the long of a visible church, which doth arife from a visible church relation. For, chap. xi. 17, 18. &c. the whole nations become the Lord’s in that refpect, and the praise him upon that ground, but the long of the redeemed, is some out of every tongue, kindred, and nation, &c. which doth expressly intimate, that redemption by Christ’s blood is not of equal extent with the visible church, but is peculiar to the elect therein. And therefore much les can it be of equal extent with the whole world.

Thirdly, If this redemption of Christ’s, and his laying down of his life for any, be the evidence of his special and peculiarm love, then it cannot be extended to all; because his peculiar love doth not extend itself to all indifferently: for, if fo, then it would not be peculiar but common; and therefore the effect thereof cannot be of more general extent: but the former is clear in this place, viz. that redemption by Christ’s death, is a fruit and evidence of his most peculiar love. Therefore, &c. That this is a special and peculiar favour, appeareth, First, from their being fo affected in this long as having this mercy peculiarly to praise him for viz. that he had redeemed them by his blood, which others had not. And secondly that they mention this as a favour, beyond which there cannot be a greater, and which doth singularly engage them to him beyond all other favours that have been bestowed upon them. Thirdly, The very expreflions of their long bear forth their sense of the peculiarities of this mercy, as thou haft redeemed us out of every tongue, kindred, and nation, that sheweth his taking notice of them, singularly beyond others: and that he did this
by his blood, theweth this tobe an expressing of his love to them in a most wonderful and singular manner. Fourthly, If this mercy were not peculiar to them, then it might be said that one person were no more obliged to praise for this redemption, and to be affected therewith, than another; and how inconsistent that will be with the scope of the place, and with the present frame and conviction of these that praise, may be easily discerned seeing their scope is to hold out themselves to be peculiarly obliged to be thankful for this mercy beyond all others? Lastly, That this is a peculiar mercy, even the greatest that our Lord Jesus doth bestow upon any, appeareth from other scriptures, as, John xv. 13, Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friend, &c. and Rom. v. 8, 9, 10, God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, &c. All which shew, that the love of God cannot more shine to one in any thing than in this that Christ hath died for him; and therefore it cannot be intended for any, but such as doth peculiarly love and whom he hath designed to be partakers of the most eminent and special effects thereof.

Fourthly, If all who are redeemed by Christ’s blood, be made Kings and priests unto God, and be effectually called and made to reign upon earth, &c. and if the connexion be certain between these, so that they who may claim to the one may also claim to the other, then Christ’s death is not a satisfaction for all, but only for some; because in experience it is clear, that all are not made kings and priests unto God, &c. But the former is true, viz. all who are redeemed by Christ’s blood, are made kings, and priests. Therefore, &c. The truth of this minor, or of the certainty of the connexion between being redeemed by Christ’s death and being made kings and priests to God, is clear in the text: for all, who lay in the 9. ver. thou shalt redeemed us by thy blood, lay in the 10. And hast made us kings and priests unto God: which would look most unlike the language of a redeemed sinner, and weaken exceedingly the confession of the redeemed, who could not be so comforted in Christ’s laying down his life for them, as they are holden forth to be in this song, if it were possible that the parts thereof could be divided, also it would mar the beauty of the inconceivable grace, and peculiar love that shineth in this ground of their praise, and no way rouze the redeemed sinner to praise, because Christ had laid down his life for him, if it might be said, that thou hast redeemed me by thy blood, yet am I not sure if I shall be made a king and a priest unto God &c.

The force of this argument, may be conceived these two ways, 1. Thus, if Christ’s death as it is a satisfaction, hath ever the justification and glorification of thee for whom it is a satisfaction following upon it, then Christ’s death cannot be a satisfaction for all: but the former is true, viz. Christ’s death hath ever justification, and salvation following upon it, to thee for whom it is a satisfaction: therefore, &c. That justification and salvation ever follow thereupon, appeareth, 1. From the text: these only, and all these who are redeemed by his blood, are also made kings and priests, and have also saving effects following thereupon, as was said. 2. It is clear from the nature of the covenant: for if Christ’s undertaking to satisfy for some, in whose name he did become surety, did make him in justice liable to their debt, and to the payment thereof, so as he could not be conceived to be the cautioner according to the terms of the covenant but also he believed to have the imputation of their sin, actually following thereupon; so, on the other side his satisfaction, cannot but be equally effectual for the procuring of actual freedom to thee whose room he sustained in the laying down of thy satisfaction. Again this effect, viz. the justification of thee for whom he undertook, is to speak it, the recompence and satisfaction which is by the Lord engaged for and made sure for him to his suffering; and the travel of his soul, according to that word Isa. liii. 11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: and if it be so, then there must be a necessary connexion between Christ’s suffering in the stead of any, and their obtaining of justification; otherwise it might be said that the Mediator for that part of the travel of his soul, did want the promised and engaged for satisfaction. And if we cannot conceive but both sides of that covenant
of redemption, must be fulfilled and the Mediator cannot but be satisfied in his design; so we cannot but conceive the necessity of their justification and salvation whose iniquities Christ hath born. This is also further clear in the following words, viz. by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities. Where these three things are clear. 1. What it is that Christ accounteth satisfaction for the travel of his soul: that is to have many justified. 2. What the ground that is his bearing of their iniquity: for this is the reason of the former, many shall be justified because Christ shall pay for them, and bear their sin. And if this connexion were not certain, and peremptory between these two, then this consequence and reasoning would be utterly brangled and made void, if it might be said that Christ did bear the iniquity of any, who yet would not be justified. 3. It is clear also from that place, what these many are, that shall be justified; viz. those whole iniquities Christ doth bear: for he shall justify many because he shall bear their iniquities: where the many that shall be justified in the first words and these whole iniquities Christ doth bear, in the last words, are of equal extent; and this relative, their iniquity, doth expressly relate to the many spoken of before. Which words do strongly confirm what is said, viz. that there is an inseparable connexion between Christ's bearing the iniquity of any, and their obtaining of justification; for the prophet doth not only make them of equal extent but he doth also draw the necessity and certainty of the justification and salvation of many, as a consequent from this antecedent, that Christ hath born their iniquities.

And is in a word, this Christ hath born the iniquity of many. Therefore it cannot but be these many, must be justified. Which reasoning, being the reasoning of the holy Ghost must be true; and therefore none can be said to be redeemed, or have their iniquities born by Christ, but such as come actually to obtain justification. Lastly, The necessity of this connexion between Christ's dying for any, and their obtaining of actual justification and salvation, may thus be made out, if the Lord befall the greater benefit upon any, then the lesser cannot but be expected from him also; but the giving of his Son to death for any, is a greater mercy than actual justification and salvation: therefore he cannot but befall the least on these upon whom he hath befallen the first. Both parts of the argument will be confirmed from Rom. v. 8, 9, 10, and chap. viii. ver. 32. In the one place, the apostle reafoneth thus, while we were yet sinners God commended his love to us, in giving Christ to die for us; therefore having obtained such a mercy, we may much more look to be saved from wrath through him. And to deny the consequent in the former argument, would emense this reasoning of the apostle. In the other place, it is he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things! where the apostle doth not only shew, that all things do follow where Christ is beffowed; but also he doth it in such a manner, as doth shew the absurdity and unreasonable beneff of thinking the contrary, viz. that it can be possible that God will befall so excellent a gift as his Son to be delivered up for any, and yet withhold any good thing from such.

A second way, by which we may conceive the force of the former argument is this, which also is a new argument of itself, that which would weaken the redeemed's consolation, and enervate the grounds of their praise, contrary to the strain and scope of this long, ought not to be admitted in the doctrine of redemption. But to say, that all are redeemed by Christ's death, yet so, that the greater part of them shall never be justified, nor partake of like through him, &c. doth exceedingly weaken the redeemed's consolation, and enervate the grounds of their praise, contrary to the scope of this long. Therefore, that doctrine of universal redemption, is not to be admitted, as being derogatory to the fold consolation of the redeemed whatever be pretended. That it derogateth to their consolation, appeareth thus, If the justification, salvation, &c. of the redeemed be not necessarily and peremptorily knit unto Christ's laying down of his life for them, then were even their justification and fal-
vation uncertain, and so none of them could heartily praise for the fame, or comfort themselves therein; much less could all do this: both which are contrary to the scope of this song. Again, if no redeemed person, believer, or child of God, can so comfort themselves by drawing conclusions from this doctrine, Christ hath died for all, yet all shall not be faved, as they may be comforted and have their hearts cheered to praise from this. That Christ hath not redeemed all nor hath died for them, yet all for whom he died, and whom he redeemed, shall be justified and faved. Then must the former doctrine be exceedingly derogatory to the people of God their consolation, but the former is true. Therefore &c. That this doctrine of such an universal redemption, doth not yield such comfortable conclusions to the believer, as the other, will appear by comparing them together: for the great consolation of the believer, is upon solid grounds, to conclude an unchangeable interest in God: but the latter, and not the former will yield this. For this is solid and comfortable reasoning, thefe that are redeemed, are made kings and priests to God, and shall reign with him, &c. because there is an indiffoluble and peremptory connexion between thefe; but may one assume I am redeemed, Therefore &c. If this assumption be questioned, viz. whether I be redeemed or not: because redemption is not universal, then it may thus proceed: all these are spiritual kings and priests, and being made subject to Christ, are freed from the dominion of their corruption, and admitted with boldness to offer themselves and their service to God by Christ Jesus, there are redeemed, and shall certainly obtain salvation. But the conscience upon self-examination, where there is ground for it, may assume: It is so with me; Therefore I am redeemed, and shall obtain salvation. This is a comfortable and solid conclusion, and cannot fail when the promises are well grounded, because of the necessary connexion that is between redemption, justification, sanctification, and salvation, so that one of them being evidenced doth infer all. And spiritually to reign in some measure over the world, and a body of death, and spiritually to perform worship unto God, being infallible evidences of sanctifi-

tation, and fruits of this redemption, they give good ground for a conscience to make application of the former general truth; whereas on the contrary if we loose this connexion, and say, that all are redeemed, or Christ hath died for them, and yet few will be faved, it cannot but ever leave the soul at an uncertainty under this most comfortless condition, although I be redeemed, yet I may perish; because many for whom Christ hath died are never actually freed from the wrath of God; and thereby the soul should be still in a comfortless condition, which is most unlike the nature of this redemption which Christ hath purchased, and most disagreeable to the consolation which is allowed to the redeemed by God and wherein they comfort themselves in this song. We conclude then, that it is more comfortable to a believer to reason from this universal all that are redeemed, and are kings and priests unto God, shall be faved, where the consequent and anteecedent, are of equal extent; than to say, all are redeemed, and yet few shall or none may be faved. And this being the way of the Lord, it cannot but be the most comfortable to his people; and it is a vain thing for man to imagine by his carnal reasonings to mould a more comfortable doctrine: for though at first, it look more plausible like to flesh, to say, but hence; yet indeed it doth not prove so: for even, upon supposition that that ground were laid, no man could gather any solid consolation therefrom, but upon condition of his receiving of Christ, and resting upon him by faith: now faith in Christ, being supposed this ground, few are redeemed, but all these who are redeemed shall be faved, doth yield more solid consolation than the former: because, it carrieth with it a certainty of salvation to such; whereas the other ground, pretending to bear forth a possibility of salvation to all, or a salvability, doth indeed make it certain to none.

If any shall say, that this is true indeed upon supposition that one be by faith in Christ; then it cannot be denied, but to to conclude, is more comfortable: but supposing one not to be a believer, is
it nor then a comfortless doctrine to say. That all are not redeemed, &c. Because it leaveth this stumbling block before the perfon, that he knoweth not whether he ought to believe or not, because he knoweth not whether he be redeemed or not; and this thought may also follow him, if he be not redeemed, can his believing be useful to him. Anfw. There are sever al mistakes in this objection, therefore we shall answer several ways thereunto; first, we say that even upon supposition that one doth not believe in Christ and rest on him, than if the other doctrine were suppos'd : for it is not Christ's dying for any that warranteth him to believe or is the object of his faith; but it is God's call, requiring faith of him, and God's offer and promise knitting life to the performance of that condition of believing called for. These are contained in God's revealed will, which is the rule of our practice, and the ground of our faith. And according to this doctrine, a hearer of the gospel, without faith that cannot promisethemselves life, or hath these grounds for his warrant: and there can be no other be given, even upon the contrary supposition. Secondly, If he be brought to yield to his call, to receive his offer, and to trust himself to his promise, he hath then more solid ground of consolation, because of the certain connexion that is betwixt faith and salvation than he can by the other doctrine, which by the interwoven errors concerning free will, without these comfortable effects following will, the falling away of such as sometime have been true believers, &c. is wholly brangled. And to fall from a mistake of the true nature of justifying supposing him not yet to have closed with Christ, he hath the more effectual motives to engage him still more to hope, and closing with this as a truth, that Christ hath died and passed away for me in particular, and that his death was 2. We answer, this doctrine of particular redemption, to call it so, doth never make salvation impossible to anyone that will receive Christ, and rest on him; but, on the contrary, though it deny that all men are redeemed, or shall be saved; yet doth it affect this universal, that all whatsoever shall believe are redeemed and shall be saved; which is the more solid ground for a toiled sinner to cast himself upon, when it faith, there was never a sinner of any rank or quality that did believe, or shall believe in Jesus Christ, but he shall be saved: from which he may conclude, then if I can, or shall believe in Christ, I also shall be saved: which conclusion, will not follow from the other doctrine. And seeing this is the very express letter of the gospel, whatsoever believeth, shall be saved, there is no ground left to question the same, without manifest reflecting upon the faithful works of God. 3. We answer, if anything follow from this ground, all are not redeemed, it is thus, therefore all shall not be saved; or therefore all will not believe: both which are true. And it doth only make salvation impossible to him who doth not believe in Christ; for, to think it faith of thou believe not thou shalt not be saved; neither doth such a cale thou haft ground to think thyself redeemed: and what absurdity is in these? Yea, upon the grounds of the other doctrine there is none.
in Christ, we are not called instantly that Christ hath offered up himself as a satisfaction for us in particular, but we are to conceive it in this order. First, We are called to believe the truth of the gospel and the way of salvation laid down therein, viz. that there is no name under heaven by which a sinner can be justified but by the name of Jesus, and that yet all who believe in him, shall be justified and saved, &c. Thus we may apply that word, Heb. xi. 6. he that cometh to God, must first believe that he is, &c. For if this general truth be not acknowledged, saving faith wanteth the discovery of a sufficient and proper object to rest itself upon. Secondly, We are then called to receive Christ offered to us in the gospel, and by faith to make ourselves to him to discover, and there, as on a solid foundation, to rest for the obtaining of justification and life by the virtue of his satisfaction, according to the offer that is made in the gospel. This is the main act of saving faith, whereby a sinner cometh to be intituled to Christ and to the benefits of his death. Whereupon, Thirdly, Followeth our accepting of the foresaid offer being suppos’d, a warrant to look upon Christ as ours, upon the benefits purchased by him as belonging to us; and upon ourselves, as actually redeemed by him; none of which, before that could warrantably concluded but this being suppos’d, there is good ground for it; because a sinner by receiving of Christ cometh to have interest in him, and consequently in all that is his; for Christ and his benefits are not separated; and therefore except there be ground to bear out this title to Christ himself, there is no warrant to believe that any of his benefits doth belong to us. Now according to this foresaid order, no hearer is ever called to believe what is false, because these three are ever true, viz. That life is certain in it, through faith in Christ, and no otherways. Secondly, That one who is called to believe on him ought to obey, and that God’s call is a good ground for that obedience. Thirdly, This is also a truth that one who hath yielded may look on himself as accepted of God; and redeemed by Christ Jesus, because, in the method foretold, there is warrant to believe all these. But if any will invert the order, and at first pervert himself that the benefits of Christ’s purchase do belong to him, as being particularly redeemed by his death, before he actually rest on him by faith; this will prove but strong presumption and never give title to Christ or any thing that is his; but on the contrary, greatly provoke the Lord; because in all the word of God, there is no promise of justification, life, or salvation, or any benefit of Christ’s redemption made to any person, but to him that believeth; and to do otherways, is as if a women that were woord for marriage should fancy herself to have title and right to all the privileges of such a man’s wife, before the marriage were actually consummated, or before she had given her formal consent thereunto. And so according to these grounds we see, that all hearers are not simply called to believe that Christ did die for them; but, first, to receive him as their father, and then to draw such a conclusion which upon the performance of that condition, can never fail. From this I say, dependeth only upon the former mistake of faith; and this being denied, that all men are instantly called to believe that Christ died for them in particular; when they are called to believe in him for obtaining of life, the strength of it will evanish; because supposing that many in the visible church which experience doth put out of question, do never believe in Christ or by faith rest on him for the obtaining of life, then it will follow that many even in the visible church are never obliged to believe that Christ hath died for them in particular because none hath warrant to make that application, but such as have first betaken themselves by faith unto Christ, whereby the assumption of that argument is palpably false; for it must be so assumed, every man that heareth the gospel and receiveth Christ ought to be-
lieve that he hath died for him: and so the conclusion will be, that Christ hath died for all who believe in him, which is true, or, it must be that every one that receiveth the gospel is obliged to receive Christ and rest upon him, and upon that condition may expect nothing which will make nothing to the intended purpose.

This occasion giveth ground to insist a little further in clearing the extent of the merit of Christ's death in respect of the effects thereof. And though it be possible for us to make every thing fully clear, nor pertinent to our purpose, long to infit upon the same; yet the former grounds being laid, we inquire shortly in some things, and answer them with a particular respect to this place. First, It may be enquired, What is the proper effect of Christ's satisfaction, and that which is purchased thereby to sinners. Secondly, If this purchase extend to the procuring of faith and the first grace, as it doth to the procuring of pardon and justification. Thirdly, If it be said that any benefit, in any respect, doth redound to any reprobate from Christ's death, as the proper effect of that purchase. And, Fourthly, If there may be an universal conditional redemption admitted, as consistent with the former grounds, yet so as the effect thereof is made sure to the elect, and to them only.

To the first, viz. What is the native proper and immediate effect of Christ's purchase unto the redeemed? We answer, That we conceive it to be not only the procuring of salvation to be possible to them, so that now, by the interveining of this satisfaction, there is a way for the just God to pardon men's sins without wronging of his justice, which without this could not have been. And so some lay, that by Christ's death God is made placabilis or, to say so, put into a capacity to be pleased, or made placable; but it is not only pleased or placatus which is the affection of the Arminians. Nor yet is it only to make reconciliation with God, upon the condition of believing and faith in Christ, possible that is, by this interveining satisfaction to give a ground for faith to rest upon, with hope of obtaining salvation thereby, which otherways would not have been profitable, had not this satisfaction of Christ's procured a new covenant to be made upon that condition. Thus according to some, Christ by his death had procured an object to be held forth to all to be by faith rested upon; and hath established this general, that all who should believe on him, should be saved: and that faith alone should have salvation annexed to it, in whatsoever person it should be found: but such to deny, that actually and absolutely he hath redeemed any, or procured faith, justification and salvation to them; but we say further, that the immediate and proper fruit and effect of Christ's purchase to thes for whom he suffered, is actual redemption, and the benefits following thereupon, to be applied in due order and manner, and not the possibility thereof only. First, This is clear from the 9. verse of this chapter, where they acknowledge and praise for this, that redemption and justification &c. are not only made possible unto them, but that absolutely they are purchased by Christ's death for them. And that they are actually redeemed to God by his blood. Secondly, This doth clear it, that by his blood he is said to make them kings and priests unto God. Which cannot be understood of the possibility only of any priviledge but must take in the absolute purchase and the actual conveying thereof in due order and time. Hence Rev. i. 5. Walking from our sins in his blood, is mentioned as the proper effect of his purchase; and justification and salvation are frequently derived from Christ's blood as from their immediate meritorious cause, particularly in that place Isa. lvi. 11. whereof was spoken a little before. And if there were no more but a possibility of salvation flowing from Christ's death, then Christ might have been his seed, or never and satisfaction for the travel of his soul. And if by Christ's death only, faith and salvation should be knit together, and so faith made thereby to have an object proposed to it, and that indifferentely in respect of all; then it will follow, that the grounds of the redeemed's song, would not be, Thou hast re-
deemed us by thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests, &c. Neither could there be accounted the immediate effect of his purchase, but that he hath given them a ground to believe upon and made salvation certain upon condition of believing: which would not be so cheerful a long to the redeemed, neither would it warrant them to say, thou hast redeemed us, in a peculiar sense, seeing these effects are common to others. All might have ground to bless thee for these mercies, beside the chosen who are made kings and priests. All which are, most inconsistent with the strain and scope of this place.

It is true, if we will consider the way and method how these benefits are applied to the redeemed, or the order by which they come to be possessed of them, that instantly upon Christ's purchase, all cannot be laid to be actually justified, or glorified, more than they can be laid all to have really existed, because the Lord in his covenant hath particularly concluded when, and by what means such persons should be brought to believe in Christ, and actually to be justified, even as well as when they should have a being, or at what time their life should be brought to an end; and when actually glorified; yet if we consider the things purchased, in respect of the bargain, we will find that they were absolutely and actually bought unto such persons, and satisfied for by the Mediator, so as not only in his intention, he aimed to make their justification and salvation possible, but really and simply to make it sure, and to procure it to them; yet so, as in due time and method it is to be applied. And we conceive, that it is a dangerous assertion to say, that Peter before his believing, had no more interest in Christ's death than Judas; which yet followeth upon the last opinion that was offered, and is acknowledged by the author thereof. See Cameron, part 3, pag. 583. Indeed if we will consider Peter's own estate, as considered in itself, without respect to the covenant of redemption; and if we will consider any actual claim, which he might lay to Christ's death, in that condition for his own place and com-
But to answer what was moved we say, That conversion, regeneration, faith, repentance, &c. are no less the fruit of Christ’s purchase than pardon and justification, &c. because first, by his purchase, we are made kings and priests unto God. And wherein do these privileges consist but in the having and exerenting of those inward saving graces of the spirit whereby the elect are made in a spiritual sense kings and priests. Secondly, It cannot well be understood, how justification and glorification may be said to be purchased by him, if all the steps by which these are necessarily brought about, be not in the same manner procured. Thirdly, We are said to be blessed with spiritual blessings. Fourthly, He is made to us of God, not only righteousness, but also wisdom, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. and certainly under these expressions, all saving graces needful to the working out of our salvation are comprehended. And the end of this is, and whosoever glorifieth, may glory alone in him, as having all in him, and nothing but by him. Neither would there be such occasion of glorifying in him, if these were not purchased by him. Fifthly, The confederate of the covenant of redemption, will also fully clear this: for no question that must be a fruit of Christ’s purchase, which the Lord hath promised to the Mediator, as a satisfaction to him for his sufferings. Now this is clear, that it is not only promised to Christ that many through him shall be justified, but that certainly he shall see his seed and the fruit of the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. 10, 11. That his people shall be willing in the day of his power, Psa. cx. 3. That thee whom the father hath given him, shall come unto him, John vi. 37. and that they shall all be taught of God, &c. and what else can these special promiseth import but this, viz. the Son the Mediator for laying down his life shall have many given him, and actually by the spirit drawn to him, and to be made to believe in him and to acknowledge him as the author of their eternal salvation, without which, that promise of seeing his seed could never be accomplished. Yea, must not all the promises of the covenant have one rule, and be derived through one meritorious cause. Now these promises of sanctification, such as to take away the filthy heart and to give a new heart, to cleanse us from all our idols, and wash us with clean water, &c. are in one bundle with the promises of pardoning our iniquity and remembering our sins no more, as is clear in Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. &c. and Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. &c. And seeing it cannot be denied but the last promises are grounded upon Christ’s satisfaction, must not the first be so also; especially considering without him there is no means for binding up a covenant betwixt God and sinners. Neither can it be denied but faith is a part of that new heart, and a peculiar fruit of that spirit which he promised to pour out upon his people. Sixthly, In Tit. ii. 14. our being separated to be a peculiar people to Christ and zealous of good works, &c. is expressly affixed to be his design in laying down of his life for his people. Also Titus iii. 5, and 6. the washing of regeneration and renewing of the holy Ghost, which must take in all particular graces, are said to be shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus; which cannot otherwise be understood; but that we have the same by their interceding procurement of Christ’s satisfaction. Lastly, All that we pray for, we pray for it in Christ’s name, as having obtained access to seek the same through his purchase, now it cannot be denied but faith, holiness, and increase therein, may be prayed for; and therefore these must be understood to be procured by him also.

The third question was, if it may be said, that the reprobates, or any reprobate do enjoy any common mercy by virtue of Christ’s purchase and redemption? Or if any mercy befell upon any reprobate, or enjoyed by them may be said to be the proper fruit of Christ’s purchase, or properly, to be procured by his death to them? In answer to this we shall lay down these assertions, which being granted, there will be no great hazard to the main matter.

Assertion, 1. There is no saving nor eternal mercy procured to any reprobate by Christ’s death; and so according to the scripture language, it cannot be said that Christ hath redeemed, satisfied for them, or
born their iniquities in their room before the justice of God, thereby to procure any such mercy to these; because, first, to be given to Christ; to be redeemed; and to be justified, are ever of equal extent in Scripture, and necessary knit together with his bearing their iniquity. Secondly, The proper and native fruits of Christ's death, are not divided, but they all go together; so that for whom he satisfied and to whom he purchased any thing in one respect, he did so in all. Therefore we will find him praying for those who were given him, and for whose sake he did sanctify himself. John xviii. 19. even when he did exclude the reprobate world who were not of this number from these prayers. Thirdly, The proper fruit of Christ's purchase, is that which is satisfaction of himself for the travel of his soul, &c. but no mercy which is common to a reprobate can satisfy him: for his satisfaction consists in peculiar favors and mercies, such as actually to see his feed, to have many justified. &c. which mercies cannot be said to be purchased to any reprobate: and so it cannot be said, that any favor or eternal mercy is purchased to them, then necessarily they were to be bestowed upon them; and if so they could not be called reprobates. We take this for granted then, that no favoring thing is purchased to them and that Christ cannot in any proper sense be called their redeemer, nor to have fulfilled their place and persons before the justice of God.

Assert. 2. We say that yet many reprobates do in time enjoy many things, which they had never enjoyed, had not Christ suffered. Of these, Christ's death may well be called the cause sine gisa non or, without which these had not been enjoyed. Such are the preaching of the gospel, and the glad tidings of the conditional office of life which is made in it; yea, it may be, that the keeping off of many temporal judgments and eternal also for a time, doth grow from this: whereby it was by the gardeners intercession, Luke xiii. The cutting down of many barren trees is for a time suspended, that thereby the glory of grace may be the more manifested, the honour of the Mediator the more highly advanced, and in the close, the glory of spotless justice made the more clearly to shine, because of their greater inexcusable negligence. This cannot be denied to follow upon Christ Jesus, his sufferings in so far as they necessarily follow upon the agreement wherein they were transacted and upon the promises made to him in the covenant of redemption; unto all which, his sufferings are presupposed as the stipulation upon his side; now, it being certain that there are some elect ones given to him by that covenant in all ages of the world, and that he hath a visible church and ordinances granted to him for the ingathering of them, which is so and so to be administred, viz. by gathering under ordinances both sheep and goats, and such like, it must necessarily follow upon the supposition of this transact of these terms, that the world must continue for so many ages, that the gospel should be preached in such and such places, and at such times, that such and such lights should shine for holding forth clearly the truth of the gospel; yea that such and such common gifts should be bestowed upon many reprobates for the adorning of this visible church the honour of the head thereof, the furtherance of the edification of the elect, and many other things necessary for the attaining of the ends foretold. And according to the former supposition, these cannot be denied to be decreed in the counsel of God, and contained in the covenant of redemption largely taken; because accidentally, to speak so, and by reason of the manner of admiration concluded, they conduce to the honour of the Mediator, and to the furthering of his design, which is to have the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand.

Assert. 3. Although these former assertions be true yet we say, that the favoring blessings that are purchased to the redeemed by Christ's death may be, and are far otherways to be conceived, as the proper effect and fruits of Christ's purchase to them, than any common mercy can be which follow thereupon to any reprobate. For first, The purchasing of the elect and of favoring grace and salvation to them, and what may tend to their good was intended by the Mediator in a subordination to the glorifying of his
grace in them: and to his glory any their good are jointly intended in the same; this cannot be laid of the other for though the things which flow from his death be good in themselves, and though it cannot be denied but that therein also he intended his own glory: yet it cannot be said; that these things are purchased by him as advantageous to them, in respect of any fruit that should flow therefrom unto them: because the effect sheweth that in the end they have no advantage by them, and therefore it cannot be said, that he intended them as advantageous to them. I know some learned men do think that some reprobates, by the power of common restraining grace and the force of ordinances are kept from falling into many gross evils, which otherwise they might have fallen into; and so in the end are kept in the greater degree of punishment, which they might have been liable to, I grant that it might be said that some civil and formal hypocrites will be punished with a more degree of wrath, to speak so than others or than themselves would have been punished with had they not been by such common grace restrained; yet this must be understood comparatively with respect to the case as it now standeth, that is a civil hypocrite living under the gospel, with many common moral inducements and giving much outward countenance to ordinances, &c. shall be more generally dealt with in the day of judgement than if he had come that length in a common reformation under the means: yet I suppose it cannot be said that such a person shall have less punishment than if Christ had never died, or he had any knowledge of the gospel or any common gifts of the spirit but had lived in more profanity without the same; for although the sins of a civil moral hypocrite, be blest in themselves than the gross profanity of a blind heathen; yet considering the circumstances that do argue the same they will be found to be of a more bloody dye before God. Hence oftentimes in scripture, the sin of refusing Christ in the most civil hypocrites, is aggregated beyond the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, &c. Neither doth this causally from the gospel being revealed to such persons but from their abusing and slighting of the same. Whatever mercies therefore of this kind are bestowed upon any reprobate, they are bestowed upon them for the honour of the Mediator, and the good of the elect and to such, must be laid to have been purchased by Christ’s death. 2. Whatever Christ hath procured to the elect, he hath procured it by satisfying justice for them, and by sustaining in his own person the curse that was due to them: so that the Lord’s forbearing of them, his making offer of the gospel to them, &c. are not only consequents, following upon the Mediator’s death and the covenant of redemption but are properly purchased fruits thereof: and to the gospel is preached to them, they are called unto a church state, &c. Because Christ Jesus hath satisfied justice in their name for the quarrel which the holy God had against them, and hath purchased peace and all things needful for their salvation: so that now the Lord cannot but be kindly to them, and bestow these mercies on them according to the order and terms laid down in the covenant; but on the other side, it cannot be said that our Lord Jesus did do purchase to the reprobate any of these mercies which are indeed so in themselves, that are bestowed upon them, or that he is satisfied in their room or in their name paid any debt, or that the Lord is upon that account as it were, engaged to be friendly to them, and bestow these things on them, as was observed to be in the case of the elect: because in no respect is Christ their cautioner as having undertaken for them. These mercies then which come to them, are rather to be accounted consequents following upon Christ’s purchase, than proper effects thereof as to them; yet necessarily they follow, that what properly hath been purchased by Christ to the elect, may according to the order laid down, be accomplished. This will be somewhat clearly considering Matt. xxiv. 34, where it is laid except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: yet for the elect sake they be shortened: the mercy promised there, viz. the shortening of those trouble some days, is a temporal mercy, and common to many reprobate as well as elect during that time: yet in respect of the elect it
may be accounted a fruit of Christ's purchase and of God's covenant love: because otherways, there
whom Christ had redeemed might be in hazard; against which the covenant had fully provided. But
on the other side, as to the reprobate, it is but a con-
sequent of his death unto them and bestowed upon
them, not for themselves but for the good of the elect
amongst them, for whose sake it is said expressly, that
these days shall be shortened, and so it is to be con-
ceived as supposing it to be conditioned to Christ
himself, that such a tribulation shall not continue be-
caupe the performing of the articles of the covenant
doth require the same: in that case consequentially the
reprobate, living in that time and place, are farers of
that outward deliverance yet considering it as a co-
venanted mercy and a proper fruit of Christ's pur-
chase, it doth agree to the elect only, for whole good
it was covenanted: and to them it may well be cal-
ced a purchased mercy. It is true there doth no con-
sequent follow upon Christ's death, but what
was foreseen and intended by him to follow there-
upon; yet it cannot be said, that all these consequents
were intended as proper fruits of his purchase to the
reprobate, as the mercies that are come unto the elect
but we must acknowledge a difference between a
consequent and a proper effect; otherways we might
say, that the greater inexcusable benefs and condem-
nation of many reprobates are proper fruits of Christ's
purchase because there do follow thereupon, and had
not followed had he not died. And we might say
that the suspending of the shutting up of the devil
in hell in his everlasting torment, were a fruit of
Christ's purchase; because supposing Christ to have
a church and such works for devils, in the exercising
thereof, while it is on earth: and that Christ
is to judge the devils at the last day, and as a part
of his glory to pass the final sentence in re-
ference to them, &c. It must necessarily follow
upon these suppositions, that the devils last judg-
ment and absolute shutting up in the pit must be
suspended for such a long time; yet there is none
that will eftect this to be a proper fruit of Christ's
purchase though it be a necessary consequent depending

upon the same. And if any more be pleaded for,
because the offer of the gospel is made to many re-
probates, this may be said that Christ's having of a
visible church and gospel preached therein, is pro-
perly purchased by him, that being necessary for the
end proposed; yet if we consider the preaching of
the gospel, in reference to such a person, as suppose
Judas, or how it cometh that he is a minister there-
of, we conceive it is hard to say, that it was purchased
by Christ's death as a mercy to him, as if Christ had
intended by his sufferings to satisfy God's justice in
les or in more upon his account. And if it cannot
be said that any satisfaction is made to God in his
name how cannot be said that properly any thing
is purchased by Christ's sufferings to him. For, this
is certain, that it is Christ's death, as it is a satis-
faction and price offered in the name of any, that doth
procure any good to them. Beside Christ's bearing
of the sins of any, and their obtaining of justifi-
cation are still linked together as was formerly said: and
therefore seeing no reprobates is justified it cannot
be said, that Christ hath born their sins, and con-
sequently, upon that account hath procured any thing
to them. This difference may be thus illustrated, as
supposing one having intended out of a number of
slaves to relieve so many, should covenant a price for
them and actually pay the same, having withal this
included in the bargain, that so many other slaves
to reliefe so many, should therefore covenant a price
for them and actually pay the same having, withal
this included in the bargain that so many other slaves
should be appointed to wait on him till these ransomed
ones were safely transported, and for that end that
they should be for a time freed from some common
drudgeries that other slaves are lying under, and be
some way fitted in their apparel and otherways as
might become his honour, and further him in the
gathering together, shipping and transporting of these
whom actually he had bought: yet still he neither
mindeth the relieving of these, nor doth for that
end buy in the least measure their ransome, but only
hath this article to him as conducing to the good of
the main bargain. In that case it cannot be said that he had properly bought these whom he minded never to transport, or that any price laid down in the principal bargain, was laid in their name; yet it cannot be denied but that many advantages do follow upon that bargain to such beyond others; which yet in the end, by reason of their own miscarriages might turn to their greater hurt: as suppose they should refuse to obey him, or to put on the cloaths bestowed upon them, should abandon him, and renounce their present liberty and not wait on the end, &c. and so procure them justly to be deprived of any favour and to be punished for their ingratitude, so may it be said in the present case. Yet we shall not much contend for words as whether such a thing should be called a consequent or an effect, providing Christ be not said to have therein the room of, or by being made sin, to have satisfied in less or more for any whom do not actually redeem and own for his.

The fourth question is, if Christ Jesus the only absolute redeemer of the elect alone, may not yet be said to have redeemed all men conditionally, and in the laying down of his life, to have intended the purchasing of life, to all upon this condition; if they should believe in him. This conditional redemption is diversly expressed by learned men who in their writings do abhor the grossness of the Socinian and Arminian doctrines concerning the redemption. Some say, that Christ died absolutely for none, but conditionally for all, that is that he purchased life for all upon condition that they should believe that he had died for them: and that God by his decree of election hath decreed to give faith to none and not to others; which difference doth yet flow from nothing in Christ's death. They say also, that Christ by his death procured freedom to all from the curse of the law, so that that is removed from all, except any by not believing that Christ hath died for them, shall make themselves liable to that curse, as Cameron asserteth, page 584. This opinion doth not lay the weight of men's making themselves to differ upon themselves, but it doth acknowledge the freedom, sovereignty and power of grace, as also the impotency and corruption of nature; yet we conceive it is dangerous and doth directly contradict what hath been asserted from the text. For 1. It denieth any even the elect, to be absolutely redeemed; which though true in some sense, viz. in respect of the method and manner of the application of the purchased redemption; yet cannot it not be said to be true in respect of this purchase and bargain itself, or in respect of the parties bargaining in this purchase; because Christ did not buy pardon of sin and salvation to sinners absolutely; upon that condition that they should believe; but did particularly and absolutely purchase the pardon of sin and salvation to such and such as were proposed to him. And this he did, not by buying salvation to the elect upon condition they should believe without making both the condition, viz. faith and salvation sure unto them: but he absolutely redeemed Peter, and John, and other elect persons by purchasing salvation; every thing needful for the making of it sure unto them, although in due manner these to be communicated according to the terms of the covenant. 2. It doth deny faith to be a fruit of Christ's purchase; which is contrary to what was formerly said. 3. This doth affect the reprobate by Christ's death to be freed from the curse of the law, in the day that thou eatest, &c. which is not to be understood as if upon condition of believing they were to be freed from it if so they did fulfill that condition: for that is not controverted: but it must be understood of some freedom from the curse of the law that redounded actually to the reprobate from Christ's death. And it doth suppose them to have attained some freedom thereby, which their after unbelief and ingratitude do make unto them void. And to they have not this freedom from the curse of God to them upon condition of their believing, but they have it, if by their unbelief they do not mar their right to it. Now, this is understood will infer, that was made a curse in the room of all men which is contrary to what is said: for they cannot be said to be freed any way from under the curse, except by his sustaining it for them. And his bore-
ing of the curse in the stead of any or the taking on
their iniquity hath ever their freedom following
upon it, for whom he did the same as was formerly
marked. Again their are many of mankind fuppede
young children, dying before any actual sin, who
cannot be liable to any other curse, but the curse of
the law: yet cannot all these, even such as are with
out the visible church and the promises, be said per
cemptorily and absolutely to be saved. Befide this
will infer that either the reprobate shall not have
the breach of the first covenant imputed to them, or that
they shall have the debt imputed to them, which
Christ himself did pay in their name; which is incon
sistent with the scripture formerly mentioned. 4

This doth make Christ's death considered as to him,
and in itself, to be equally laid down for Peter and
Judas, which the authors of this opinion will abhor;
yet doth it necessarily follow thereupon; for sup
posing Christ to die absolutely for none, but condition
ally for all, there is in that respect no more regard
had to Peter than to Judas; for he did conditionally
for Judas, and he did no more for Peter; and no sal
vation, upon the condition of believing is made equally
possible to both. And though in God's purpose
Peter hath faith decreed for him, whereby he com
eth to be absolutely justified: in which respect there
is a great difference betwixt Peter and Judas, for
whom there is no such thing proposed; yet consider
ing that this faith which maketh the difference accord
ing to the former opinion, is no proper effec
t of Christ's purchase, but of God's absolute sover
eignty as election is, it cannot be said, that because thereof
there is any inequality in reference to elect and re
probate in respect of Christ's death. It is true their
acknowledging faith to be God's sovereign and pecu
liar gift, doth not make the difference flow from Peter
himself; yet it cannot be said that it doth proceed
from any thing in Christ's purchase, in respect of his
sustaining the person of the one more than the other 5.
This doth also infer that Christ hath paid
for such as shall be brought again to reckon for their
own debt; yet for the fame debt which he had paid,
now in scripture these two are ever put together, viz.
Secondly, That such a conditional payment is not spoken of in scripture, neither do these places of scripture speak of some whose iniquity Christ hath born, who shall thereby have freedom from being called to a reckoning; but they do speak absolutely of all for whom Christ hath suffered, and in whose name he hath paid any thing to God: for all of them gave ground for this connexion, Christ hath born their fin, was made a curfe for them, &c. therefore, they shall be justified and freed from the curse &c. And this reasoning will not hold, except this universal proposition be presupposed, viz. that all whose fin Christ hath born, whole debt he hath undertaken, and in whose name he hath paid any price to the justice of God, &c. shall be justified, absolved from their debt, and not brought to a reckoning for their fame. Now it must either be assumed that Christ hath paid a price in the name of many reprobates and hath born their iniquity before the justice of God, &c. and it is evident how false the conclusion will be.

Therefore the minor must be false seeing, the major is true, or we must substitute thus but none of the reprobates shall ever be justified or absolved from their own debt therefore it will follow, that for none of these did Christ become a curfe to satisfy God; which is a truth. If it be yet laid that his suffering in their name, was but conditional; and to it cannot be said firmly, that he had paid their debt but upon such and such conditions only; and to he did not bear their iniquity, but upon condition that they should believe. To this we answer, first this is almost one with the former objection, and may be again repelled thus: either that conditional bearing of their iniquity, was a paying something in their name, or, it was not; if it was a paying in their name, and laying out of any price by the Mediator, then the consequence from the former scriptures will still be urgent whatever the condition be; because they affirm that all for whom Christ hath laid out his suffering and in whose room he hath sustained any part of the curfe, &c. shall be partakers of justification and life. And whatever the condition be, this conditional redemption supposeth a price actually to have been laid down. If it be said that actually Christ did lay down nothing for them, and in their name when he suffered but upon condition that it should be imputed to them when they should actual believe, then it must be said that Christ hath paid for none till they believe, because it is his purpose with the Father that both make his sufferings to be accounted a price for any; and if so then faith cannot be said to be purchased contrary to what was formerly said. Besides if none can be said to be redeemed but a believer, then it cannot be said, that Christ hath paid any thing in the name of any reprobate, seeing he hath paid only for them who shall believe which no reprobate can do. Further though the imputation of Christ's laid down price to be conditional; yet the paying of it is absolute for he according to this opinion did really lay it down: and if such should after believe, there were need of paying no more in their name. Yes, what is actual laid down is supposed to equivalent to their redemption and with what is laid down for the elect; otherwise the price would not be proportioned to the oped end, viz. redemption, and fo it would be nothing.

That we may follow this conditional redemption little, it is otherwise in some things expressed by some others, thus, viz. that Christ in some sense is a saviour for all, and yet not in that special manner as for his people: he hath brought others under the conditional gospel covenant, but them under the absolute; hath according to the tenor of this covenant procured salvation total. If they will believe; but he hath procured for his chosen, even this condition of believing. Thus learned Baxter in his Faints and Feats, part 1, page 753. Which may be yet veritably understood as to one branch thereof: for though he doth there speak of all to be conditionally redeemed, and else where often hints this, yet by several expressions of his it would seem to be restricted, at least in a special manner to the visible church because he faith thet eall, are by his death brought under the conditional gospel covenant, which else where, viz. in the appendix to his Apporphims, Page, 241.
in the last edition, is acknowledged to be that which is revealed, and offered in the church. And in that part of his Saint's rest, Page 156, it is laid not to be offered to all, and that expression is used by him, that the conditional covenant is made with all, at least, with the church. Also others, have many hints to this purpose, and the Learned Tuffill doth cite this laying out of Vorritus, lib. pri. Page 195. Et fami nii pro vocatis faltum omnibus, mortus est pro Christiis, tum fructum omnium credere jubentur. Therefore it will be meet to touch a little this conditional redemption, as it may relate to all men individually, and more particularly, as it may relate to the visible church, and because of the nearness of the matter, and grounds thereof, both may be done as we go on. Although this opinion, as thus expressed, may seem more plausible; yet we conceive, that will neither be found agreeable to the former grounds, nor to the text nor to reason, nor yet any way more conducing to remove, or prevent these difficulties which are supposed to follow upon the doctrine of particular redemption, as it was formerly explained. For First, what we urged from these scriptures that speak of one absolute redemption, and do ever knit justification and life with Christ's bearing the iniquity of any, or satisfy in their room, will also be binding here against this conditional redemption. For if any way Christ hath born their iniquity, then they must be justified; otherwise the former connexion, which is so strongly urged in the scripture will fail: or if he hath not born their iniquity, or paid any thing in their name, then it cannot be said, that he hath any way died for them, or redeemed them. Secondly, The text will confirm this, for in it all men are divided into these two ranks, viz. the past by body of nations and kingdoms, &c. and these few that are redeemed out of these tongues, nations, &c. But this conditional redemption cannot agree to neither members; therefore it cannot be admitted. It cannot be applied to the redeemed who praise, for they are all absolutely redeemed, and made kings and priests to God, &c. nor will it agree to the past by multitude of the unredeemed, that are contradistinguished from the former; because first, the place doth assert the actual enjoyment of friendship with God, and being made kings and priests, &c. to be the proper fruit of Christ's purchase, and not the having of these things made possible upon condition, as was formerly said down. Secondly, Because by past multitudes, is expressly contradistinguished from the redeemed, and these who partake of the benefits of Christ's purchase: and therefore the one being called the redeemed, the others may be called the non-redeemed; and they are distinguished from, and opposed to the other here not by any distinction simply founded upon the effect of Christ's death viz. the one are made kings and priests, and the other not, but it looketh to the meritorious cause procuring these effects, and making them certain to the one, and leaving others without all title thereto, viz. Christ's death, and so it is to be understood, we are redeemed by thy blood, that is, thou hast paid the price of our redemption in our name, by thy blood, which hath not been done in respect of the multitude of these same nations whereof we are a part. Thirdly, There is but one class distinguished from these, and these must be such who are no ways redeemed. For what must be laid of the one as to redemption by Christ's blood, must be denied of the other: for thus not to be amongst the redeemed, is indeed to be unredeemed. This will strongly militate against any who should restrict this conditional redemption to the visible church: for that would make upon the one side, two classes of such as are redeemed, viz. some absolutely and some conditionally to be such, whereas the text doth acknowledge but one; and it will also confitute two classes of the unredeemed, viz. some that are without the visible church and conditional covenant, and some that are within; whereas it is clear, that these within the church who belong not to Christ, are equally contradistinguished from the redeemed with others that are without.

In the third place, This opinion will not be found consistent with reasons drawn from the scripture, as it cannot be denied but Christ's satisfaction and
Intercession must be of equal extent, seeing they are both parts of his priestly office, and it is his satisfaction that regulateth to pay to his intercession. Now it is clear in scripture, that Christ's intercession is qualified by God's decree of election, therefore he prayeth, Job. xvii. For these whom God hath given him: whereby it is not only implied, that he doth not pray for the world which were not given him but expressly he doth exclude them, I pray for the world, faith he, verse 9. Therefore it must be supposed that he did no way die for the world seeing he doth not pray for them, because he did not satisfy for them; and he did not satisfy for them, because they were not given unto him. And we can no more say there is a conditional satisfying for, and redeeming of all than we can say there is a conditional praying for all; and we cannot say, that there is a conditional intercession for all, seeing he doth expressly and absolutely exclude the reprobate world from his prayers; and upon that implied ground, because God did not own them as his, and had not given them to the Mediator, to be owned and redeemed by him, therefore he doth solemly disown them.

If it be said, That in that place, our Lord Jesus doth only pray for these who did actually believe? The very contrary will be found in the text: for John xvii. 20. he intercedeath for all who should after believe; and through the chapter, for all these whom God had given him. Beside, it was hard to say, that our Lord Jesus did comprehend all that were unrenewed under the title world: for so many unrenewed elect would have been excluded. Seeing therefore Christ excluded the reprobate world from his intercession, even when he includeth many unrenewed elect, then lying in proflavity and nature. The former argument doth bind the more strongly. From which also we may remove a second exception, viz. that by world, there are understood such as Christ forsook should reject the gospel, and continue members of this world, notwithstanding his death and call, or such as did for that time violently reject the same. To this we say, That if Christ meant by world, present contemners and rejecters, then would many elect be excluded, as is said. Again, If he understood such as he foresaw, would continue in opposition and unbelieving unto the end, can it be reasonably thought that he would immediately offer himself in their room upon condition of their believing in him, whom he did not only foresee to continue in unbelief and never to perform that condition; but also whom he had intransiently in express terms excluded from his prayers and intercession as having nothing to do with them. And so according to the former ground viz. that his intercession and satisfaction are of equal extent, they cannot be understood, any way to come in under either of them.

If it be said, That his intercession respecteth only the efficacy of his death, and therefore must be bound to the elect. This will lay, That this satisfaction also must respect that only, seeing they are of equal extent. Again, Why prayeth he only in reference to the efficacy? It is because he hath ground to own none as God's or his, and that will lay, That he will not satisfy for them either. Lastly, He boundeth his saying and praying in these words, ver. 19. of the forsworn chapter. For their sakes sanctify myself; viz. for their sakes for whom he prayed in their room alreadily did he devote himself to be a sacrifice.

Secondly, In the first ground, laid down we said, that Christ's satisfaction, as to the object thereof, was to be regulated by the fathers proposal to him: to that he died and satisfied for such, and such only as was proposed to him. It being cleared there, that all were not proposed: therefore there is no warrant to lay that Christ in any respect, did bear the iniquity of any other. Neither can their be any end of his undertaking to pay for more than was proposed to him: neither can it be thought, that any other was proposed to Christ, but such as were given to him absolutely to be redeemed: because there is no word in scripture that speaketh of proposing any thing to Christ to be bought but the elect who for salve are peculiarly named by this title, those that...
were Christ’s own; and given to him &c. If any should say that they were conditionally given: and proposed which indeed must be supposed in this conditional redemption; then beside what was said it may be asked; if the father, by proposing such, did intend their redemption, and their obtaining of any benefit by Christ’s death? If he did so, why is it not effectual? If he did not, to what end was such a proposal made by the only wise God! Again we may conceive this conditional proposal to be thus upon the father’s side: I do propose and give such and such persons to thee that are not elected to be redeemed, and to partake of thy redemption; providing they shall believe; and I will absolutely exact the price from thee, which yet is not to be imputed to them till they believe, and yet freely they cannot believe except God gives them the same freely, according to the first opinion: or till they purchase the same, according to the second; yet might be say neither do I mind to give it to them, nor mind I to propose it to be bought by thee for their use. This certainly would not look like the withom sovereignty and grace that do shine in the bargain of redemption: yet such a conditional proposal must be supposed as in these terms. And if they are proposed to be purchased; but the contrary is included: and fo at the most the father proposed but one part of their redemption to the market, viz. the end without the means: and therefore consequently the Mediator must undertake for paying for the end when he hath not the means by which it is attained, made to speak for redeemable, because it is never offered to the market: and what wise men would make such a bargain.

Thirdly, It seemeth not consistent with reason and equity to say, that such as are by God’s sovereign decree absolutely reprobated and decreed to be made to reckon for their own sins: and yet to say that our blessed Lord Jesus should have that debt imputed to him, and thereby conditionally to purchase for them a freedom from that curse which is already determined to be executed justly upon them: for the decree of reprobation must be, even in order of nature, as long as the decree of election. Now it being clear, that the work of redemption doth presuppose election to have proceeded: that in the order of nature, and according to our uptake of things, we must conceive God’s absolute electing of some to eternal life, to be prior to the covenant of redemption because those who are given to Christ in that covenant, are said to be God’s own by virtue of that decree before that John xvii. 6. Which will infer that God’s absolute decree of reprobation must be so also seeing the decree of election doth necessarily infer the decree of reprobation; for where this is an election of some, there is a predestination of others. And therefore, we must say, that Christ conditionally had proposed to him, and did conditionally pay according to that proposal, the debt of many, that by prior decree were absolutely reprobated. And as to the last opinion hinted, there being but one decree of reprobation, it will follow, that either all these must be under one unconditional redemption which yet cannot be said confidently as to such who are without the conditional covenants; or all must be excluded therefrom.

Fourthly, From the grounds of this opinion, it may be thus argued, If Christ redeemed any reprobate conditionally, then the performing of this condition is either in their own power, or it is a singular gift of good procured by Christ’s death. If in the first they will not assert who own this opinion; it was formerly observed; therefore it must be something that can no other ways be procured but by Christ’s purchase. And according to what is said it is not purchased to any reprobate though it be necessary for their obtaining of any benefit of Christ’s purchase therefore it cannot be said that they are redeemed. For at most it faith that they are redeemed upon a condition, which they can never possibly perform: and this will infer, that they are not redeemed at all; for a peremptory exclusive conditional offer where the condition is impossible, and known before to the offerer, is equivalent to an absolute refusal, as supposing one would offer to relieve another from bondage, or to pay their debt for them upon condition, and no other ways, that such a person should at once drink up the whole sea; That offer
fo circumstaniated, could not be looked upon otherwise but as an absolute refusal. Again, if he hath not purchased faith to them then there is no saving grace purchased to them: and if neither faith nor any saving grace be purchased by them, it will be hard to say, that Christ hath died for such, for whom no saving grace is purchased.

Fifthly, we say further, if all men be conditionally redeemed, then we must say that all the midles necessarily concurring in the work of redemption, to making of it compleat, it must be conditionally purchased also: for as by the acknowledged ground that is called absolute redemption, wherein faith and all the midles are absolutely purchased, so it will follow that in this conditionally purchased; for the end and midles are in one bargain; where the one is purchased, so it will follow that in this conditional redemption must be conditionally purchased for the end and midles are in one bargain; where the one is purchased, the other is so also and therefore where the one is conditionally purchased, the other must be so also, but it cannot be said that the midles, viz. faith, regeneration, and other graces, are conditionally purchased, because this will be the feln thereof that Christ hath purchased because this will be the feln thereof, that Christ hath purchased faith in himself to perform upon condition that they should believe in him which I suppose none will affiirm. It will follow therefrom that they cannot be said to be conditionally redeemed, even as to the end.

Sixthly, if any conditional redemption be supposed to be, or if Christ be said to have paid the debt of all even conditionally, then this must be looked upon as a singular effect of God's grace, and a special evidence of thereof for provoking the hearts of all such to pray for the same; now such a mould of conditional redemption as is propsoed doth not look like grace nor tendeth to the engaging of such as are not redeemed and magnify God; therefore it is not to be admitted. That it doth look like grace, will easily appear by considering, 1. That grace is every grace, and by the ancient laying of Augustine that is, it is grace the end and grace in respect of the midles also. But here whatever may be said of the end, sure there is no grace in respect of the midles, seeing no necessary and effectual means for attaining of the end is provided for in this supposed bargain of this conditional redemption: therefore it can neither be said to look like a bargain of grace, nor yet to tend to the commendation thereof. 2. We may consider, that as to the effect or end, this bargain doth not make the same free unto them that are comprehended under it: for it leaveth them to perform a condition for obtaining of the end, and that in their own strength without furnishing them for the performance of it, even though they do of themselves in an incapacity to perform the same: and how unlike this is to a covenant of grace, may easily be gathered. 3. This conditional redemption doth neither make the effect supposed to be purchased certain, nor possible: certain it cannot be, seeing it never cometh to pass: possible it is not, seeing it dependeth upon a condition which as it is circumstaniated is simply impossible; yes and is supposed to be so in the covenant of redemption, for we must look upon this condition, in respect of its possibility, not only with regard to men as men endued with natural faculties but we must look upon it with respect to men as they are in their corruption incapacitated to do anything that is spiritually good, such as this act of believing is now in the covenant of redemption, it is supposed, not only that faith is necessary; but also man is corrupt, bled under sin and so cannot of himself, except it be given him, believe; and yet in the same covenant it is agreed, that faith be purchased and bestowed upon some because of the former reasons and even then, such who are supposed conditionally to be redeemed, are past by, and deliberately no thing is capitulated for concerning them. Therefore the effect notwithstanding this be still impossible and if so, can it be said to be of grace, which is so clouded in the terms thereof, and doth neither make any good possible to those who are comprehended in the same, nor give thorough occasion to glorify grace in shining in the freedom, comfortableness and re-
freshefulness thereof? And in effect it seemeth rather to obscure grace, than to manifeate the same; and therefore ought not to be preseed in the church. For a conditional tranfaction in this mould, would be as if one should be paid to have paid the Turks for fo many slaves, to be rent home to him in such ships, as himself only could send for them and that this purchase should be valued as to thefe slaves, upon condition alenarily that they should return in such and such ships unto him; and yet in the mean time he never intended to fend these ships for them, but in the fame bargain conclude that ships should be sent only for such and such others; would no thefe slaves necessarily continue under their bondage? and would this so be accounted a redemption amongst men, or yet a wife conditional bargain? And is that attributed to the only wife and gracious God and our blessed Lord Jesus, which is upon the matter of the same, viz. that our Lord Jesus should pay the debt of fo many, upon condition that they should believe in him, by such faith as he only can procure unto them; and withal, that in the fame covenant it should be expreffly capitulated, that our Lord Jesus his fufferings should be accepted for procuring off faith to some others allenarily, and to none elfe; whereby thefe, supppofed to be conditionally redeemed are absolutely excluded upon the matter? This conditional redemption therefore is not to be contended for.

Lastly, bedefe thefe, this opinion will iner many aburdities intricacies not easily extricable, as if Christ Jesus hath died conditionally, then it will follow that either he died equally for all, as is absurd, and acknowledged by the aserters of this opinion; and of this we fpeak in the former part of this question. If it be faid he did in a different manner die for the elect and for thofe that are not actually redeemed, then it may be enquired wherein this difference doth confift for it must either be in the matter, or price, to pay for, that is given, viz. that he gave more for thofe whom he absolutely redeemed, than for thofe whom he only did conditionally purchase; or it muft be in his intention in the laying
understood as contradistinct from the absolute redemption as necessarily it must be, it is as much as to say, that the Father and Son in the covenant of redemption did intend for such and such persons, instead of a conditional redemption, a nonredemption, or ineffectual redemption; and so it cometh to this, that their redemption was never intended at all.

A second absurdity is, that this secometh to imply contradiction, viz. that the reprobate whom God hath passed by are redeemed by Christ’s death: yea, that the unredeemed are redeemed: for if the redeemed be distinguished from others in this place, then these to whom they are opposed must be unredeemed. Neither can it be said that the opposition is not ad seculum, because the one are absolutely redeemed, and the other conditionally: for upon the matter, the denying of an absolute and effectual redemption is the denying of any redemption at all. Again as to the first part, if any say, that though Christ died for all men, yet did he die for no reprobate as a reprobate, which none of late even walking under the name of orthodox do assert, because it is absurd to say, that Christ died for any reprobate. We answer, In Christ’s redemption the elect are considered as elect, for them he redeemeth absolutely. Therefore on the contrary, he must consider others as reprobates, or at least as not elected, but he must also be considered as a reprobate, seeing there is not a mids. Therefore either Christ must be said to redeem all men, without respect either to election or reprobation, which is impossible, because the elect are in all the burdens of redemption, considered as such; or he must be said to die for the reprobates as reprobates, which is the absurdity they would shift. Or it must be said, that in the laying down of his life, he had no respect to them under any consideration, which is the truth. For the decree of reprobation, being an order of nature, and according to our conception, prior to the decree and covenant of redemption, as was said, such as are contained therein, cannot but be looked upon under that consideration. And by the way it would not seem incon siderable as to our purpose, to think that before this transaction we were concluded to speak according to
lay down his life for him as one of them. Again, When Christ speaketh of his people, of his sheep, and of his own in this case, he doth particularly lay to consider them as a species or kind of people by themselves, and differenced in the respect mentioned, from others as the scope cleareth. But when Paul speaketh of himself, as differenced from all, and not rather as one individual of the species foresaid: Therefore although we may conclude thus, God hath made man a reasonable creature according to his own image, Therefore no other creature is fuch, because by this qualification, man or that species to lay fo, is differenced from all other creatures on earth; yet it will not follow, Peter is a reasonable creature according to God's image, Therefore no other man is fo. Because Peter is not an individual person under the same species with others. Just fo is it here, Christ's sheep, own, people, &c. denote a species, as it were differenced by fuch relations from others, whereas Paul is but an individual believer comprehended under the same.

A fecond objection is, That many other scriptures do assert Christ to be given and to have laid down his life for the world. Therefore it cannot be absurd to say, that in some sense Christ hath redeemed all; and particularly that place, John iii. 16. is urged for our scope luffereth us not to digrefs to more, viz. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; and whoever should believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. In reference to which place, we say, 1. That the scope is not to shew, that Christ was given for all the world taken distributively, that is, for every person that should be in the world, because it is only brought in here to confirm this general fum of the gospel which is laid down verfe 15. That whosoever believeth in Christ should not perish but have eternal life. Now verfe 16. is brought in as confirmation of this; for faith he, God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, for this very end, That whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. Where God's end in giving of his Son is mentioned to be a ground of quietness to all that should believe, and will bear that universal well, Whosoever believeth are redeemed, and may expect the benefits of Christ's redemption: because the justifying and saving of fuch, was the end for which God sent his Son; and to extend the place any further, will not be consistent with the scope thereof, If he be said, That God's respect and love to the world indefinitely is mentioned here; be it fo, yet that will not infer, that because that he had respect to the world, that therefore he intended that Christ should die for all and every individual person in the world; but will only infer, this much at most, as if we said, in common fpeech that fuch a Christian king or potent man, had fuch a respect to Christians, or to men of fuch a nation, as to fend fuch a great sum, to redeem fo many of them as he particularly confeduced upon, from the bondage of the Turks. It may well be said, that fuch a great man had respect to Christians, or to fuch a nation, because he purposed to redeem many of them when he took no thought of others. Yet it cannot be said, that he intended the redeeming of all, either absolutely or conditionally, seeing he did appoint the price given, to be paid for fuch and fuch as he himself thought meet to redeem, and not for others. Just fo is it here in this case, at the most; and fo God's respect to the world, may be opposite to his passing by of all the fallen angels. Again, Secondly, We say, That if world, in this place, be to be understood of particular persons, and an univerfality of them, It must be understood of the elect world, as in the verfe following is clearly, where God's purpose of sending of his Son is expressed to be, that the world through him might be saved. Now there can be no other univerfality be thought to be intended, to be saved by God, as was formerly cleared, but the univerfality to speak fo, or the world of the elect. Neither will the reading be absurd, to understand it thus, That God so loved the elect world, that he gave his only begotten Son to death, for them, that by their believing on him they should not perish but have eternal life. And fo this place interpreted by the parallel thereof, 1 John iv. 9. In this was manifested the love of God,
towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. For us, and we, in the one place, are equi-
polent to the world, and whosoever will believe, in
the other. That this it is to be understood, appear-
eth in this, that even according to the grounds of
this opinion there can none be expected to believe
but the elect. And in the text, there are none pro-
fitted by this fruit of Christ's love to the world, but
the believers: therefore this love which giveth this
gift, must be said to respect the elect only, espe-
cially considering that it is in a matter which is the
evidence of God's most special love, as was formerly
said. Only it is expressed in this general, Whosoever shall
believe, &c. because the extending of it in this in-
definite expression, doth suit best with the purposed
mould, of the offer of the gospel, which is not to in-
vite men to believe, because they are particularly ele-
ced or redeemed, but invite men to believe, because
God hath promised to save such as believe, and
because he doth by the outward ministry call hearers
thereunto. And this is the more to be observed,
because Christ here as a good minister of the gos-
pel, is preaching to Nicodemus, and laying before
him the sum of the gospel, and that which must be
the object of his faith; and therefore it was ne-
cessary that he should take that way of preaching
these truths to him, so as that upon the one side, he
doeth hold forth God's peculiar love to the elect
world; so upon the other he doth hold forth God's
acceptation of all whosoever should believe, thus
the peculiarity of the redemption may not stumble
any in their approaching to Christ, who have the
offer of the gospel made unto them. For the word
faith in sum, A believer cannot fail of salvation,
feeing God had that respect to his elect, as to give
his only begotten Son, to purchase this unto them.
And this is to be preached in these indefinite terms
and cannot but be true, seeing it is the revealed will
of God.

A fourth, difficulty following this opinion is, That
it will be hard to conceive how Christ could condi-
tion all die and lay down his life for the redeem-
ing of many who were actually already condemned
in hell. Yet this universal conditional redemption
will infer this, otherwise the reprobates that lived
before Christ's death, were not so much obliged to
him as they who did succeed. If it be said, That
although Christ actually died in time, yet the tran-
saction was eternal before any man lived in the world.
This will not remove the difficulty, because though
it was transtacted before time; yet no question
it was so regulated as it might be performed in time.
Now can it be supposed that the transtaction was in
these terms, That the Mediator should die and lay
down a life for so many elect, who by the virtue of
his death were not to be brought to glory before his
sufferings; and also he should pay so much in the
name of so many reprobates who for their own sins
were to be abstractly damned at the time of payment?
And whatever be said of the transaction, yet when
it came to Christ's suffering, it must either be said,
That these were coerced out, so as Christ did not bear
their iniquity or died for them in any respect; or it
must be said before God's justice, Christ did bear
their iniquity, and pay in the name of such as were
actually in hell, suffering for their own sins at that
same instant of time.

It may be asked, What doth become of all infants,
whether in the visible church, or without it, who
die in their infancy? According to the former
grounds it will be hard to determine. For none can
die, upon the one side, that they are all absolutely re-
deemed and saved, there being no warrant in scrip-
ture for this; on the other side to say, that Christ died
for them, upon condition that they should believe
in him, cannot well be understood. For though some
of them be within the conditional covenant made with
the church and therefore cannot be more rigidly
constructed of than these at age, yet are they not in
a capacity to perform acts of faith, and to fulfill that
condition: and this incapacity doth not mere flow
from mens corruption as it doth in men at age, but
is natural to young ones, as not to understand, speak,
or walk, are: now it were unreasonable to lay, that
such children who die in their infancy, were redeemed by Christ upon condition that they should understand, speak, walk, &c. or, of a child dying in such a condition suppose it be one not absolutely redeemed, it cannot be said that that child was redeemed upon this condition, that it had walked, spoken, &c. when as yet it was not possibly, or one hour age. Again, can it be said of children within the visible church, which are not absolutely redeemed, that it is indeterminate whether Christ did die conditionally for them or not, at least till they come to such an age as they themselves may act faith? Neither can it be said here, that he redeemed reprobate children in the church conditionally, as he did absolutely redeem theae that are elect, although these cannot act faith: for he purchaseth to the elect having grace in the seed thereof, and a new nature to be communicated to them, whereas the youngest children are capable seeing therein they are meerly passive; but in that conditional redemption, there is nothing purchaseth to any but upon condition that they receive Christ offered and believe in him: which doth suppose an active nature, and acting to be in them to whom the offer is made; of which children are not capable. And if this condition could be supposeth only to infer something wherein children might be meerly passive; then this will be the meaning thereof, viz. that Christ redeemed such children upon condition that he himself should confer such and such things on them, in receiving of which, they could only be passive; then this will be the meaning thereof, which would not look like a conditional covenant: for the performing of the condition will be on Christ's side and not upon theirs; and so it would be absolute as in the case of the elect children. Neither will it remove this difficulty to say, that children are partakers of the fathers privileges, and are to be reckoned accordingly: for this cannot be said of saving privileges, so as if no elect parent could have a reprobate child; or no reprobate parent an elect child dying at such an age; because these things belong unto the sovereignty of God, and he is not so to be bounded in respect of all particular children. Besides experience in the word giveth ground to say in question. It must then be understood of federal privileges and that in respect of the external ministration of the covenant; and this will say nothing to the difficulty; because the doubt is still, what to say of children that are within the conditional covenant, in respect of their parents that are within the visible church; yea, supposing them to die infancy, or in their nonage, they cannot be said to be conditionally redeemed, because of the reasons forelaid.

Sixthly, if the reprobate be conditionally redeemed then that redemption of theirs is either transacted in the same covenant with the absolute redemption of the elect or not: they cannot be said to be comprehended within the same covenant because all such are comprehended in it, are contradistinguished from others, as being the Lord's chosen, and such as are given to Christ, &c. Again this covenant of redemption includeth the means with the end: for it is ordered in all things and sure; which cannot be said of this conditional covenant; therefore they cannot be comprehended in one. And it would not found well to say, that the elects redemption, and that of reprobates, were contained in one covenant. Nor can it be said, that it is a distinct bargain beside the covenant of redemption: because, 1. That were indeed to grant that it is no redemption, seeing it is not comprehended in the covenant of redemption; 2. The business of Christ's death, is only transacted in that covenant, where the redemption of the elect is absolutely concluded: because it is the great ends designed for making of that effectual: therefore ought it, as to the extent of its merit, to be proportioned to the object of that covenant, seeing by his undertaking therein allenerly, he becometh liable to death. 3. This would infer two covenants of redemption, whereas the scripture doth but speak of one. And although some speak of a conditional covenant with the visible church: yea neither can that be said to be made with all men, and so none without the vi-
faith of themselves except by his purchase, than they can by themselves satisfy divine justice had he not by his death interposed. Now may not carnal reason still cavil here and say, that though Christ hath died and purchased them conditionally, yet seeing he hath not purchased faith to them, their salvation is not less impossible, than if their had been no such conditional redemption at all. Neither can it be ever intanced, that this mere conditional redemption profit any person as to life, or any saving good, more than if it had not been at all: and so the matter upon which the pretended cavil deth rise is not altered, but no way removed.

Secondly, seeing the asserters of this conditional redemption doth admit of an absolute election unto life as we do, at least for ought I know then they will have the same cavils to meet with: for this connexion betwixt election, faith, and salvation, is no peremptory, so that none can believe and be saved but an elect, then the connexion is betwixt Christ's dying for one and his obtaining of salvation: yet the connexion is no less peremptory, and reciprocal to say for betwixt absolute redemption and life, and betwixt mere conditional redemption and damnation to speak of a connexion simply without respect to any cautuality and that according to their grounds, than their is betwixt redemption and life, and none redemption and death according to the grounds which we maintain yet I suppose, that none will account this absolute election of some few, when others are past by, to be any spot upon the sovereign and free grace of God: or yet any ground of excuse to such as are not thus elected by him: and yet without this as to the events it is certain that they can never believe nor attain unto salvation: yea supposing that election were grounded upon foreseen faith, and supposing reprobation to be grounded upon foreseen impotency therein; yet now both these decrees being peremptorily and and irrevocably past, this is certain, that no other will or can be saved but such as are so elected: and so that all others: to whom the offer not cometh, shall necessarily perish, or the
former decree must be cancelled, which is impos-
ible; and this is true, although it be past as they say, 
volutante consequente, now when the offer of the gol-
pel cometh, may not carnal minds rise the same cavail,
and say, thinking the Lord foreknew that such would
not believe, and for that cause did determine toglorify
his justice upon them, to what end then is this offer
made to such, who are now by a decree excluded
from the same, whatever be the ground thereof.
And indeed there is no end of cavailing, if men
will give way unto the same; for flesh will ask even
in reference to this, Why doth he then find fault,
and who hath rebuked his will? For certainly if he
had pleased, he might have made it otherwise; and
seeing he pleased not to do so, therefore it could
not be otherwise, as the apostle hath it, Rom. ix. 20.
unto which he giveth other no answer, but nay, O
man, who art thou that repiest against God, shall the
thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast
thou made me thus, hast not the potter power over
the clay? &c. in which also we must acquiesce,
otherwise no such mould of a conditional rede-
ption will give satisfaction.

Thirdly, It can no more warrant the application of
the fruits of Christ's purchase to any, so as to com-
fort them in this conditional redemption, more than
if there is no such thing at all. For if the sinner
believe the doctrine of particular redemption doth
warrant any to make application of Christ's pur-
chase. If they believe not, this doctrine of conditional
redemption giveth no more warrant to make
application for the comfort of any than if were not
all.

Fourthly, Neither doth it warrant a person with
any greater boldness to take hold of Christ, or to
close with the offer of the gospel made unto him;
because that person, who is jealous to close with
Christ upon this ground, because he knoweth not
whether he be redeemed by him or not, seeing all
are not redeemed, may be no less jealous upon this
account, because he knoweth not if by his death he
hath procured faith unto him, or not, and so if he be
absolutely redeemed, for this is no less necessary for
his peace and confidence than the former, and yet
will be as difficult to be known to any that will
needs searcho into what is secret, and not rest upon the
revealed offer of God as the sufficient ground and
object of their faith. And if only by actual believing
and no other wise, they may be assured that faith is
purchased, unto them; by the same ground also, may
be cleared that they are redeemed by Christ, yea and
elected also; because there is a equal peremptory con-
exion between faith and all these.

Fifthly, Neither do this way and the grounds there-
of give minister a solid ground to make the
offer of the gospel indefinitely in their public preac-
ching; for by the truth formerly laid down, we can
assure hearers that whatsoever believeth shall partake
of life and of the benefits of Christ's redemption;
and by the virtue of the general call and warrand
which we have in the gospel, we may invite them
to believe in Christ, require faith of them, and up-
on condition thereof, assure them of pardon; &c. be-
because the nature of the administration of the covenant
of redemption is such in plain terms, viz. whatsoever
believeth shall be saved. Also the nature of our
commission to preach this gospel, doth fully import
the same, as it is summed, Mark xvi. 15. 16: for min-
ister a warrant to preach and offer salvation, is not
to preach and offer the same to the elect only, whom
the Lord hath kept secret from them; but is to
preach and make offer this gospel, to those unto whom
the Lord shall send them, and whom he shall gather
into a visible church state, yet this is done for the elect's
sake among such, whom God hath thought fit to
gather out among others for this preaching of the
gospel, without dignifying to the minister who is
elect, and whom he hath designed to believe; there-
fore it is requisite to this manner of administration,
that the gospel be preached indefinitely in respect
of its call, and that indifferently as to those who
preach, that while the call doth reach all particular-
ly, the elect may withal be gripped with the same.
And upon the grounds of this conditional rede-
ption others can do no more, but publish the offer
of the gospel is indefinitely, and assure any who shall believe in Christ, that thereby they shall obtain life and pardon. It is true, we cannot say Christ hath not died, and is risen for all whom we preach; yet this doth not lessen our warrant to call hearers indifferently, on the terms of believing: because though Christ's redemption be the ground which hath procured this gospel to be, preached even in these terms, as from that forecited place, John iii. 16, may be gathered. And though it be that which bounds the Lord's making of preaching effectual, yet our commission is bounded according to the express terms in which he hath pleased the Lord to draw up the same unto us. Because the transaction of redemption, as it relateth to the names of the redeemed, is a secret between God and the Mediator, therefore the book of life is never opened until the day of judgment, Rev. xiv. But a minister's commission in his treating with sinners in the visible church, is a thing which he hath thought good to reveal, and therefore hath done it so, as the former secret may not be revealed, and yet the end be made effectual, viz. the effectual calling and ingathering of so many elect. And upon the other side, those who may require faith of all, and plead it of them, upon this ground, that they are conditionally redeemed, yet they cannot say to their hearers, Christ hath by his death procured faith to them all, and so they do leave them still at a loss, except they betake them to the external indefinite call, which doth warrant ministers to require faith of all hearers indifferently, and without disputing whether Christ hath redeemed all or not, or whether by his redemption he hath procured faith to them all or not. Therefore there needeth not much contending for a different doctrine, or as some say a different method to derive this warrant from, which doth so naturally flow from the received truth. And though the scripture doth sometimes use this motive indifferently to the members of the visible church, to stir them up to glorify God, viz. that they are bought with a price, as 1 Cor. vi. 20, yet will not that infer an universal or conditional redemption of them all, more than these immediately going before, verse 15, and 19. wherein it is laid, that they are members of Christ and temples of the holy Ghost, will infer an universal or conditional regeneration of them all. The first whereof is fallacious, the second is absurd. For it would be upon the matter, that they were renewed, sanctified, and had the spirit dwelling in them, upon condition that it were so, seeing regeneration, the spirit, and faith, which is a fruit of the spirit, cannot be separated. The like phrases also are, chap. iii. of the same epistle, verse 16, 17, &c. Beside will any think when the apostle saith ye are bought with a price, That ye doth only intend that conditional redemption which can never be effectual, but he must be understood as having respect to that great mercy in its most peculiar respect, because he doth speak of it to the elect as well as others, and that as having with it the greatest obligation that can be.

Lastly, It cannot be thought that this mould of a conditional redemption so qualified, can be more acceptable to those who plead for an indifferent or equal universal redemption. Because this doth not by any way whet remove their objections whereby they plead for nature against the sovereignty of God, nor their cavils, whereby they reflect upon the justice of God, for condemning men who cannot possibly according to the case they are in be saved. Therefore there is still ground for them to plead an original's execrability, seeing his salvation according to these grounds is still impossible, as hath been formerly cleared. Neither I suppose will it be intimated any holding the Socinian, Arminian or Lutheran principles in these things, have been brought in in this, judge, more favourably of that way, than of the other; but on the contrary, may be strengthened, rather flattered by this, to continue in their former errors, as finding many orthodox divines in part yield, because of the supposed strength of their arguments, and from such concessions they have one ground given to make their conclusions the more strong. For this conditional redemption doth
alledge there is need to vindicate God's justice, and
to declare man's inexcusable acts, and to have cleaner
grounds of dealing with men for bringing them to
faith, &c. than can be consistent with the principles
that are ordinarily maintained by the orthodox in
that point. And seeing by the length which this
conditional redemption doth go, such ends are not
attained, as hath formerly been hinted. Therefore
it will follow, that even more than that is necessary,
and so that there can be no halting till it be their
length. Also it must stumle and strengthen them
not a little, to find orthodox divines taking up and
managing their arguments, and by their weapons
beating down the answers which hitherto have been
thereof, and to see them also enervating the argu-
ments which have been brought against them by
homologating of their answers. Sure Cameron the
Author of this method, went as far in several points
to alloy the heat of Arminians, and others against his
document, as any; yet Episcopus in his dealing with
him, doth load his ways with no less absurdities, nor
doeth any withinveth less bitterly against him than
he doth against others whom he dealt with; yea in
some respect he doth insinuate more, as alledging his way
to be more inconsistent with reason and with itself,
than the way of others; because still Cameron did
asser the absolutenes of election, the efficacy of con-
version, and the impossibility of frustrating the same
when God doth apply it to effectuate conversion,
or to convert themselves without it, though he ende-
voured to maintain these things upon grounds differe-
cnt from what are commonly made use of. We
conclude then, That these who are redeemed, are
peculiarly obliged to Christ more than to any other
and yet that no other hath any just ground to quarrel
with him; this being certain, that though the reason
of his proceeding may sometimes be unknown to us,
yet can they never be unjust. And there is no ques-
tion, but these who dispute most against his way
now, shall in the day of judgment have their mouths
shutted, when their confidences bear witness of the
justice of all the Lord's proceeding in this work of
redemption, and even in their own condemnation.

But who can search in these depths: O the depth
of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom
of God! O how unsearchable are his ways, his
judgments they are past finding out! To him be
praise for ever. Amen.

LECTURE I.

CHAP. VI.

Verse 1

ADN I saw when the Lamb opened one
of the seals, and I heard, as it were the
wife of thunder; one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

THIS chapter beginneth that part of this book
which is properly and mainly prophetical. We
heard of the preparation to it in the former two
chapters; serving not only to stir up John, but all
that should hear and read, to observe the things that
should be revealed. Followeth now the first prophe-
y to be spoken of, which is manifested to the
church by our Lord opening of the seals of the book.
But it will be needful to permit some generalis, be-
fore we enter on particulars. 1. Touching our way
of proceeding. 2. Concerning the object and scope
of the prophesies. 3. Concerning the sequries and
order of them. 4. Some generalis observable about
them, for the better understanding of them.

For our way of proceeding, we say, 1. That this
being an obscure place, and the interpretations
being many and different, we must have liberty to
propose these that be most probable; that out of
them we may take what is latest seeing among three
expositions, when a fourth cannot be given, the
overthrowing of two is an establishing of the third.
There must be more use made of human history; and
there is no scripture story posterior to this. Use
then must be made of others, as in the expounding
of
of Daniel is needful. 3. We intend not to be particular, or peremptory in afflicting or limiting applications to times, cases, or persons; seeing the same expression may be more comprehensive than only to take in one event, or look to one party or person, it may take in others also; it may therefore suit as well with the scope to comprehend both, when the things included do not overturn one another. 4. Neither will it be meet, where consistent and subordinate senses offer, to adhere to one of them, when it may be fave to take in both.

2. For the object and scope of this prophecy, we conceive it to be mainly to let out what concerneth the church; and occasionally to touch any other thing as may serve to that end; for it is sent for the behove of our Lord Jesus his servants, to arm them against trials, to keep them from being offended with them, and to comfort them under them; believe that God's not in this whole book, as in the former visions looked on as in his government simply but in reference to his church chiefly. So it is his churches sufferings, battles, victories, and others, as they are enemies to her, or fighting with her, that are spoken to. Because the church was especially within the bounds of the Roman empire, that then almost did command the world, and because they were most manifestly friends or enemies to her, and the affairs of that empire being of most concernment to the church, there are mention made more particularly of it.

3. Antichrist being the great and lasting enemy, and most dangerous to God's people, and yet pretending to be no enemy; the holy Ghost therefore infinsth most in this particular, describing, discovering, and pointing him out in his rise his followers or church, his reign, and ruin, that believers may be especially guarded against him, and that Christ's church and people may be discerned from Antichrist's church, people, or followers. 4. It is not purposed particularly to hold forth every dispensation of the church, or all changes befalling it, or happening to it, but the special and main ones, most needful and useful to be known, and understood by the church. Therefore while as other prophecies are more general,

this concerning Antichrist is especially, particularly and at length infinith on, as if the Lord intended especially by this prophecy to meet with him.

3. For the series of the story, this is certain, the state of the militant church is holden forth from that time to the end of the world but how it is, there is difference. There are three opinions especially in this. 1. Some would carry on the story in an even line by an interrupted series, knitting every chapter at the back of another; as if the chapters kept the order of time till it come to the end; but this will no ways conflict with the matter contained in these chapters especially, chap. xii, xiii, xiv. Which certainly is contemporary with and explicatory of the former visions and so are chap. vii, xiii. 2. Some make all these visions to begin and end together, as if in each of them were a full prophecy, extending from the beginning of this revelation to the end of the world. But this will not hold in the principal prophecies, as will appear. 3. Some divide it in two books; the first closed chap. v. the second opened, chap. x. and that these two have two prophecies beginning alike, and ending at the end of the world. But it is certain that that book, chap. v. contained all; for it containeth the seven seals, they contain the seven trumpets, the seventh trumpet is not blown till chap. xi. and certainly it containeth the vials, which are the last woes and plagues. 4. We may add a fourth opinion, as a kind of mids, that is, that neither is there a continued series amongst all the prophecies, nor yet are all the visions, or the three principal prophecies contemporary; but that the three principal prophecies, viz. of the seals, trumpets and vials, continue the series from the beginning to the end, and are not contemporary properly, but that the explicatory visions, though they be not contemporary one with another, yet are they contemporary to these, or some part of the principal prophecy. That is, 1. The seals proceed. 2. The trumpets succeed. 3. After follow the vials, and immediately, and these carry it on to the end.

If we consider the matter contained in this revelation, it may not unfily or divided in two parts.
each of them giving a view of the whole from the beginning to the end with this difference, that what is more shortly and openly pointed at in the one is more largely and plainly inferred on in the other; for, from chap. vi. to the end of the xi. inclusively there is a view given of affairs concerning the gospel church unto the end. And such like, from chap. vii. to the end of the book a review is given of the same extent, viz. from the first spreading and rise of the gospel unto the end of the world; wherein what was more shortly hinted at concerning Antichrist his rise and ruin, by the fifth and seventh trumpet, chap. ix. and xi. is more largely and fully inferred on, from chap. v., and forward; so that upon the matter, this division seemeth not impertinent. Yet considering the native form in which the prophesies and visions are delivered, and the special periods of the militant church, which are by special events remarkable, and of which the holy Ghost taketh particular notice by beginning, and breaking off purposes at them by continuing one form of expression viz. by the same types of seals, trumpets, or vials, until such a period run out, and then altering and proposing the succeeding matter in a different form, and under different types, as altering from seals to trumpets; and then again, when a new period cometh, altering to vials, considering these things, we conceive that the dividing of this book in principal and expolitory prophesies, and subdividing each of their again in three, will conduct most for a distinct and clear upmaking of the matters; revealed, and suit best with the form wherein it is delivered; and by which also of itself it is divided as will more fully appear in our proceeding. And so the order and series of the prophesies of this book are thus to be conceived.

The whole revelation, as prophetical, is contained in that book sealed with seven seals, chap. v.: The six first seals, being opened, deduce the story to one period, viz. to the end of the heathen perdition; and the quitting of the church from that. The seventh seal bringeth in the trumpets, chap. viii. and xii. which contain the story of the church’s trouble by infinte enemies, until Antichrist be at his height. The seventh chapter containeth no other matter, but is cast in betwixt the first principal prophecy and the second, to make way for the more clear passing from the one to the other; and especially to prepare for, and help to understand the prophesy of the trumpets chap. x. and xi. contain a commination for the church in reference to that sad condition. Then in chap. xii., xiii., and xiv. is inserted an expolitory prophesy belonging to that same time, and conducing both for hearing the two prophesies preceding, and also that of the vials, which hath its preparation, chap. xv., its execution, chap. xvi. and is enlarged and explained in the two last expolitory prophesies, chap. xvii. xviii. &c. unto the end of the book.

Concerning these three principal prophesies, viz. 1. Of seals chap. vi. 2. Of trumpets chap. viii. ix. 3. Of vials, chap. xvi. oferven,

1. They have all prefices, preparations before them with songs of upturning of the reader at the entry, chap. iv. and v. are preparatory to the prophesy of seals, chap. vi. chap. vii. is preparatory to the trumpets which follow, chap. viii. x. and chap. xy. to the vials, which are comprehended chap. xv.

Observ. 2. That all of them have conflation and explication intermixted with them, or added relating unto them. This the conflation of the church against the perdition, intimated by the second, third, and fourth seals, is added in that same chapter by the fifth and sixth seals. And the explication which is contemporary with it, is in chap. xii. viz. the first part of it. The conflation laid down in reference to the trumpets, is chap. x. xi. And the explication of them, for both the difficulty and conflation are expounded, is xii. last part, with chap. xiii. xiv. The vials are of themselves consolatory, being against the churches enemies, yet are they particularly explained, and insistent on from chap. xvii. to the end.

Observ. 3. That each of these prophesies have
something inserted in them, which as a key may serve both for the understanding of the meaning of them, and timing of the thing contained in them. This key is especially to be found in the confutation, part of each principal prophecy, it being not one of the leaf confutation to understand them. 4. It is to be observed, that every one of them is linked in, with, and to another, so as the leaf feemeth to infer a new period; as the seventh seal bringeth the trumpet, the seventh trumpet bringeth the vials, the seventh vial again feemeth to look to an interval after the seals destruction before the day of judgment, and to relate to that vision, chapter xx. or at least to a chief part thereof. So that looking to the prophesies in themselves, there are but three periods, of the militant church; but as the seventh vial, containeth something new, and singularly different from the former, there are four. Thus the churches estate is either suffering, and that, 1. Under heathen persecutors: this relateth to the seals, and is the first period, Or 2. It is torn and wafted under heretics and antichrist: this holdeth forth by the trumpets, and is the second, Or 3. It is an aspiring to an out gate from these in a more wrestling and fighting way gaining ground against Antichrist, from his begun to his ruin by his decrees: which is held forth by the first six vials and that is the third. Or 4. It is more quiet after his ruin; which taketh in that interval and kingdom, chap. xx. I mean that eminent part thereof that falleth under the seventh vial, and that is the fourth. In sum the whole state of the militant church may be divided in two, 1. In a condition more suffering; or 2. More prosperous. Each of which again may be subdivided. Her suffering condition in two, 1. Under heathen; 2. Under Antichrist. Her prosperous condition again, may be considered as it is begun and fighting, or more quiet after her eminent enemy Antichrist is down: which in all make four periods, but because this last of the churches quiet condition, feemeth not to be of such continuance as any of the former, it is not set down by distinct types as they are; and therefore the whole estate of the church, runneth most in three periods, according to the principal prophecies of seals, trumpets and vials. By period in this discourse understand one continued way of dispensation unto the church, till by some new intervening change it be broken off, as the alteration from heathen persecution and heathen from without into intelline persecutions and troubles from within and the like. That this ferious may be clear which we will find agreeable to the nature of and matter contained in the prophesies, to history in what is past, and to reason drawn from solid grounds in the book itself: we shall lay down these following propositions to make out, that these three principal prophecies are not contemporary to each other, and do not deduce the state of the gospel church severally from the beginning to the end of the world: and also to make out that these explicatory prophesies do not belong to any distinct time different from the former, but are to be understood as contemporary with them, or some part of them.

Proposition 1. These principal prophecies are not contemporary one with another, in this respect as if each of them did hold forth a view of the whole gospel church, from the beginning to the end of the world, as may appear, 1. By the genuine order that is amongst the seals, trumpets, and vials. The trumpets are comprehended under the seventh seal. And therefore cannot be contemporary with the former six, except we lay the last were contemporary with the first, which is absurd: for the second is not so contemporary with the first, nor the third with the second. Likewise the vials are comprehended under the seven trumpets, as will be clear, chap. xi. when the seventh trumpet is expounded: and therefore cannot be contemporary with the former six trumpets upon the foregoing reason. This argument preseth the more strongly; because, if there be order of time amongst the events comprehended under the first six seals, so that the following seal comprehendeth more in time succeeding the former, then must the seventh seal contain matter, succeeding in time to the sixth,
as the sixth did to the fifth: but the former is true, 
there is order amongst the first six seals, viz. the 
white horse cometh by the first, bloody persecution 
followeth in the second, and so forth one succeedeth 
another, as will be clear by the expostion of them 
and therefore the seventh must succeed the sixth 
except we overturn the whole order of the rest, 
which seemeth, for weighty and remarkable reasons 
to be to particularly mentioned by the holy Ghost. 
The same argument also will bind the more strongly 
by considering the order that is amongst the vials, 
and trumpets among themselves; for if one trumpet, 
or vial accordingly as they are designed, i. 2. &c. 
be in time proceeding or succeeding to another, in 
respect of the matter contained in them, then that 
same order must be between the seventh seal, and the 
trumpets comprehended under it; and the seventh 
trumpet which hath the seven vials following upon it, 
for that same reason which distinguishes the second 
from the first, and the sixth from the fifth, will hold also 
in distinguishing the seventh from the sixth proceeding, 
but it will be clear that the trumpets have order amongst 
themselves, as appeareth, chap. viii. &c. by the three woes of the last trumpets 
successive one to another, and so also in the matter 
of the vials, as will appear, chap. xvi. And therefore 
we conclude, that the trumpets which are contained 
under the seventh seal, cannot be contemporary 
with the six former seals, nor can the vials 
which fall in under the seventh trumpet, be contemporary 
with the six first trumpets much less with the seals.

It may be made out by the different matter, contained 
in these principal prophecies, that they cannot 
be contemporary one with another, but must be 
successive one to another. For the seals hold forth 
predominate persecution by heathens, the trumpets 
hold forth the tyranny of antichrist to its height, 
which is inconsistent with the former; the vials bring 
judgment on all the churches enemies, which is inconsistent with both; which argument will be more clear hereafter.

3. It may thus be made out. If neither of these 
prophecies begin at one time, nor end at one time, 
but one of them succeed to another, then they are 
not contemporary, but successive one to another, 
but the first is true. Ergo, i. They have not one 
beginning. The vials chap. xiv. the first of them is 
poured on them that have the mark of the beast; 
which beast was not riven during the seals, and was 
persecuting under the trumpets, as appeareth chap. 
xi. Therefore the beginning of the vials doth not 
contemporate either with the seals or trumpets. Again 
trumpets suppose a church, unto which they give 
warning as appeareth by the Lord's sealing and 
preparing of his own chap. vii. ere the trumpets 
blow, chap. viii. and therefore the first trumpet cannot 
contemporate with the first seal, wherein the 
preaching of the gospel, for the begetting of a church. 
is held forth, as will appear in the expounding of 
them. 2. It may be made out, that the close of these 
three prophecies do not contemporate together: for 
it is certain that the vials bring the last judgment, 
as they bring the last judgment, chap. xv. the last 
plagues, or which is all one the last wo, chap. xi. and 
therefore they must be conceived to succeed the seals 
and trumpets, which contain in this respect, the 
first plagues; so first and last cannot contemporate 
one with another. 3. Neither the first first 
seals, nor the first first trumpets, for the seven contained 
a different period from the proceeding as is 
laid, reach in their events unto the end of the world; 
for the seventh seal as is laid followeth the sixth, 
and so the seventh trumpet followeth the former 
six, and yet neither the seventh seal, nor the seventh 
trumpet can be laid to be after the day of judgment 
which that would infer.

Yet concerning this, take these advetiments, 1. 
That when we name a order or series betwixt trumpets, 
and seals, or amongst themselves, we mean not 
as if what was mentioned under one seal were fully 
past and ended before another were opened, and 
so betwixt the seals and trumpets, &c. No, this is not 
meant: for the white horse in the first seal, and the 
red horse in the second, are still riding, as well as see
chap. xi. in the time that belongeth to the vials; but it looketh especially to the rite of those, as the white horse goeth before the red, and the red before the black, and the seals before the trumpets, and to forth, although the event, signified by the white horse may continue after the red is come, and so on in other events. Also it looketh to these events mentioned in an eminent degree, as for example when we say the seals hold forth open persecution, and the trumpets error, the meaning is, they hold out these to be at a height more than ordinary, and to be the predominant state or evil of the church, during that time respectively.

2. We would be advertised, that one of these may well agree, and may be applied to another time and occasion by proportion and analogy, but not simply. As for instance the white horse cometh first out under the first seal, and ere long the third horse followed. This may hold doctrinally in the general from it, that wherever the gospel cometh ere long, the devil stirreth up men to persecute it. Or wherever Christ tendeth the gospel, he holdeth forth that his errand is there to conquer yet looking on the words as they are prophetical, they hold forth the first spreading of the gospel. And the conquest and persecutions that followed it: Otherwise there were no difference between this book which is prophetical, and any other which is doctrinal; seeling the general dispensations which befal the church might be gathered from both alike; neither would it make for Christ's scope, which is shewn unto his servants things to come, for arming of them against them.

Prop. 2. The first two prophesies hold forth the troubles of the church; that the vials the ruin of her enemies. 1. That the seals, at least second, third, and fourth, hold forth bad things to the church appeareth, 1. From the first seal chap. vi. in which mention is made of many martyrs killed for the testimony of Jesus, which must be under the former seals. 2. In that they defire revenge on their persecutress for their blood; whereby it appeareth, that till that time they had been born down by persecutors as un-revenged, which could not be, if the former seals contained judgment on the world.

2. That the trumpets hold forth a torn and wretched condition of the church, and God by them giving the alarm thereof is evident, 1. By the prophets prophesying in sackcloth, chap. xi. and the beasts prevailing against the saints, chap. viii. which contemporaneously with the trumpets. 2. By this that when the seventh trumpet sounds, chap. vii. 17. it is said, that God hath taken him great power, and reigneth, as if under the former his power had been by, because his church was under affliction. 3. That the vials bring judgment on the enemies, appeareth first from the long, chap. xi. when the seventh trumpet sounds, and chap. xvi. 5 and 6. is the shedding of their blood who had shed the blood of his servants, and it is on the beast his followers and throne in the chapters following. And though now and then God took order with particular persecutors; yet such a particular change as that, will not agree with a general persecution, or to speak it, with a state of persecution, such as was under the former two.

Prop. 3. Though both the seals and trumpets hold forth troubles to the church, yet do they hold forth different troubles, not only in time, but in nature and from different enemies. The seals hold forth bloody cruelty from heathens, the trumpets deceitful heresies and troubles from false Christians which may be thus gathered, 1. Concerning the seals, they are bloody to the church as appeareth from the fifth seal where they cry for vengeance against the shedders of their blood. 2. That under the seals, the saints are merely passive and patient, in bearing out their scourge with sufferings towards their enemies, and prayers towards God: but under the trumpets it is different. 1. God giveth them warning that they should be active in preparing for that form. 2. That they are represented as striving not only in suffering, and prayer as to outward enemies, but chap. xi. by prophesying, which agreeth better to the vindicating of truth against false brethren, than to those who are altogether without. 3. The enemies are diverfe-
ly described: under the trumpets, some false prophets and the locusts, in a secret manner carrying on their design. 4. The effects are different; the false prophet shed blood, and take away the lives of all professors. By the trumpets again, the clear water of life is imbittered, and truth corrupted, stars made to fall from heaven, and especially the prophets persecuted and infallible, chap. 14. 5. It is clear from God preparing his own against the trumpets, chap. 15. which is more than against the seals, chap. vi. 6. 4. is clear, compared with chap. 9. 4. is clear, 6. It is the most clear, by comparing the expiatory prophesies with chap. 12. 13. which are contemporary of these of the seals and trumpets. From which may be gathered, not only that the church hath trouble during that time, but also that these troubles are not to be distinguished as they proceed from the dragon, who waiteth to devour the child, chap. 12. which contemporateth with seals, or as they proceed from the beast, chap. 13. which hast horns like the lamb, but indeed speaketh like the dragon, and succeeded him in his seat, which contemporateth with the trumpets.

From which we may conclude. 1. That the first period of the militant church, viz. that which be- longeth to the seals, is to be fixed at the close of the great persecution by heathens, and her meeting with new thorns from within, by the devil's raising up false teachers, and corrupt doctrines with great patronage to them, both civil and ecclesiastic, which is a trial of another nature, and yet of as great concernment to her. Therefore, least being free of the former, she should now think herself free of all, the Lord foundeth a trumpet, and giveth her the alarm of this thorn: which time will fall about the three hundred and tenth year of our Lord, or thereby when at first the church enjoyed peace by public authority under Constantine, which peace was immediately marred by the Arian hereof, and others following it unto which the trumpets gave warning.

This would not be underlood as if the church were under perdition hereafter under the seal, or persecution under the trumpets; no the contrary is clear: but this we shall see.

1. That under the seals persecutions by blood and fire, and their height, and were for the time respectively dominant in the church. 2. We mean that under the seal there is a change in the church, and the effect is, as the last perdition by Dioleian was the death of the people by killing swords, but under the trumpets error and death wrought, till Antichrist came to his height: so though there may be error under the seals, yet it came not to its height then, and was not the predominant evil which troubled the church as under the trumpets. 3. Although there may be persecution under the trumpets; yet thus do they differ. In respect of the persecutors, in the one, open enemies of Christ and in the other covered enemies to Christ. They differ in respect of the grounds they go on and the manner how the persecute their desirous, according to their respective principles.

Again, we may conclude the period between the trumpets and the vials, is to be fixed at the Lord's beginning to punish Antichrist, and to make the sured light of the gospel to break out to the dis- mishing of Antichrist's tyranny: which will fall to about the one thousand five hundred year of our Lord, or somewhat thereafter: for, the first vial brings strange judgament on him, that is, the beasts worshippers; which judgment is carried on by one vial after another, chap. 15. till he himself be cast in the lake. 2. The sixth trumpet endeth before the last woe, when the seventh is found; and chap. 10. it is certified within him that swarcs, that the time of his reigning preponderant and uncontrolled shall be continued no longer than the seventh angel begins to sound: at which time the vials begin to be poured out on him. 3. It is clear by the long, chap. 11., for the founding of the seventh trumpet, wherein God is praised for avenging of the blood of his saints, and beginning to reign in Antichrist's overthrow is carried on by degrees under the seven vials, and God is praised for it at the beginning of
becometh then to certain though in one instant it be not perfected.

3. We conclude, that the sixth vial endeth at Anti-
Christ's casting in the pit, chap. 10. at the end: the
seven that the utter overthrow of all the enemies of the
church and the consumption of all things, yet so as
God doth several ways and at several times plagues his
enemies before this, but their final and full overthrow
goeth along with this.

For these prophesies, which we call explication
prophecies, they are also three: the first is in chap.
12. 13. 14. Describing Antichrist's rise, reign and
begur ruin: and by the party to whom he succeedeth
viz. the dragon, chap. 12. The second is, chap. 17.
18. and 19. holding out a particular explication of
his ruin especially by the fifth and sixth vials. The
third is, chap. 20. 21. and 22. relating unto the happy
estate of the church here and hereafter, especially
under the seventh vial, as at chap. 20. will be
cleared.

That these three must be for a time contemporary
unto, and for the manner, though in more obscure
things, comprehended under the principal prophecies,
or some part of them, which was the second thing
proposed concerning this series to be cleared may ap-
pear. If these principal prophecies be linked together
that the one of them immediately inferreth the
other, and yet to that all of them together do con-
tain a view of the churches affairs from the beginning
unto the end, then all these explicatory prophecies
must contemporaneously with some of the former, and
the matter contained in them must be of that same
nature with, and relate unto the former: but the
first is clear from the propositions formerly laid down

2. It will be clear by the considering the matter
of both. The same thing is in the 12. chap. that
we had chap. vi. and so the 13. chap. agree with
the trumpets, even as the 17. 18. &c. Answer unto
the vials: with this difference, the principal prop-
hecies shew the events more shortly and darkly;
the explicatory more fully and clearly. The
sheweth the events what is done; the second sheweth
the manner how, and the instruments by whom, an

circumstances relating unto them. 3. That the 12.
contemporately with the feals; the 13. and 14. with
the trumpets; the 17. and 18. &c. with the vials:
may thus be made out. 1. The ruin of Antichrist
chap. 17. 18. &c. is evidently and undeniably con-
temporary with the vials, chap. 19. which beginneth
and perfecteth that ruin 2. The rise of Antichrist and
his reign chap. xiii. doth immediately go before his
ruin, and so preceedeth the vials immediately; and
therefore must contemporately with the trumpets,
which do also immediately go before the vials 3. The
dragon's pursuing the church, chap. 12. is im-
mEDIATELY antecedent to the beast's rise, chap. 13.
and so must contemporately with the feals, that imme-
diately go before the trumpets, which contemporate
with the beast's rise, according to that certain rule,
qua conveniunt unius tertis, conventunt inter se, that
is if the feals belong to the time that goeth immediately
before the trumpets, and the perfecution of the
dragon chap. 12. belong to that same time also, then they must
belong to one and the self same time, and so in the
rest. Or thus to the same purchase, the feals contain
the churches infancy and first trials, and the 12. chap
undeniably doth the same; therefore they are con-
temporary together. The beast chap. 13. succeedeth
the dragon as the trumpets do the feals, which pro-
veth again that the chap 12. and the trumpets are
contemporary; so also must the vials which succeed
the trumpets be contemporaneous with that reviving
state of the church, chap. 14. which immediately depend-
deth upon the beast's height, chap 15. And this
sheweth to be native to the form of the types, the
Holy Ghost minding to set out things successive one
to another by one manner of expression in seven
types: and when he stoppeth, or digreseth to let
down what is further needful for preparation unto,
conflation against, amplification, or explication of
things contained in these he taketh him self to an-
other manner of expression after the trumpets, chap.
9. until the 16. and again when he returneth to
the series of this story to follow on where he left;
he taketh up his former way of setting forth events
by evens, as he doth in the 19 Chapter. And no other reason can be given why he interpreteth that manner of expression, and returneth to it again, but to help us to know what part of this prophecy to subjoin to another, and what part of it to take as an explication of something already said. This we judged necessary to premise in the entry, that we may the more clearly proceed according to the mould proposed; from which in general we may observe.

7. How various the case and state of Christ's church is here on earth, sometimes worse, but most ordinarily under the crose, there being two prophesies holding forth their suffering, but on their victory; God in his wisdom hath so mixed the conditions of his church here with prosperity and adversity, that the one is ever set over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him Eccles. vii.14.

Obf. 2. That the best condition of God's church and the worst part of the enemies condition, cometh laft. The church hath a foul morning, and a fair evening, the enemies have a fair morning blink, like Sodom, Gen. 20. but ere long wrath is poured out of vials upon them.

Obf. 3. That our Lord hath wisely ordered and circumstanced the case of his church unto the end of the world, whether in their afflicted or prosperous condition, whether from enemies without or within: our Lord knoweth them all and hath given us a little touch of them, and though we cannot know all the particulars, yet that he not only knoweth them, but hath ordered, measured, and timed all of them, with all their circumstances, and so far revealed to us, should be a ground enough of comfort, patience and submission to us.

Concerning learned Mather his Synchronism; or a particular consideration of the same.

LEARNED Mather in his accurate Calvis to this book, doth lay down several Synchronisms, which he divideth in two parts: And because the right contemplating of the several prophecies, doth much conduce to the understanding thereof, we shall before we proceed lay down his Synchronism in order as he hath them; and then shew wherein we agree with them, and wherein we differ from them, according to the former verse.

His first Synchronism, part 1. Doth contemplate these four, that is, maketh them to belong to one time, having the same beginning and close, viz. First; The woman her being in the wilderness, chap. 12. Secondly, The seven delivered beast after the healing of its wound, chap. 13. Thirdly The treading of the utter court of the Gentiles. And fourthly, The prophets prophesying in false cloths, chap. 11. All which are of the same space of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, chap. 12. 6. forty and two months, chap. 11. ver. 2, three days and a half, chap. 11. ver. 9, 11. And time, times, and half a time, chap. 12. ver. 14. This is a truth, and necessarily followeth upon the exposition of these places.

His second Synchronism, is of the two horned beast or false prophet, with the ten horned beast, or that which is called the image of the beast, chap. 13. To speak properly, these cannot be laid to be contemporaneous, because that supposeth them to relate to different things. We do therefore say, that that two horned beast or false prophet, and the ten horned beast, or image of the beast, do set forth the same object, viz. the former seven headed beast after the healing of its wound. And so upon the matter, it is but the same Synchronism with the former, all these types tending to set forth and describe the same Antichrist and his kingdom, although under many considerations, because no one type doth sufficiently describe him. This will be clear from the explication of the 13. and 17. chapters.

The third Synchronism is, of the great whore, mystical Babylon, chap. 17. ver. 1, and the seven headed, and ten horned beast that carieth her, ver. 3. Of this we give the same judgment as of the former, That these do describe the same Antichristian church considered diversely in respect of its head and body.
as the exposition of that chapter will clear: and therefore they are to be understood, not as expressing different events that fall together, but as describing the same one thing under different considerations.

The fourth Synochrifisms, is of the hundred forty and four thousand sealed virgins chap. 7. ver. 4. and chap. 14. ver. 1, 3, 4, with that Babylonish whore and beast formerly mentioned. This we acknowledge to be truth, and is made out, chapter 7. lecture 1.

His fifth is but an confectary, drawn from the former four; whereby they are all in their events found to be contemporary one with another, which according to the former qualifications is to be admitted.

The sixt doth contemplate the measuring of the inner court, chap. 11. ver. 1. with the dragons watching of the woman, and fighting with Michael, chap. 12. This we do not agree unto; because this measuring of the inner court or temple is contemporary with the leaving of the outer court, as will appear from the exposition thereof, chap. 11. But from the former grounds, the leaving out, and treading under foot the outer court doth succeed the woman bringing forth her child, chap. 12. and doth contemplate with the prophets prophesy in sackcloth, chap. 11. Therefore this measuring of the inner court, cannot be contemporary with the dragons watching of the woman, but must succeed the same. Neither will the ground given prove, that this measuring of the inner court doth proceed in time the treading of the outer court, nor the first ground, viz. that the building of the inner court of the temple, was in respect of order and situation, before the building of the outer court. Because first, That is both obscure and uncertain. Secondly, The scope of that measuring and allusion to the temple, chap. 11. is not to shew any successive five different estate of the church, but to describe her estate during the same time by distributing of her members in two sorts; even as the temple of old, after it was compleatly built, was divided unto two courts, the greatest whereof was common to the multitude, and the least and inner court peculiar to the priests, who were a few but in comparison of the other, as will be clear from the place, and there is no respect had to the order, of its building in respect of time or priority at all. The second ground is built upon this mistake, that the 11. chap. doth deduce the whole series of the prophecy from the beginning thereof to the end, as being the first new prophet of the opened book. chap. 10. supposed by him to be another from that mentioned, chap. 5. This will be clear to be a mistaken ground, chap. 10. and is contrary to what was formerly hinted in the division laid down.

The seventh Synochrifism, is of the seven vials, chap. 16. with the decaying state of the beast, and Babylon, which of itself is clear.

In the second part he doth add other seven Synochrifisms, the first whereof is of the seventh seal, in so far as it respecteth the first four trumpets, with the ten horned beast, and all these other prophesies mentioned to be contemporary with the first four Synochrifisms in the first part; so that they and the first six trumpets belong to the same time. This in the general, we acknowledged to be truth, yet in the application, we do exceedingly differ, although we do both grant the first trumpet doth succeed immediately to the sixth seal, and that the sixth trumpet doth close with the expiring of the 1260. days of the churches wilderness condition. Ye although we make no great question concerning the duration of that time, viz. that it doth signify so many years for days, or near thereby, yet do we differ in the fixing of the beginning and close thereof. For he doth not fix the beginning of these days until popery and the Antichristian kingdom be at an height, and doth cloath them with his full ruine, at least with the first six vials. We again, do begin the trumpets and these 1260 days immediately after the publick authorizing of the Christian religion in the world and cloath them at Antichrist his height, and the beginning of his ruine: Of which we have spoken, chap. 11. lect. 4. and it must be so considering the grounds formerly laid: for if the first trumpet con-
The third Synchronism, viz. of all the vials with the sixth trumpet, cannot be admitted, because it is inconsistent with the series formerly laid down, and would confound the distinction that is between the principal and explicationary prophesies. This is the main difference, and hath many others following upon it: we shall therefore endeavour beside what is already said, and may be subjoined, chap xi, lxi, and chap xv, to make out this that the vials do not contemporaneously with the sixth trumpet, and contemporaneously with it, as the seventh seal, or were comprehended under the same. Which we demonstrate thus. If the title, nature, effects, object and the time of the seven vials, and of the seventh trumpet be contemporaneous: for there can be no distinction gathered between them, if they be the same in all the former respects; and there can be no nearer identity than to be one in respect of the ruin of the churches enemies, and her freedom: but the former is true, ergo, &c. the title is one: the seventh trumpet is called a woe, and a great woe: the seven vials are called plagues of God, as if they were the former woe divided into so many great plagues. Secondly, Their nature is the same, may be read out of their names which doth express it. Thirdly, Their object is the same: the seventh trumpet bringeth destruction upon those that destroyed the earth, and particularly those who slew the prophets and servants of God, chap. xi, verse 18, which can be no other but the judgment on the beast and his kingdom, who persecuted the prophets, ver. 7 and is threatened for that cause chap. i, ver. 10, and chap. 17. The vials again are poured out on the same object, on the men that worship the beast upon his throne, great Babylon, &c. chap. 16. Fourthly, That they belong to the time must also be clear, because the seventh trumpet is the last woe, the seven plagues, which doth make them relate to one time. And if they were not wholly contemporaneous, they both could not be called the last: for if not 10, than the last woe, viz. the seventh trumpet, would be posterior the first five vials. And we conceive, that the first of these vials is comprehended under the title, last plagues, as well as the seventh; because it also filleth in within the compass of the last woe, viz. the seventh trumpet. And if these four considerations prove them not to be the same, we know not what will prove them: or for what end such coincident expressions are chosen by the spirit of God. Befides, these seven vials must be called the last plagues, either because they do contemporaneously with all the three last woes, which cannot be alleged: or with the last two
only, which only can be pleaded for by him, seeing at most they begin at the close of the second woe, as is alleged: or, it must be because they do contemporaneously with the seventh only, which is the thing we have laid; and so they are laid to be the last plagues upon the same account, that the seventh trumpet is called the last woe, viz. because both had woes, and plagues, and the same woes and plagues preceding them, and none succeeding and therefore as the sixth trumpet must go before the last woe, so must it go before the last plagues, and so none of these can contemporaneously with it, seeing they are called last, with respect to it, and as following upon the same.

To clear and confirm it further, we may consider their periods more particularly, and we will find that they arise and decline alike, and therefore that wholly they must be contemporary, first, that they expire together, viz. at the end of the world, is not questioned; and they could not both be called the last, if it were not so, this then will prove them in part to contemporaneously. Secondly, In reference to their rise, we say either the seventh trumpet doth contemporaneously with the seventh woe, or with all the seven, or with some of them, and not with all, but neither the first nor the last can be said: for 1. All the woes contain matter of one kind, as is already cleared: there fore there is no reason to divide them, as if one part of them, viz. the first, did belong to one woe, viz. the second woe or sixth trumpet, and others of them to another woe, viz. the seventh trumpet; there is no reason for this division especially considering the last woe is of the same nature as the seven woes, but the second woe, viz. the sixth trumpet is not of the same nature with the last, as the expostition thereof will clear, for which cause they are divided in distinct woes: the woes thereof being of one nature, cannot agree to woes that are so different in all their former respects. Secondly, That there is some observable march and bound betwixt the second and third woe, cannot be denied; for it is especially marked in all the three last woes, one woe is past, and another cometh, &c. and the expostition will make out: but if we will apply some vials to the second woe, and others to the third, there will be no such remarkable change to fix the difference betwixt these two woes; because all the vials are but degrees and decrees of plagues of the same kind, or rather of one plague, and that on the same object, viz. Antichrist, &c. but these three woes do express judgments of different kinds, and upon different objects. And it is observable, that the learned author, otherwise most acute in every thing, yet here is at some stand, whether to take in the first five or the sixth five vials within the sixth trumpet. And considering that the seven vials are put together in one form by the holy Ghost, even as the seals and trumpets were, What reason can there be given, why they should be divided, and the last made only to contemporaneously with the seventh trumpet, and others with the preceding trumpets, as if it were not one principal prophecy, as the rest are, more than to divide the trumpets and make the last only to contemporaneously with the seventh seal, and the rest with the other proceeding seals, seeing the spirit keepeth the same form in both? Further we argue thus, if the seventh vial and the seventh trumpet on. contemporaneously together, then the first six vials must contemporaneously with the preceding trumpet, viz. the sixth, but that cannot be said, because first, the vials carry judgments on the same object with the seventh trumpet, viz. on the beast, but the sixth trumpet doth contain a judgment of another nature, and on another object as is said; therefore the vials cannot belong to it. Secondly, The series and train of the vial, the woe that they together do contain one whole period of the state of the militant church, viz. Antichrist's declining and decaying state, even as the vials and trumpets did contain two former periods, viz. the churches sufferings under heathenish persecutions, and Antichrist's rise and height. The sixth therefore being a step or degree of a former period, cannot be contemporaneous with any of the vials, which are steps of a subsequent period, for two periods neither in whole, nor in part be contemporaneous one with another.
More particularly their rule must be at one and the same time; for the seventh trumpet cometh immediately on the back of the killing of the witnesses, and contemporaneously with the whole course of their liberty, as appeareth this, that then and not until then the kingdoms of the earth becometh the Lord's, then he taketh to himself his great power, and reigneth, then he rewardeth his servants the prophets, and destroyeth them that destroyed the earth, then the temple is opened in heaven, and the ark of his testament is seen, &c. as it is chap. 11. All which do suppose, that it was otherwise in all these respects, before the seventh trumpet did sound, seeing these are marked to be effects of the founding of it. Which demonstrateth that the founding thereof must be immediately on the back of Antichrist's height, and killing of the witnesses; and so must carry on his ruin, long before his destruction, which cometh by the fifth vial. It must therefore blow long before the seventh vial, yea it must contemporaneously with the first; they, viz. all the vials carry on Antichrist's ruin, from that same term, as is granted and will appear from, chap. 15. where the angel with the vials, even the first of them, came out of the temple thus opened by the seventh trumpet, upon the instant of the earthquake and shaking of Antichrist's kingdom at the expiring of the fifth trumpet, which is the very march thereof. For which see chap. 11. lec. 2.

Therefore none of these vials can preceed the seventh trumpet, seeing before it the temple supposed to begin. Secondly this last woe doth immediately succeed, the woe, and therefore must have its beginning with the first vial, because if six vials did preceed the blowing of the seventh trumpet, then a distinct woe would intervene between these two, viz. Antichrist's ruin, which is carried on by the first six vials which were absurd: for the fifth trumpet is not called a woe as bringing any judgment on Antichrist as the exposition will clear, as is granted by him. Thirdly, if it were so, that the first six vials did belong to the five trumpets, then would it viz. the fifth trumpet contain two woes, viz. the plague of Mahomet and the ruin of Antichrist; for both the
give a denomination of several woes, but the former is absurd. Fourthly If the seventh trumpet doth comprehend Antichrist's ruin, and the carrying on thereof to his destruction, then must contain the first six vials, because by the he is ruined, and brought to nought, and his judgment is begun immediately, on the back of his height and fall, and perfected by them. Therefore must here belong to the seventh trumpet, or the seventh trumpet do no way belong to the ruin of Antichrist, but it doth belong to his ruin, as was formerly hinted in the object thereof, and afterward will be clear, Ergo, &c. Fifthly if the sixth trumpet doth contain Antichrist's height, and the churches lowest sufferings, then can it not comprehend the first six vials, because by them Antichrist is ruined and brought to nought, and it is absurd to place Antichrist's height, and total fall under the same trumpet, or woe, seeing they do not fall under the same period. Neither will it consist with the nature of this prophecy, that one trumpet which containeth but a part of one period, should contain effects of so contrary and opposite natures, as Antichrist's greatest height, and his total and full ruin, but the former is true, the sixth trumpet containeth his height and triumph, Ergo, &c. Sixthly, The sixth trumpet doth leave the beast in some being while the seventh come, as the same author giveth Synchronism 1. of this second part; but the sixth vial doth wholly overturn Antichrist, and casteth him into the lake as will appear from chapters 16. 19. and is often inculcated by this author. Therefore the sixth trumpet and the first six vials can no way be contemporary. Sevently, This seventh trumpet doth containly relate with the palm bearing company, chap. vii. which palm bearing company doth immediately succeed to the sealed company preceding, so that where the sealed company clothe themselves, they begin and the vials do the same, for chap. 15. immediately upon the hundred forty thousand, their being compleat in getting the glory over Antichrist's name, which is all one with lying lamps in their hands, then immediately came.
angels forth with the vials, and not till then; therefore it will follow, that the vials must in whole contemporaneity with the seventh trumpet, the contemporaneity of the palm bearing company, according to the common rule quae conveniunt uni tertio conveniunt inter se; but the first is true from the former grounds is clear. Ergo, &c. Lastly, if we suppose 1260 days to signify so many years as he doth; and again; if we suppose that just so many years must intervene between the breaking of that heathenish persecution, and the blowing of the seventh trumpet, and also of the pouring out the first vial, then must the seventh trumpet, and beginning of the vials be contemporaneous, this cannot hold; but both the former are true, and are to be supposed, the first from his grounds, chap. 11. The second will appear thus, that so many years de facto, or in experience, have interveened from the churches deliverance from heathenish persecution, and her begun deliverance from Antichrist, before which no vial can be said to be poured forth: the other part viz. the blowing of the seventh trumpet upon the expiring of these 1260 days from that date, is to be made out, chap. 11. loc. 4. In sum it can be made out, that the sixth trumpet is past, and the seventh already hath founded, de facto, then the debate of contemporaneity of the seventh trumpet with the last vial only, will even, because that this is the thing driven at, that the seventh trumpet may hold forth an estate of absolute freedom to the church after Antichrist, his full ruin; but we suppose the former is made out, chap. 11. loc. 4. The grounds therefore that is laid to hold up this Synchronism, must also fail. If it be said that the seventh trumpet doth suppose an absolute freedom from Antichrist, because in it the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, the kingdoms of the earth are become his, &c. which cannot be verified during the first six vials while in part Antichrist reigneth; Therefore it must succeed them. Antwerp. First, This a mistake of the place, which is not to shew, what else the church shall be in at the founding of the seventh trumpet, but by way of anticipation to shew the effects following thereupon before they come. And serveth to explicate expected events thereof and make it observable, because of such a wonderful change, viz. that kingdoms and nations, even now Antichrists, are by its founding, to become the Lords. Which doth suppose Antichrist's to be strong, having many kingdoms and nations, and the church to be few and low when it doth found. Secondly, Although it expresses the events in their highest degree, yet it will not follow, that it was at its height instantly at the blowing thereof; but only this it was to fo cre it expir'd. Because it is usual in this prophecy to express the state of the church, during one period by the most eminent step thereof, as we will find, chap. 11. and 12. where the church is said to be in the wildernets during a whole period, because that decay came to a height during that time, although it was not at the first instant to low. Particularly, the whole state of the church, after heathenish persecution, is set forth, chap. vii. in two periods; the one, viz. that of the sealed number, is set forth at the lowest the other at its highest victory. Yet no question ere that palm bearing company came to height, after the sealing time, there was a fight and wrestling against Antichrist for his weakening. Hence we may reason, either the vials, which bring down Antichrist, must belong to the sealed, or to the palm bearing company; for there is no mids. But they cannot belong to the first, because in all periods, the last step is the highest step, as the last persecuting seal is the forest. The laft trumpet of Antichrist his reign, hath him highest, and the last vial hath his kingdom lowest. The vials therefore suppose Antichrist's height to be past, and the churches flourishing condition to be begun; can in respect of none of them contemporaneous with the sealed number, but with the palm bearing company, and so all of them must contemporaneous with the seventh trumpet; which was the thing to be demonstrated. His Synchronism is, of the serpent and dragon his binding, chap. 20. with the seventh trumpet. This being well understood, according to our former grounds, whereby the seventh trumpet and all the
vials, are made contemporary, is to be fixed as a truth: but being understood (as he doth understand it) by contemplating the seventh trumpet with the seventh vial only, and that interval which followeth the destruction of the beast by the fifth vial, is not to be admitted. And supposing that it bindeth Satan, during these thousand years, chap. 20. doth contemnate fully with the seventh trumpet, chap. 11. which is indeed a truth, and supposing that the seventh trumpet doth begin with the seven vials immediately on the fall of Antichrist his declining kingdom, which we formerly made out. It will necessarily follow, that the thousand years are to begin with the vials where the fifth trumpet cloeth Antichrist height: and as the seventh trumpet doth not presuppose Antichrist's full, but his begin ruin, as hath been shown. So it must be said that the thousand years binding of Satan, which is called the time of his binding, because during that period, he cometh to be bound, although at the entry thereof his restraint be not at its height: concerning which more is to be seen, chap. 20. sect. 4.

His first Synchronism is of the thousand years of Christ's reign with the seventh trumpet or interval following the beasts destruction. This reign of Christ's bearing the same with Satan's restraint; what judgement we have given of the former Synchronism, is also to be applied here.

The sixth Synchronism is, of the new Jerusalem, and the lamb's wife, with the seventh trumpet and interval foretold. This we cannot admit, because we conceive that new Jerusalem, is to set forth the glorified estate of the church triumphant, and so falleth not under the seventh trumpet, safe as that trumpet doth put an end time and enter the church, then made ready as a bride for the bridegroom within the palace of the king, and there to abide for ever. But of the grounds thereof, see more, chap. 21. sect. 1.

The seventh and last Synchronism is, of that palm bearing innumerable company, chap. vii, ver. 9. with the seventh trumpet, or interval aforesaid. This general we acknowledge to be a truth, the seventh trum-

Verse 1. A ND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, come and see.

2. And I saw and behold, a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

Followeth now the history of opening the seals, which is to be knit to verse 7. of chap. v. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. There is then a digression by a long from the matter, whereunto now he returneth as it were, thus: I saw when the Lamb had taken the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, he went on to open the seals, thereafter I saw and behold &c.

Every one of these seals hath a type, holding forth the matter contained in it, and some word or explanation added for the understanding of it.

The first four have one common type, viz. a horse because they relate to one common subject or object, viz. the church; and they have a voice, calling, come, and see: the fifth and sixth have no voice, because they speak so distinctly of themselves with difference from the former four in respect of their scope.

For conceiving the meaning of these seals, take notice, 1. That they are not to be looked upon as continuing a story of the church from the begin-
ning to the end of the world, as was said; yea it appeareth by the answer given to the faints in the fifth seal that there were martyrs to be crowned by suffering after that time before the end; and it being clear that these martyrs are not crowned by the fifth seal: which bringeth judgement upon persecutors. It must remain therefore, to be fulfilled under the trumpets, and consequently they must intervene between the fifth seal and the end.

1. Take notice, by them is set forth the state of the church, and that under persecution uninterrupted until the fifth seal be opened. For 1. There is one common sign or type in the first four seals, viz. an horie, which in the first seal represents the church as honourable and victorious by the spreading of the gospel. And therefore 2. By an horie, under the second, third, and fourth, must be understood the same thing represented, viz. the church, although different in her condition from the former, according as the same type is variedly set forth. 3. It appeareth by the fifth seal, that the churches sufferings are to be understood, where we have thefe four. 1. That the party suffering was the church, as appeareth by their prayer, Doth thou not avenge our blood? &c. 2. It appeareth that their suffering was for no private quarrel, by their description, verse 9. The souls of them that were slain, for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. 3. It appeareth that this suffering was from men, and that without the church, by their description who were instruments. Doth thou not avenge our blood, on them that dwell upon the earth? As looking to the multitude of the world, contradistinguishd from the church. 4. It appeareth, that his suffering was a long time uninterrupted, and so must be the first suffering of the church before God overthrew heathen persecutors. Their prayer, How long Lord wilt thou not judge and avenge our blood? &c. which importeth that unto this time God had not visibly reckoned with heathen persecutors, as he did when authority began to own Christianity. And so these five first seals, at least hold forth the suffering condition of the church during the time of her

hellenish emperors. And this period runneth to the first great change of God's outward dispensations to the church, viz. when civil authority and force began to befriend the church against her enemies, which will be found to be in Constantine's time, about the year 310 or there about. Yet would we not peremptorily assert, that none of these judgments affected the wicked world during that time. For 1. God sendeth the gospel unto the world. 2. Many profane men reject it. For which 3. God punisheth the ungrate world more than before the gospel came. Whereupon, 4. The rage and malice of men do break out against the gospel, and the professors of it, as the cause of all their evil, with procuration again new judgments from God. By which we may see what interwoven connexion there is amongst these things, viz. the churches sufferings and the worlds, which hath been long since observed by Tertullian and Cyprian in their apologetes, contra spectulam and De spectris. But we think, that there might be, and no question were, judgments on the world, for the detulping of the gospel, and particular plagues on persecutors; yet during that time, there was no such general reckoning with them, or are there such judgments which the seals primarily describe, which is all we would say.

For understanding these seals, or types in them, we would have respect to these three. 1. To the key or entries of the story before expressed from the fifth seal. 2. To the nature of the type itself being compared with the other Scripture. 3. To the events as they are recorded in story.

The first words of this chapter, hold forth the rite of the vision, viz. The Lamb's opening one of the seals, which is to be knit to verse 7. chap. iv. as is said. By opening one of the seals, is understood the first seal, as Matthew 28. verse 1. One of the four, or by one day of the week, is understood the first day of the week, as by comparing of the evangelists is clear, and here confirmed by designating the second, the third, &c. after this. And so also is clear, by that mentioning one beast, is understood the first, by
the same reasons. We shew before chap. v, that these books were long lerolls rolled about some thing, and the book being rolld, it might be divided by fundry seals, so that one part might be opend and read, while 't e rest were sealed, and so, when he had opened the first seal, impoteth, that such a part of the legall was made legible.

The first thing that occurreth is, The preparation by the first beast's inviting to come and fee. This is common to the first four sealls, though in some things there be difference. There are three parts in the preparation for this seal, the first is common, A voice laying come and fee. Which is not only for John's upstirring and warrant to behold that type but also for all readers and hearers, to put them to observe it, implying that there is some mystery in the thing, yet desirable in itself to be known, and to be desired by God's people.

The second is, That it is the first beast that uttereth this voice, chap. iv. he is like a lion, importing the vialiante courage and boldnes that faithful ministers had in their primitive times, when Christ first lent forth the gospel, and fitteth well with the type following the beasts being so marshall'd as they hold forth the qualifications that should be, and are requisite to be, in faithful ministers in the execution of the things prophesied of in these types.

The third is, That it is said to be like the noise, or voice of thunder, because of the power and force of that word, exhorting all to the beholding and welcoming of Christ in the gospel, as was in the first founding of the Christian church and spreading of the gospel, and the flourishing state thereof, when he furnished his apostles and ministers with such liberty and boldnes.

From all which these two special doctrines arise, 1. That the best of men need upstirring, for receiving the things of God, and considering his dispensions, where John himself, he hath need of upstirring, and consequently all God's people have need of upstirring on this side of time, else things may escape us, and not be observed; means are not useless, a

ministry is needful and useful, as long as there is a corrupt member in a church, or corruption in any member.

2. That our Lord Jesus in dispensing gifts to his church, and people here, hath suited and accomodated the qualifications of his ministers wisely to that which they have to do. Therefore he having the gospel to spread, he fitteth men like lions, as through the acts of the apostles is clear, and when he calleth men to suffer, he fitteth them like a calf, as the second beast is set out, with patience to endure persecution. Or take the doctrine thus, that the thriving of the gospel is accompanied with bold and valiant preachers: or, boldness and liberty in preaching, is a good sign that God mindeth the thriving of the gospel.

Verfa 2. We come now more near to the types. The first thing seen is, A white horse. Where consider, 1. The type, that is a horse and a ridder. 2. How he is described and set out in several circumstances; As First, From his colour, he is white. Secondly, In his ridder and his armour, He that sat on him had a bow. Thirdly, In his dignity, A crown was given unto him. Fourthly, His employment, which is expressed in the word added for explication, He went forth conquering and to conquer.

1. By a horse and a ridder, is understood in scripture among the prophets some dispensation of the Lord to his church, brought medially by the ministry of angels or men, or immediately by God himself, as is clear by comparing Zech. i. verse 8, with verse 10. verse 8. the prophet saith a man riding &c. and behind him were red horses speckled with white. Verse 10. Again expoundeth this to be the same whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. That is his dispensations of several kinds of whatever mean he pleaseth to bring them about, and they are either good and prosperous, or adverselie and afflicting dispensions, as the colours and other circumstances differeth them as in the forecited place.

His dispensations are compared to horses and riders on them, for these reasons, 1. To let us see his
fovereignty, that hath all these at his command to fend for good and ill, as great kings have their messengers for executing of their will. 2. To show their speediness, swiftness, and irresistibleness of whatsoever dispensation he sendeth, as the horse is speedy and valiant. 3. To show the dependence of all events on his dominion, and his immediate ordering and guiding of them as a rider doth a horse. And he letteth them not run at random, or by guile, as a horse without a rider or bridle, but hath them all well ordered whether good or bad.

2. A white horse signifyeth comfort, gladness, victory, triumph, and antiquity, both as interior and profane authors declare it, see chap. xvi. ver. 11, where Christ is in his triumph upon a white horse.

4. The riders armour and dignity, a bow and a crown, which signify the same thing: the bow shooteth and pierceth deeply, as is said, Psal. xlv. Thy, arrows are sharp in the hearts of the kings enemies. A crown again setteth out flatelins and victory, especially while it is laid, a crown was given him, which suppeth growing success.

4. This is declared by the word added for explanation. He went conquering, that is, carrying all before him. And to conquer, that is, continuing and going on to do it victorious. In the application of this, and of the following types, we shall look. 1. To them as prophetical, relating to particular events and times. 2. As holding forth some doctrines in general useful for all times.

1. By the type, is understood the flourishing estate of the church, and the spreading estate of the church by it after our Lord's ascension, as it were Christ in the ministry of his word, going out to conquer souls and prevailing. First, This exposition agree well with the type, being compared with p.s. xlv. 3, 4, 5, and Rev. xix. 11. &c. In which places Christ is represented, 1. As riding on horseback, and that upon a white horse. 2. As armed with arrows, and the two edged sword, which is his sword. 3. As crowned. 4. As having the same design of riding prosperously, for the subduing of the people under him.
measure, for a time kept from being overturned with errors and ichin. This horse and rider, though he began to conquer then, he hath not altogether given over yet, though for a time he may seem to hate: when the world is again restored from antichristian darknes, ye will find him thus mounted, chap. xix.

For general doctrines we may observe these, 1. That the preaching of the gospel more than any other dispensation cometh not by guerd amongst a people, but is sent and ordered as other dispensations are, and hath a particular commission. It is one of the horses he fendeth not: and hence it is sent to, and preached in one place and not in another. So, Acts xvi., the spirit puteth them to one place and suffereth them not to go to another place: there is not a sermon come without a commission. Ob. 2. That the thriving and success of the gospel, more than the coming of the gospel among a people goeth not by guerd. The gospel hath its end as well as its commission, a particular commission for such an effect, 1 Th. iv. 10: as the ruin cometh down, 2 Cor. ii. 14. Thanks be to God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ. 3. The gospel is most mighty to conquer and subdue, when Christ armeth it with a commission and doth concurr therewith, 2 Cor. x. 4. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ, and bringeth into captivity every thought, &c. 4. From this description of the horse and his rider, and his employment. Ob. That the great and main end of the gospel, where it cometh, is to conquer and subdue souls. That is the end of a ministry, to bring souls in subjection to Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. To pull down holds, hold strong holds, to cast down imaginations and every high thing, to lead every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and it hath its end, when Christ's arrows are made powerful to prepare hearts, Compare Eph. iv. 8, with psal. cxviii. 18. He ascended on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. This is the main thing, the gospel aimeth at; and as many of you as render to Jesus Christ, the gospel hath its force and effect in you. But where folk stand in rebellion, it hath not its proper fruit: and O how few are wrought upon kindly! How few are made subjects! How many are yet serving their lusts and pleasures, and yielding themselves to sin which they were born slaves to, sin and Satan, keeping still their old dominion in them, and they their old subordination to them! Ob. 5. The gospel enquires where more or less wherever it cometh, that being its end to conquer, when Christ is mounted, he is going to conquer, if it were to take one foot or one soul from Satan, when he lightens his candle, it is for some light great, and it will accomplish that for which he lighted it, Is. lv. 6. taking this conquest and flourishing estate of the gospel to relate to the first times thereof when it came into the world. Ob. That most frequently the gospel, at its first coming amongst people prevaileth most, and hath more sensible success and conquest, then at any other time. So as it when it came first to the world, its victories were swift and speedy: increasing more for a few years at that time, then afterwards in many generations. And so is it when the gospel after Antichrist's defection, reviveth again, chap. i. 11. In a few years it spreadeth through many kingdoms and nations, when there were but a few labourers comparatively. In Luther's days it conquered more than for a hundred years since. And as this holdeth in the general, when the gospel cometh to a land: so doth it proportionably hold with a congregation, yea with particular persons, who in experience are found often to take more sensible progress at the beginning than after ward, so also with the coming of a particular minister with the gospel to a certain place, often he is most sensible countenanced, or at least by a people more accepted than afterwards, it being often with the hearters of John baptist. John v. 35. who rejoiced in his light for a season.
ompanieth the gospel at its entry, there being generally amongst people some common effects of the Spirit, such as convictions, warming of affections with love to the meedage, and to the carriers of it, as was in John hearers; partly from the newness and uncouthness of the thing, partly from the love-lines and delibelines of what is contained in it, partly from the reasonableness and equity of what the work calleth to, partly from the exercises and wakenings of others touched about them, partly of some special efficacy and power usually accompanying the word at its entry, while the affections of both speakers and hearers are most warm. Which things being somewhat new to many, and not being acquainted formerly with the like, breed some stirring and motion amongst a people; which though it be but common, yet somewhat dispeth for the more ferious and single use making of the world, even as miracles, though not having gifts of themselves, yet thus contributed for making the gospel to be received at first among the people; And experience teacheth that when the gospel to speak to, becometh more habitual to folks, these motions are more rare, and the disposition to profit les.

Reason 2. When the gospel cometh amongst a people it readily findeth them in some grov temper of ignorance, profanit, or the like, and therefore when or where the general truths of the gospel are believed, there is a more ready way to convince, and threaten, and a great facility to take with convictions and to trouble at threatenings, when the natural confidence can neither lay against the truth itself, or the application of it to them. But again where the gospel hath been for a time, men are for put up with the name of Christiannit like Laodicca, or are satisfied with formallity for the removing of challenges for greater evils, or with presumptious in misapplying the promises, that is, so easily to alarm them with their hazard.

Reason 3. God's intention and purpose in sending of the gospel to a people or place, is to conquer; and his way of conquering, is to catch as it were whole draughts by his met at once, as we may see by the

...many thousands, Acts ii. 3, 4. that are gained by one preaching, and therefore as he never sends the gospel but where he hath force to gather, to speak to he keepeth the tide, and tendeth where, and at such time as he hath many together, having as it were, fitted and twisted them for that end. As we may see from Mat. ix. 37, 38. the fifliss are first ripened, then labourers are sent to the harveft. Every time is not harvest time, and therefore not ripening time, but when he hath ripened a kingdom, town or parish, then and not till then, ordinarily thrusts he out his labourers, who speedily cuts down the ripened grain; but as the harvest doth not always continue, to neither doth this ripening, for a ministers success is not always according to his pains, but according to the ripnes of the field he labours in, and therefore he may when the harvest is past, be at more pains in the gleaning of a ripened field than at first to gather whole sheaves.

Reason 4. Because then ordinarily people are in more capacity to profit by the gospel, at least in a incapacity than when without fruit they have lived for a time under it: For when it edifies them not through presumptious they grow more hard and cold, more secure and presumptuous in respect of themselves, more prejudiced in reference to the world and the carriers of it and can abide freedom les patiently than before, as we may see by the churches of Galatia, who first received Paul as an angel of God, chap. iv. 14. and so far he prevailed with them as to make them give up themselves in profession to Christ with much seeming zeal, ver. 15. yet afterward, these lame Galatians being Christians, took ver. 16. Paul's freedom, ver. 16. and were not so easily, even by him brought over a fault in Christianity, to be singly Christians as they were at first to be Christians. This being ordinary where the word cometh, and bettereth not folks condition the longer folks live under it, the greater will be their incapacity of getting good by it, Ha. iv.

Reason 5. Which upon this God's giving up a people judiciously, that they who have loved darkness
rather than light, though light came unto the world should be given up, as it is 1a. vi. To see and perceive, to hear and not to understand: which is to have means and not to profit by them, or as it is, 29. 10. To be cast unto a deep sleep, so as all visions become as a sealed book unto them. This cause hath divers steps in some less and in some more, according as they continue to thwart with the light of God and to imprison it in righteousness. Rom. 1. 18. hearers had need to advert what use they make of this gospel, many sad proofs of these truths are amongst them: young ones and beginners had need to be watchful if they thrive not at the entry by this word before the growth over their ears, it is a hundred to one as may be seen by experience if ever it do them good. Ministers at their entry to a place, and the people with whom they enter, had need to heed to be busy, every time of the year will not be harvest time to them.

7. From the order that the Lord keepeth when judgments and fad dispensations are coming, you may see though there be three sad, for one comfortable yet he beginneth with the comfortable offer of his grace. Hence observe, That in God's order the offer of grace cometh first he is content to do folks good, if they do not reject it, the white horse goeth before the red or any other. This is his way to sinners, 1. To offer peace before war; which is his practice to you, and so it is now the time of your visitation.

LECTURE III.

Verse 3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, come and see.

4. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given to him a great sword.
Matth. x. 34-35, and Luke xii. 51, &c. that he cried not to send peace but a sword, and to kindle a fire already almost begun, confirm it. And we cannot more warrantably expound these sad things that follow and accompany the gospel of particular event than of that which agreeth with his plain word by which word also we may be helped to understand what taking peace from the earth is viz. confusion and troubles that came on of the church after the manifestation of the gospel.

The meaning of this type as a prophecy, in short, is to perceive that that church which should at first shine by the spreading light of the gospel, and should be captivated unto Jesus Christ by his triumphing in his ordinances throughout the world, that church should suddenly fall upon by persecutors, and a bloody and a terrible like dispensation should immediately follow the conquest of the gospel, so that in no part of the world the professors thereof should have eternal peace; but being hated of all men, should be betrayed, killed, maltreated, and unjustly put to death, in so far that the former dispensations to the church should seem quite to be altered in their outward face, and the changed from her former whiteness to a bloody colour, in respect of her many sufferings.

The preparation here to this type, is the same as under the former, viz. a voice laying, come and see. Whereby all are again and again stirred up by all the ministers of Christ whatever be their qualifications, to consider the opened seals. Only it differeth in these two, 1. That is the second beast formerly described, chap iv. 7. 2. That though he speaketh the same thing, yet doth he it in a different manner as a calf or ox; differeth in their found from a lion. The reason why the second beast so qualified as a calf, is made use of to invite to come and see the events of this seal, is because the beast being most famous for patient enduring and hard labouring with such a suffuring condition of the church and so, as to be reveal'd by this type; and also because it representeth best the qualifications of a ministry fit for such a dispensation, and so al.
persecutions, even the most cruel, which is signified by killing one another. Yet in all the commision is particularly given by God: none can move it till he give power: yea all the weapons are furnished by him: which is a great proof of his sovereignty, and contributeth much to the comforting of God's people under such trials.

There is one objection against this exposition necessarily to be removed for clearing this and other passages of this prophecy: That is, by those, this commision is express to take peace from the earth; but through this prophecy the church is ordinarily understood by heaven, and that which is without, by the earth.

For, Answer, we say, 1. It is true by the earth, often is understood the uncontroverted world: ye it is not always, even in this prophecy, as is clear by these places, chap. iii. 10. The men on the earth which are to be tried, are members of the church: otherwise it had been no peculiar privilege to Philadelphia to have been exempted from it: so chap. vi. 1. chap. xii. 6. chap. xiv. 10. &c. Where the expedition of several places will make this clear, for as sometimes the church is distinguished from the world, and in that respect called heaven, and in that respect is called the earth: and that is especially, when in its trials or sufferings are spoken of, which reach only to that part which is on earth.

2. We answer, that by earth is understood the visible church here militant: which is so called, 1. Because it seemeth this prophecy relateth to that of Christ's, Matt. v. 34. And therefore is expressed almost in the same words. 2. By persecution of the church, peace may be said to be taken from the earth because by it, all the earth is put through other, it having to many troubles, divisions, treacheries, and tumults, &c. going along with it. 3. Because it pointed here at the outward and earthly peace which by persecution could only be taken from them, and that it reacheth not to marr their spiritual and eternal peace according to Christ's word, John, 16. Last verse: In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace. 4. The church may be called the earth here, because it is usual to the prophets, whose expressions John often followeth to set out the church and her troubles under that name, therefore do they account it said to all the earth which is said to her, et contra. See Isa. xxiv. 1. 4. 5. 6. &c. Where yet the church is understood, as appeareth from verse. 5. and therefore the former exposition doth agree well with this expression. We take it then for granted, that this exposition agreeth well with the scope, which is to shew the church's condition immediately after the gospel came into the world, and the sufferings, than that it agree well also with the description of the horie in his colour, commision, and weapons. We are therefore, 3. To consider how it doth agree unto the event, which in every thing we will find answerable. None that know any thing, but know how soon persecution especially killing with the sword followed after the gospel. The scripture mentioneth it of Stephen, Acts, vii. of James Acts, xii. the history of the acts, Acts, Paul's frequent reckoning of persecutions, and particularly by the sword Rom. viii. 35. &c. 1 Cor. i. 4. 2 Cor. iv. and chap. ii. 2 Tim. iii. 10. &c. and the former epistles to the churches of Asia, make it evident. This also is in general made out by the ten several persecutions which are for their cruelty and univerality, famous if we may speak, in all church history beside what particular murders were committed in several places at all times: so that the event answereth well both to the, and to them exposition of it.

More particularly, we think this part of the prophecy looketh especially unto the first two persecutions, viz. the first raised by Nero, which began near or about the year 66, of our Lord. The second with some interval under Domitian, whose persecution began, Anno 97. These were the first, who by public edicts stirred up the heathens and all the enemies of the Christians against them to kill, murder and torture their pleasure. By these persecutions suffered almost all the apostles, as the history of
the church cleareth and many other famous champions of Christ: and it came to that height, that Christians were all the day long as sheep for the slaughter, Rom viii. 36. and could have no certain dwelling place in the world, though it was not worthy of them. We apply it especially to these two first, persecutions: because 1. It agreeth best with the order of timeformerly laid down, because the nature of these persecutions, and the effects of them, which were in a bloody cruel and open manner driven on by these two beasts, one of whom Paul calleth the lion, 2 Tim. iv. 17. do not best with the type formerly expounded, though proportionably the following persecutions in their nature are described here as they were bloody: in which respect, we will find killing with the sword again to be mentioned, verse viii. under the fourth seal.

This being the exposition of this type, as it is prophetical, we shall lay down some general doctrines which may be drawn from what is said and further confirm it. 1. From renewing this exhortation, come and flee. Observe, That every passage revealed by God for the good of his church, should be taken notice of by them, second that it is the second beast which now made use of when the church is suffering. Observe that our Lord Jesus hath minimizers fitted for suffering as well as for action: he hath them who are like lions to spread the gospel: and therefore the first preachers or reformers in a land, are eminently furnished ordinarily with boldness and zeal, daringly to undertake such a difficult task. Again he hath them who are patient like calves when he calleth for suffering. Obf. 3. That fitness for patient suffering is a gift necessary and profitable for the edification of the church, and a qualification becoming a minister of the gospel no less than the former boldness, and hath work and use in the church, as well as the former hath; though it be not always shining yet is it not to be despised by any. Obf. 4. That our Lord Jesus Christ timed and tryeth his minister’s qualifications according to the task which he hath to do with them, whether it be for doing or suffering he hath them accordingly qualified. 1. He tendeth but, as it were lions, because then he is to triumph over difficulties: then come as it were, calves after them because their great work is not so much to gain new ground, as to maintain what the former have gained, and as it were, calves, to endure suffering: yes both forts are employed for one end, to preach one gospel for the edification of the church.

More particularly from that which is held forth in the type being compared with the former end, we may observe, that a flourishing gospel in the world, or in a land, is not long without a perceiving sword on the back of it: or ordinarily there is a certain connexion betwixt a conquering gospel, and fad trials upon the profectors thereof, Luke xii. 49. 50. 51. I came to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? &c. Scripture and experience do abundantly confirm this.

We may only ask, how it cometh, that perfection followeth so at the heels of the gospel; and what sort of connexion this may be? Anfw. We will find a threefold connexion between the three.

The first is meritorious, procured by the churches walking unworthy of the gospel: for, many despire and reject it: others walk unworthy of it: the most part sit down under a formal end, lukewarm profession; and so by not welcoming kindly the white horse, they do procure this red horse to be sent out upon them for punishing their hypocrisy. This is given for a cause of these first persecutions by some of the blessed martyrs, particularly by Cyprian, who laying out the causes of the persecution both name worldlies, emulations, divisions, &c. as sins amongst Christians justly provoking so to excite them, accounting that a chastisement as from God, which was perfection as from men. See Cyprian in his fourth epistle of his fourth book, which is the 8th. epistle, page 15. Edit. palmet. and frequently, see Euseb. lib. 3. cap. 1.

The second connexion is final, in respect of God’s purpose, who by these persecutions intendeth the bringing about of good ends, as to make his truth more manifest to discover the rottenness of some profes-
sors, to evidence the honesty of others. Many will rejoice for a time under the professions of the gospel, who, when perfection cometh like the seed sown in stony ground, Matth. xiii. 21, and by will stumble, therefore the Lord in his wisdom let eth a sword pierce through many of his most precious servants, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed which reason is given, Luke ii. 34, 35.

The third conviction may be called occasional, that is, when the light of the gospel with power cometh into the world where sin hath had the dominion and by men's corruptions begin to be restrained, and their liberty in sinning marred corruption and malice in men take occasion thereby to rage, as being the more provoked; and therefore leave them no mean unsavory to have that gospel out of the world, which disturbeth their sinful peace. This doth not properly flow from the gospel, but from the devils, malice, and men's corruptions, which are imbibed thereby and now rageeth to be disturbed in that dominion and profession, which for a long time hath professed; like a strong man keeping all in peace within his bonds, till this stronger come to cast him out. This maketh many who lived quietly before light came amongst them, to appear quite another thing.

More particularly, we will find these primitive persecutions to have been raised upon these occasions, which went along with the gospel.

1. The gospel drew men from the old heathenish way of leaving Idols, and by force of reason did evidence the nothingness of idolatory and vanity of that worship which was used by these emperors, and almost all the world. Upon this Satan took occasion to charge Christians with singularity, in taking up a religion of their own; and with pride, in counting themselves wiser than their predecessors; and to be incontestable, as untractable men who would not follow the rest of the world, nay not their own emperors, nor predecessors in the matter of their religion, but took them to a new way of their own: all which was exceedingly heightened by the devil, to make Christianity odious. This pretext is frequent.

2. The second was, the devil striving to make Christianity suspected unto the great men of the world, as incommenst with civil authority, and tending to the eclipsing and diminishing of temporal greatness, dominion and power of kings; which was confirmed by these things. 1. Ministers' freedom in reproving the faults of all, and their not sparing nor flattering of any, often occasioned the enmity of great men, who thought that derogation to their honour, and unbecoming inferiors; therefore to suppress that, often the most faithful men were persecuted, as we see in that instance of Herod, in John the baptist, Matth. xiv. 2. This suspicion was confirmed by the multiplying of Christians, and the mistake of the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if his kingdom had been incommenst with theirs: therefore fearing lest the multiplying of Christians should have tended to the setting up of Christ's power, and the overturning of theirs, they endeavoured to bear them down: this made Domitian in a special manner to search for, and to death all the natural kindred of our Lord Jesus, left any of them in the abounding of Christians should have pleaded right to his kingdom. 3. The many flanders that were vext against Christians, especially by Magicians, Idolatrous Priests, Jews Apostate Christians, and such like, who crying out on them as enemies to mankind, and guilty of the vilest sins, as adultery, incest, drunkeness, &c. at their meetings, and to to be the causes of all the plagues that came upon the world. Which calumnies are fully refuted by Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Cyprian in their apologises. Wherein these two things are asserted. That Christians were innocent of these scandals. That it was not the gospel, but the worlds rejection of the gospel that brought these judgments on. 4. That this occasion rose from Christians indigets, who would not flatter their emperors by worshipping of them, and calling them gods, as others did. 4. Nothing more was mistaken than churchmen in their exer Deing of discipline, and cen-
furing others without dependance on civil power, especially when they exceed in any particular, as the law of Euritius, ordaining that no acculation of a layman, or lack, against a pastor should be admitted. This is recorded to have provoked Trajan, to persectute all the Christians.

3. The failings and practices of some Christians and their unwarrantable carriage, made Christians odious in the world, especially these. 1. The many differences and divisions that were amongst themselves and the many feuds contrary to truth, and one to another, that sprung up with the gospel, and the great bitternesses wherewith these differences were followed. 2. Outbreakings of profaneness in any gross sin, made all others to be accounted; yea practices of the Saturnians, Nicolaitans, and other gross hereticks tho’ disclaimed by true Christians, yet were imputed to them. 3. Unfaithfulness in some few of them, in reference to their trust, provoked persecution against all. It is particularly recorded that Philip, who was the first Christian emperor, his killing of the emperor Gordianus, by which deed he came to the empire, did not only stir up Decius afterward to kill him but also to rife a most hard persecution against all Christians as become odious by that fact.

Ob. 6. The persecutions of the church of God are particularly ordered as well as the preaching of the gospel, and the thriving and flourishing of the church. The horse hath a rider, that hath his armour and a sword given to him, and is told what he shall do, he shall take peace from the earth, go so far and no farther, yea there is a more particular commissoning of this nor the former, to point out that there is a particular hand guiding the suffering of the church and people of God. See it in Job, how in all the commissions Satan geteth he is strictly bounded and limited. If the world rage at Christ and his followers, and persecute yet that horse is not without a rider, and a bridle and the sword he carryeth is limited, it cannot hurt a hair of the head of any but as it is commissitioned, Mat. x. The hairs of your head are all numbered. Persecution cometh not without a particular commissition, more than one

converted without the influence of his spirit, he that guideth the one, guideth the other, and our Lord Jesus reigneth now as before. 7. The restraint mentioned here, to take peace from the earth that no perfusion can mar spiritual and eternal peace, they reach but the outward condition, as to hurt the name, to plunder the goods, and to kill the body; but can reach no further, Job, xvi. 27. Christ’s peace is given, not as the world giveth it, uncertainly but surely; which would make us esteem the more of it. 8. An earthly condition or peace is never settled, any trouble may quickly disturb that. 9. The world is much in God’s reverence for their outward peace. At one word he can take peace from the earth, and turn order into confusion, and imbitter the spirits of most familiar friends and near relations one against another. Did he not prevent it, our life would be miserable. It is he that we should depend on and acknowledge, even in outward things for which he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hiddeth himself who can behold him? Job 34. 29.

LECTURE IV.

Verse 5. And when he had opened the third seal I heard the third beast say, come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black bore, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

These verses continue the history of the opening of the seals, or rather the prophecy revealed by them. The third seal holdeth forth a sad condition of the church, in some things agreeing with the former type, and preparation thereunto; but in many circumstances differing. As first the voice that cal-
leth come and see is the voice of the third beast, which chap. iv. and 7. had the face of a man; whereby is signifieth, 1. Prudence and rea
tion in the minis-
ters of the gospel as we said there. 2. It signifieth such a condition of the church to be typified by this type, as should have need of prudence, rea
dom and wisdom in the ministers of the gospel, even as the former two called respectively for boldness and patience as meet for them. 3. It holdeth forth that the church under this dispensation should be well fur
nished with ministers accordingly qualified, as suitable to such a dispensation.

2 The colour of this horse differeth from the former: this is black, the former was red. 3. The weapons of the rider differ. As also, 4. The word added for explanation, differeth as we will see more particularly in the opening of them.

2 That this type may be understood it will be necessary to insist a little both in the explanation and application of it. At the first view it seemeth to hold forth some terrible famine by all the circumstances of it, more particularly, this horse is said to be black; which in general holdeth forth a sad trait. Job. chap. XXX. 30. giveth it as one of the symptoms of his lamentable condition. And to Zech. iv. 2. the black horses do represent a sad dispensation coming. Most ordinarily it leteth forth the plague of famine which turneth the most beautiful colour to blackness as from Lam. iv. 8. and 5. is clear. 2. The pair of balances in the hand of the rider, import a trait wherein men should not have meat at their pleasure but weighted and measured out to them which ordinarily is used to let forth famine. Ezek. iv. 16. Lev. xxvi. 26. famine is threatened through these words ye shall eat your bread by weight, &c.

In sum this type importeth these three, 1. A great fear and restraint. 2. Not an utter want. 3. A sort of justice or equity in the measuring and manning of this want or accompanying this trait, wherein it differeth from the great confusion without any shew of justice, as was under the former. 3. This word of explication added, verse, vi. hath two things to be considered in it 1. Whence this voice came: it is said to be from the midst of the four beasts, that is, from God, or from the Lamb, as he is placed, chap. v. 4. to shew Christ's particular ordering of this most sad dispensation in the object and extent of it: and therefore he is to be considered not as the rider, but as he who giveth orders unto him. 2. The words uttered are to be considered: in which there are 1. A proclamation and 2. A limitation. The proclamation, is a measure of wheat for a penny; wheat and barley are the two grains commonly made use of for the entertaining of life. The word rendered measure is in the original "chobinix;" what the particular quantity of it is, needeth not to be enquired: this is commonly acknowledged, that it was the ordinary measure allowed to a working man for his meat in the day so as it came to be understood ordinarily for a day's meat according to the proverb, "non setentium est si merebatur" meaning, that none who had but a day's meat besides them, ought not carefully to sit down, but have need to provide more.

The price of this measure is a penny, which is likewise the ordinary wages of a workman for his service through the day, as appeareth from theparable Matth. 20. The sum cometh to this, that men by their labour and toil should hardly buy so much wheat, which was the best grain, or so much barley which was more coarse and to take the greater measure as was meet to entertain them. The limitation added is, see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine. Wine and oil are more for cheering and refreshing men, Pial. civ. 15. The scope is to shew according to the letter, that though there was much hardship to befall the church in things that necessarily pertain to their life: yet all should not be destroyed, but a reservation should be of the best things for their replenishment.

This type then holdeth forth a sad condition the church should be under and sad dispensation the should meet with, which though moderated in a more orderly way than the former, yet should exceedingly mar the beauty of the church, and bring her low, so that the who was before white and lively, and afterward red and wounded, should now, as it
were drawing near expiring, fainting and swooning as one who had shed much blood, turn black and pale, which in general holdeth forth a growing strait of the church drawing nearer unto death than the former.

That we may consider the meaning of this type, more particularly, we would lay down these conclusions touching it. 1. We conceive it doth not hold forth an abounding or reigning of justice in the world simply, for that is of itself no plague, but a great good, and it doth not agree with the scope, which doth let forth the trial of the church though we think it may point at a sort of seeming justice in the way, and persons of these who should be instrumental in these afflictions; in which respect this rider differeth from the former, as is said 2. Neither can it only literally be understood of bodily famine, but figuratively for the plague of famine, is no peculiar exercise of the church but is common to the rest of the world. Again, this famine here, is such a cross as maketh them in the fifth seal to cry for vengeance, on these who were instruments of it; which cannot agree to famine properly, which ordinarily floweth from God's immediate hand. Before that there is little in history to evidence the fulfilling of it in that sense, save what is mentioned by Tertullian and Cyprian to have been in Africa. Neither is it likely that any famine lieth been or could be, in the ordinary way that famines come, and wine and oil be spared, which yet necessary according to the letter must be. Add, that their is always some suitableness between the qualifications of the beast inviting to come and fee and the event foretold by the type; but there can be none between the third beast, and famine literally understood which yet may well confit, if it figuratively be considered. Conclusion. 1. The event foretold, must fall within the first period laid down, viz after the first perfecution, and before the vengeance executed upon heathen perfecuters; yea it must be as a being a middle sort of perfecution between the rise thereof under the seal, and its height under the seals following.

By this type then in sum we understand the church's sad condition after the first two persecutions; yet not so much as any particular sort of trial on her, whether from without only in respect of perfecution, or within only in respect of divisions, errors and heresies in herself, but a concurrence in both, and what accompannieth both, in a manner suitable to this type whereby the beauty of the church formerly glorious is now marred and more obscured and darkened, than it was by the preceding violence and rage of the former perfecuters. This exposition and application we will find to suit well with the type, in its colour; sign, word of explication, qualification of the beast, that inviteth to come and fee, and with the event drawn from the story.

1. It is ordinarily in the scripture, particularly in Ezek. xxiv. to set down sad judgments of any sort, under these four plagues, sword, famine, pestilence and beasts. And therefore we would not particularly affirm this type to one sort of plagues, but generally comprehended all these calamities which came upon the church, even as by sword, under the former seal, is not only understood one plague, but all perfecutions by whatever mean the church was brought low and made bloody. And considering that the following type cannot be literall understood, wherein also this plague of famine is included, considering also that the effect, viz. the churches sad condition, is rather in the event held forth to be black, than by any particular mean to be pitched upon, whereby that is brought about. We do incline to take it more largely, as comprehending the churches sad condition in general and all the means that are instrumental in bringing that about.

2. Famine also is figuratively spoken of in scripture as it holdeth forth a famine, not of bread but of the word, Amos viii. 11. and this famine more particularly and properly agreeth to the church.

3. Famine is sometimes mentioned as a particular affliction of the fain'ts, even as word and prifon are; so in Rom. viii. 35. 2 Cor. xi. 27 That is a famine and strait even of outward things occasioned by the
worlds imprisoned, banishing, forfeiting, and spoiling of God's people or their goods, as Heb. x. 34, and xi. 37, 38. This famine agreeth to the church in her persecuted state, and as the word was, so was this made use of by persecutors against her.

Now if it be asked, whether this famine, expressed by the type, be to be taken literally or figuratively as more generally comprehends all the troubles of the church, both in reference to her outward and inward condition, according to the three exceptions mentioned, is some sad condition, peculiar to the church. 2. Because it holdeth forth such a trouble as men are instrumenal in and therefore are liable to God's vengeance for it, as is clear by the fifth seal following. 3. More particularly, the considering every thing in the type will make this out.

1. It agreeth well with the type: for blackness of the church is spoken of in scripture both as an effect of outward persecution and, and inward carelesness and divination: from which two grounds the church Cant. i. 5. 6. doth derive her blackness. Upon the one side her mothers children were angry with her, and on the other she had not kept the vineyard that was committed to her: which two had brought on blackness, as sun-burning doth in these hot countries.

2. This will agree with the sign of a pair of balances: whereby open persecution is set forth to be done by seeming authority by sentences, proclamations and the like; men, as it were weighing the violence of their hands, Psal. lxxviii. 2. As if violence could be covered with pretext of justice, this also agreeth well to error, abusing the word which is the balance of the sanctuary for the covering of it.

It agreeth well to the voice of the third beast, whose qualification of prudence, learning, &c., will be tried and put to exercise by this fort of famine.

4. It speaketh such a famine as hath a reservation, so that though the beauty of the church may be marred by it, and many things corrupted, yet the main fundamental and soul refreshing truths which are the marrow of the gospel) called the finest of wheat,

money, wine and oil, Psal. lxxxi. 16. Isa. xxv. are a delight of all oppositions kept free for the refreshing of God's people, by which it differeth from the overflowing of heretics under the trumpets, where some persons are exempted but no truth kept free from the winds, chap. vii. but every green thing made to wither.

More particulary yet to make it out, we look upon it as applicable to the state of the church during the second century, after Domitian's death, which put a close to the second persecution, vizi. under Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, Antonius Philo, Commodus, Pertinax, Maximiinus, and Severus, which tooketh a five several perfections; the reasons why we apply it to this time are.

1. It suiteth well with the series formerly laid down: if the former seal hold forth the first two perfections under the first century, as is said, then this following seal must hold forth the state of the church immediately succeeding the former.

2. Because during this time, though the churches troubles continued: yet began they, after Domitian's death, to be of another nature and to be followed in a different manner from the former, and to look like this type as we shall see by considering the state of the church during that time. 1. After Domitian's bloody rage, the church had but a little breathing for a year, then followed a third persecution under Trajan, which continued under Hadrian and the first Antonius. All which time is accounted but one persecution by some because not interrupted. Some interval again there was under Commodus, though a more gross man than any of the former, then persecution again broke out under Antonius Philo, Maximiinus, and others so that the church condition is always suffering, even under those emperors who did not actively persecute: yet because they restrained it not, men took occasion to vent their malice against Christians. 2. These perfections were most especially followed against ministers, thereby increasing the famine of the words of the Holy Spirit was almost the first martyr under Trajan
during that time also suffered Ignatius, Onesimus, Polycarpus, and many faithful ministers: and that persecution of Maximinus was especially directed against ministers, as being in his esteem, the shortest and readiest way to root out Christianity from the world.

3. By publick edicts, all meetings of Christians for worship or hearing the word were discharged: so Trajan began not forbidding Christianity but condemning all meetings of Christians as contrary to the law: by which it came to pass that pastors were banished, publick assemblies defected and people left without the publick means. Barnabus volum. 2. page 5.

4. Confer in these persecutions the many banishments and great spoiling of goods, used during that time. It is marked in history, that then they endeavoured the undoing of Christians by banishments, not only to have them at a distance, but that by force and spoiling of all they had, they might be weakened and debilitated. At one time Trajan having tried who would own Christianity in his army, and finding ten thousand Christian soldiers, adhering to the faith of Christ, he banished them all, with many ministers into barren islands. Beside these were purposely martyred by flaying, as is recorded of one Ayacitus, one of Trajan's own chamber, plundering and confiscation of goods was rife, particularly under Severus, whereby none quitted on much poverty and great trials followed on the church, Barron. vol. 2. page 27. 44 &c. other writers make it clear.

5. Confer, beside all these outward trials, the church was distracted and overwhelmed with errors, heresies, and corruptions that had crept in, such as the Marchionits, Basillides, Carpocrates, Valentinians, Pricillianists, Montanists, Cataphrygians, Apollinarists, with thousands more, venting most grofs and vile errors and follies, whereby both the purity of doctrine was obscured, and even in all, a great declining from the primitive simplicity, under the pretext of reverence to martyrs, and following of traditions &c. All which is specially marked to

have begun about that time of Trajan's beginning to reign, Euseb. lib. 3. cap. 26. et lib. 4. cap. 11, more largely observed, Cent. Magd. in their preface to the second century.

6. Consider there were even failings in, and differences among good men and great lights in the church, so at what time she was free from outward persecution, it was spent in intestine divisions and debates, as is regretted by Euseb. lib. 3. cap. 1. Padias brought in Chiliasm, herewith Irenus, Justin Martyr, LaCantius, and many others were infected. Tertullian after great appearing for Christ, became a Montanist, and many great men began to cry up free will.

7. In worship much of their former simplicity was lost; the multiplying of holy days, inordinate reverencing of martyrs, at first honestly intended, were brought in, and many other things observed by the Cent. Magd. cent. 2.

8. Upon these following schisms in the church, when men drave their own devices, and did not acquiesce with the simplicity of the gospel, in God's righteous judgment they broke on thefe; particularly then broke up the long lasting schism between the east church and the west, concerning the keeping of Easter: the church in the west, for the most part driving to have it kept on the Sabbath, following its ordinary day, moved thereunto as they alleged by tradition, and that difference might be put between Jews and Christians in the observation of that day. The churches of the east again, preferring to be kept on its ordinary day, alleged John's example and the common rule. And though Irenus, and Polytarp, who was John's disciple, took much pains to prevent and remove these divisions, and for a time kept these churches in communion together, notwithstanding of that difference, yet afterward it broke out by indiscrete centuring and condemning of one another, to the contempt of all church authority, and rendering of the church contemptible before all others: which though rising from such a small ground, yet grew to that height, that these two churches were never heartily united after-
ward. Which consideration certainly shew the growth of famine in the church, and the fainting of her spiritual life being joined to persecution, while it is Amos viii. 9. her sun was going down at noon, and the famine of the word coming to that height which followed on the former, that the virgins were made to faint for thirst, ver 13. All which agree well with the type.

9. Add to these, the many reproaches and slandering calumnies, that upon these occasions were cast upon the church, hath both by heretics and heathens who changed all the evils, which any bearing the name of Christianness committed, upon the church as wimfes Cellius his bitter writings answered by Origen the vindication of Christians by Justin Martyr, Tertullian and others in their apologetics, who reject these flanders as belonging to the Gnostics, Saturnians and others of that stamps.

10. If we will consider several circumstances of the churches outward persecution, we will find it not unity refembled by this type, as especially in the actors and ways followed by them. The actors were not Commodus and Heliogobolus, profane wretches, the church had peace under them, but men for civil justice and excellency of parts, such as the world never had better, as Trajanus, whose title was princeps optimus, so that the salutation of the new emperors after him became this, I wish you may be as happy as Augustus, and as good as Trajan. Hadrianus had this encomium, the restorer of the city. The Antonius, the first was Titus pious, the other philosopher. Severus was a molt severely just man. Again their way of persecuting was not tumultuary, by raging violence joined with outward difflences and tyranny in their actions, as was in Nero and Domitian, but by making good laws to the commonwealth and enacting laws against Christians they pursued them in an illegal way as an act of justice, under pretexet that Christians opposition to the worship, of the gods or as being guilty of the many flanders imputed to them, in which respect it may be said, that the actors in comparion of the former, weighted their iniquity of their hands in a balance, Psal. lviii.

11. All these persecutors, though they be at their height very terrible, yet were they almost all, one way or other restrained. Which agreeth well with the limitation of the commission of the type. That persecution raised by Trajan, was laid by Plinius Secundus, proconsul of Bithynia, who thus wrote to Trajan, that he supposed it unmeet to kill, such multitudes of innocent men, whose law as he calleth it, leadeth them to such strictness, as to abstain from these things wherewith they were slandered; but they used to meet and sing psalms &c. as it may be at further length seen in the epistles themselves apud Euseb. and Cent. Magd. To which Trajan returned answer that Christians should not be thought to be punished, yea if they were prefented and accused, that sentence should pass upon them. Euseb. ibid. This answer is justly taxed by Tertullian in his apology as inconsistent with itself, that Christians as innocent should be fought for, and yet if prefected as guilty, should be punished, for faith he, if guilty, why should they not be fought for? If innocent why should they be punished? yet did this occasion much calumnies to Christians, especially in these parts, the persecution stirred by Hadrian, was laid by the apologists of Quadratus and Afrites presented unto him. Anton Pius was made to relent by that apology Justin Martyr, Anton. Philophostus, by an extraordinary providence was changed, and made to befriend Christians, which was thus in the Marcomanian wars, he and his army were brought to great straits, being overpowered with the enemy, and inclosed among mountains without water so that he and they were like to perish with thirst, a legion of Christian soldiers who then were in the army, did separate themselves from the rest, and before them all, falling down to prayer, the obtained from the Lord not only water, in abundance but a glorious victory over the enemy, the Lord causing it to rain such fire and thunder upon the enemy, as made them to give lacks. This legion upon this occasion was by him called legio fulminatrix. And this mi-
tacle prevailed to with the emperor, that presently he gave out an edict, most favourable to Christians ordaining that they should neither be fought for nor punished if prefent, seeing that his safety and the safety of the empire depended upon their prayers. And it is worth the marking, that so many persecutions together were restrained by God during this time, for it maketh it the more applicable unto the restraint infused in this seal, which can be found in persecution at no other time.

12. We may add, that in no age the church had more well qualified men nor at any time had more appearing for her against all sorts of enemies, as may be witnessed by the apologies of the forefaid Quadratus, Ariades, Apollophanes, Malchus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and sundry others, boldly and learnedly pleading the Christians cause against persecutors; and were presented to several emperors. There was also much dispute with heathens, as Origin contra celium; with Jews, as Justin dialog. cum Tryphone; and Tertullian adversus gentes et Judeos. So also against many heretics, as witness Irenus, and Polycarp, their pains and travel to keep a good understanding between the churches in the east, and in the west, not only by writing serious exhortations, to peace and forbearance one to another, and in reproving the vehemency of some, too fervently advancing their own judgment with hurt to the churches peace; but from their traveling from east to west to compose, their differences, whose labour for a time God blessed, till about Anno. 200, when Victor communicated the churches of the east, which had been condemned by marly. Vide apud Euseb. Cent Magn. Baron. in the history belonging to time.

By which we see, that as there was never more to do with well qualified ministers, so was the church well furnished with them; which doth well agree with the qualification of the third beast represented like a man in the type, as is said. By these, Christian religion was preserved from heathens without, and vindicated from heretics within, and substantial parts of the gospel were kept from hurt. The white horse was still conquering, and many were brought in to Christ to that the heathen Idolatrous temples were almost desolate, no man haunting them, nor buying their sacrifices, as the fame Plinius in the forecited place complemeth: and yet there was no place almost where Christianity was not: and though all other Monarchies had their bounds and war limited, yet this dominion of Christ's had none but spread over all: and therefore behooved to be the son of God's as Tertullian at length proves, Apol. cap. 37. &c. Yea, Christians did to increase, that as the same author affirmeth had they but withdrawn from their towns and countries they had left them almost desolate, and terrible to the indwellers that remained, and yet all this was without humane force and help but as it were, by the alone voice of him whose throne is amongst the four beasts. All which being considered, we suppose it will not be immoveable to the type, nor any straining of the scope thus to apply it so as it is to be especially speak out these four agreeing better to the event of this time than any other. As.

1. A decaying state of the church in some things worse than the former, whereby the becometh black.

2. A remarkable restraint upon the instruments and effects of this sad decay.

3. A sort of seeming justice in the authors and abettors of these evils.

4. We see a sober improving of parts and abilities by the ministers of the church, in a rational way opposing themselves to these evils. All which we have found in the event, and therefore conceive in not unlikeness to be resembled by this type, as differing both from the seal preceding and the others following.

And from it thus understood, we may observe: That the church is subject to more sorts or trials than one: and when one cometh, there is really a second that followeth before the outgate of that: and the last trial is ordinarily the last left, and bringeth the church lowest, Obi. 2. That men may be good, civil
and moral men in things belonging to the common wealth, and yet be exceeding great enemies to religion and the church. Or that the most excellent men in the world for parts, if they be not sanctified are, often the greatest enemies of the kingdom of Christ. The church had peace under Commodus and Heligabulus, but suffered Trajan, Secerus, Hadrian, and Antonius Plus, whose government was excellent to the common wealth, which made many at that time without force submit, themselves to the Roman's: yet in the matter of religion, and what concerned the church, there was none greater enemies to them which proceeded partly from the nature of fleshly wildness, Rom. viii. 7. is enmity to God partly because men of that temper had more settled principals of persecution within them, not acting by profane fury as others but from deluded zeal. This made them more eager, more constant, more vehement of profanity, use to do as, we see in Paul who in his blinded zeal furthered persecution on more than many others. 

3. Because the more wise and civil the one be with religion the more foolish doth religion appear to and more furnishing hath he to persecute with. 4. The perils of such men have more weight with others to provoke them to their practice and to abhor as a great ill, the thing they persecute; was nothing thought of to see Nero, and Domitian persecute Christians, but when Trajan Antonius, Plus and such like opposed Christanity, that made men abhor it while such men otherwise blameless cried out upon it; and this ground maketh the devil especially aim to engage such into persecution; and therefore in the first ten persecutions, we will find that the church suffered never more nor oftener than by such men.

5. A thriving state of the gospel, doth not usually long want errors and offences from within following it as well as persecution from without. The black horse followeth the white, almost as soon as the red; as Christ hath foretold, a sword should follow the gospel; so doth Paul of hereof, that they must be in the church, 1 Cor. i. 19. 1 Tim. iv. v. v. 1.

1. How soon in the apostles days crept in falle teach-
LECTURE IV.

Verse 6. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

3. And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name was death, and hell followed with him; and power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

We have already opened three seals; now followeth the fourth, which at the first appearing holdeth forth some terrible event more fatal than any of the former, as the particular description will clear.

It hath, as the former, these three. 1. A word calling, Come and see. A type representing some thing to come. 3. A word added for explication.

For the first, it is common with the rest, which the Lamb had opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth beast, say, come and see. This preface is the same fave that he is the fourth beast, which Chap. iv. 7. is like an eagle, whereby is holden forth the sharp sightedness, and learning, with a high heavenly high fleecing high, to speak, strain of spirit called for among the ministers of the gospel. This fourth beast is reserved for this type, because then such qualifications amongst ministers should be most necessary, and also should be by God bestowed upon them during this time, while death was so frequent in the church, and temporary contentions so blasted, therefore ministers were to fear on high themselves, and to call others upward with them, this fleecing and mounting being a special property of the eagle. Isa. lx. 31. Jer. lx. 16. Job. xxxix. 27 Prov. xxiii. 5.

2. For the type itself, the matter of it, is the same with the former, a horse and a rider, but in every other circumstance different. 1. His colour is pale, pointing forth another degree of the churches afflictition; she was before fainting and swooning, but no groweth near to death as the words afterward clear. 2. The rider is named with a terrible name, He that saith on him was death. Which holdeth forth, 1. A spreading of death to many, so it is expounded, a fourth part of the earth shall be killed. 2. That there should be many sorts of death, and many ways to put to men's lives, as sword, famine, pestilence, &c. 3. He geteth this name of death, to import the cruel kinds of death which Christians should be obnoxious to, under this horrid, and barbarous perfection, beyond what formerly they felt. The third thing peculiar to the rider, is his convoy, which is suitable to his name. And further exprest the terribleness of the event, and hell, or the grave followed with him. The meaning is, that death and mortality was frequent, that in every place there was graves, and that this dispensation brought men so frequently to death, that wherever it came there was need of graves to receive them. 1. We expound it rather of the grave, than of hell, in this place, not only because the same word in Hebrew and Greek doth signify both, but because it is ordinary to them, in expressing a deperateliflike condition to join death and the grave together, Job. xvii. 1. and 13. And 2. Because this death especially related unto the church, and therefore must be understood of the grave, rather than of hell.

The third thing is a word added for explication, to them was given power, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, pestilence and death, and with the beasts of the earth.

In which application these things are implied.

A commission this rider geteth, he is not absolute to go and do as he pleaseth, but it is said power was given unto them. Whereby God's sovereignty and active providence over the fadest dispensations of the church is holden forth. This power is said to be given to them, in the plural number, either because, 1. It looketh both to death and the grave. 2. Rather to this horse with the former two; seeing all these seem to be running together in this seal; and the
grave is rather to receive men dead, than to kill according to his commission.

2. The commission itself which they get, and the extent of it is, to kill a fourth part of the earth. To kill, horrid acts of cruelty and murder. A fourth part, this doth shew the extent and limitation of their commission, that it should be many, even a fourth part, yet not all, it is but a fourth part, being a definite for a indefinite number. It is fall to kill a fourth part of the earth, by which is not understood, the world as contradicting the church, that will not agree with the souls in the following seal, it being true that they that cry there who are killed here. But we understand here the militant church on earth, as formerly under the second seal, there being the same scope in both.

3. This explication holdeth forth the different weapons, as it were by which that great murder is to be executed, viz. sword, famine, which two were made use of in the second and third seals, death and the beasts of the earth. By death may be understood the pestilence called the mortality, because so many ordinarily die by it. And these four here do certainly allude to God's four great plagues, under which ordinarily is holden forth by the prophets God's singular judgment. For this end also beasts are added, which we conceive is not so much properly and literally understood as it is with allusion unto the expression of the prophets formerly mentioned, and point at these three here 1. At the greatness of this fruit, wherein such a deluge should at once fall upon the church, as if God's four plagues had been let loose together, there being but one under each of the former seals, viz. sword and famine, here the evils continue, and two more are added, viz. death and the beasts of the earth. Which doth certainly hold forth a greater degree of persecution than was before. 2. By beasts we may understand abhorred, unreasonablenes and beastly men, as 2 Thes. iii. 2. Such Paul fought with at Ephesus, 1 Cor. xv. 3. Of this sort was Nero, 2 Tim. iv. and of such the faithful martyr Polycarp complaineth in his epistles, apud Euseb. who thought long for the lions, and beasts unto which he was condemned to be casten, that he might be freed from these beasts, his keepers, which were worse than the former. 3. By beasts, we may understand that kind of death frequently used by persecutors, especially in the first persecution, their hungering of ravenous beasts, and then for a sport, calling Christians unto them. It being thus understood, it holdeth out this plague of beasts, as it doth particularly relate to the church, in which also men were instrumental, committing that murder by beasts under the seal, as famine under the former. However this is certain, that this pointeth at dreadful condition of the church, beyond the former, wherein persecution is at an height, malice laying no mean unsawed for undoing of the church, and wherein the saints are predestin to double their cries to God for vengeance, as in the following seal, and so it appeareth to be at, or immediately before, the heatheneth persecution. Before we make particular application, thereof, we may observe some things useful for understanding the rest of the seals.

As, 1. That this seal with the former two, doth signify sad things unto the church, for that they are all of one kind, appeareth by the gradation which is clear conspicuous in them. The red horse woundeth, the black horse fainteth, the pale, horse killeth. 2. Hence also it is said, power is given unto them together, as having one commission. And 3. Considering, that sword, famine, and death, are joined together under this seal, to signify a trait in the highest degree when they are separated; they must also be understood to point at things of the same kind, and therefore whatever is found, to be the nature and object of any of those contained in these three seals, must be understood of all, though in a different degree. Seeing then that some of them hold forth clearly the afflictions of the church, it must be so in the rest also. 2. It appeareth, that by these riders we are to understand the dispensation, or event itself, signified in these seals, more than any actor, who is either the supreme or inferior cause of it, here the rider is death, and consequently we may call the first, victory, the second, war or violence,
the third famine, by the same reason whereby this
is called death. 3. That one seal, doth not end, in re-
spect of the event contained in it, when another be-
ginneth. Here are both sword and famine, under
this seal, though death and beasts be added to it. 4. We
may gather, that these types are to be applied,
to special times, and do not only hold forth in ge-
eral the kinds of rods and judgments which were
to come upon the church: for the repitition of sword
and famine by this seal, faith, such judgments were
to continue during the time this seal relateth unto, as
had been exercising the church under the former
seals, otherwise the repetition was needless. 5. It
appeareth that these plagues were not literally, to be
understood, according to the letter of the word of ex-
plification, and therefore must be some way figurative-
ly taken else it cannot be told how expounded that of
hell following and beasts, if it be not told forth by
allusion to them, some sad dispensation to the church,
as hath been laid.

In application of this prophecy to a particular time
and event, there are two opinions even almost these
agree in this, that the first period of bloody perfe-
cution, which ends about Constantini’s time, about
the year three hundred and ten is typified by this pro-
phesy of the seals. Some make four stips of these
persecutions; the second seal, that is the first seal
that typifieth persecution, viz. the second; for the
first is of another kind comprehending the first
two persecutions of Nero, and Domitian; the third
seal to them comprehendeth the third persecution of
Trajan, with the fourth of Anton Phillp, the fifth
of Severus; the sixth, of Maximiinus. Under the fourth
seal, they take in the seventh persecution raised by Gal-
lus or Volusius and the ninth rather intended than
executed by Aurelius, who being to terrified by
thunder immediately after his transferring of the edict
that he instantly recouled it; these who reckon under
the fourth percuting seal which is the fifth in order
wherein the cry of the faints is expressed do com-
prehend that great and last percuting of Diocletian.
By this reckoning, this seal relateth the events, bet-
provoked and the church made contemptible; upon followed this horrid persecution, begun in the nineteenth year of Diocletian, about the three hundred year; this Diocletian, being engaged in many wars, choofed for a colleague to himself in the empire one Hercules Maximianus: and while their wars increased every one of them choose a helper to themselves who were called Caesar's yet had not the style of Augustus, as the emperors had, Diocletian choofe one, Maximinus chiefed Constantine governor of Britain, he was Constantine's father, and a good man. Thee emperors yet themselves together to root out Christianity out of all the provinces of the empire, joining together craft and violence for that end. Putting to the choice of the soldiers and officers to sacrifice with them to idols, or to quit their service. Making that fame offer to magistrates, with promises to both if the should obey. 3. By throwing down all churches. 4. In exhibiting meetings of Christians, and such like. And when these wrought not their end, they fell to open violence, giving out public edicts against Christians, stirring up all against them, and following their cruelty to holy with a profane emulation, who should go beyond others in persecuting, save Constantius who was still friendly to Christians, that almost all province of the empire was free; and the number of martyrs is by all, during that time, counted innumerable.

To make out the conformity of the event with this type, take this particular consideration, which will evidence the horridness of this persecution which is called turbus persecutionis 1. That it was universal through all the empire, and executed by so many prime persecutors, combining together in several parts for that end. 2. For that length of time it continued full ten years in this heat. 3. Particular instances of some places may give us to conjecture at the whole; in particular places often there would be at once: some whole cities refusing to sacrifice to idols, and calling themselves Christians, were burnt; whole legions of Christian soldiers, being in number fix thousand six hundred and fifty were put to death.

One legion is instanced, who after a most godly ordination to Maximianus by Mauritius, their commander, with him were killed, because they refused to act in persecuting Christians even after they twice were decimate for that cause though they willingly yielded to serve against all public enemies. 1 In some places, the blood of the slain, of itself made little brooks and coloured great rivers, as it is in Foxe, page 108. and Euseb. lib. 8, chap. 11, and 12, chap. 10, who affirmeth, he hath seen the actors of that persecution fo outworned, and their swords fo blunt with killing that they behoved to be relieved with fresh actors. In one month of that time, seventeen thousand are reckoned to be killed and by Made locum, out of famous writers that in Egypt alone which was but one little province of many belonging to the enemies there were one hundred forty and four thousand martyrs: which may give a hint of what great number the whole, put together might draw to. 4. The diversity of deaths used by these persecutors on the Christians, may be gathered, first from the many engines purposely made for that end, as iron grates to rost on brazen bulls, iron pikes, in barrels and such like, never heard of before. Secondly, the many ways used to kill them, drawing with horses, craving with trees, casting to wild beasts feeding to sea in boats without any provision, and thousands of this kind to be seen in Fox his tale of these tortures, and in Euseb. lib. 8, who affirmeth there was an emulation amongst wicked people who might invent the most torturing deaths unto Christians. 5. This cruelty may appear by this that none of whatsoever relation were spared, friends found place to divert their rage. It is reported of one Eustachius, who having returned victor over these enemies against whom he was sent, that on the day of his triumph and entry to the city, he and his family was put to death because he refused to sacrifice with the emperor, at his entry professing himself a Christian to the emperor, who out of honour to him had gone forth to meet him: 6. Add to these the greater mortality and deaths there be throughout the
the world in this Dioecesan time. It is recorded by Euseb. lib. 8. cap 10. that the men died faster than the living were able to bury them; by which it came to pass that dogs were accustomed to eat dead men's flesh that they became a terror to the living, for the dogs would eat them also, which made them in all places the killing of all dogs, as it is recorded by him. Consider that many excellent ministers stepped at this time to comfort God's people and to draw up their minds upward to a creature contemning and spiritual walk, as Arnobius, and Cyprian, who upon a very little occasion wrote his treatise de mortalitate, under the ninth persecution. From all which considerations, we may see an event answerable to the type, which may be well called death, with such a convoy of commission, and arms, as this rideth hither, yet was there even such a restraint as made the church have still a being in dispute of them, as will be more clear in the following seals, from which we may gather these observations.

1. That there many had trials past unto God's people; and yet more fatal before them; or that the fittest trials come often last like women's travelling the sharpest showers come last immediately before a delivery. There is no warrant for God's people to limit their own trials or to fit down upon beginnings. After trials have ordinarily some other circumstances and aggravations beyond the former, as we may see by the gradations of these seals. Trials are like pythick to God's people; therefore there is a necessity of new ingredients to purge away such kinds and corruptions as former petitions have not reached.

2. When trials begin on God's people, they ordinarily come to some great height ere there be a turn, 1 Sam. iii. 12. God hath ordinarily some more than ordinary caufe in bringing them which he will accomplish; and often men are not brought to his design by smaller rods, therefore is their yet seven times more and seven times more added unto the former, as it is, Lev. xix. 4. God will sometimes give persecuters great seeming advantage and will bring his church very low under them. We might be ashamed to fret or repine under our sufferings, which are not worth to be mentioned in comparison of these here. 5. Though death and the grave, &c. be terrible; yet God hath them ordered in all the circumstances of them, they are limited by him, and are not bound less in their commission. They are ordered by him and neither death, famine, nor pernicious walk at random. It is observed that the petition in Hebrew, is expressed by a word debtor, which signifieth speech or command, because however it walk in darkness as to men, yet walketh it not one step without God's word of command. This may be said of all other trial or deaths, which are precisely regulated by God. 6. We may gather, God's people cannot wrong them nor make God's designs concerning them. All these trials do but as Psa. xxv. 8. of the beast's teeth to which he was to be casten as a mill grind them that they might as good wheat be fitted for their Lord's table. 7. We may gather God's people's happiness, and the evidence of God's love to them do not consist in outward things, their lot is oftener suffering from one seal to another. Death the king of terrors Job xvi. 14. marcheth upon them whereas the world feigneth to be in covenant with him. These are old truths, that through many afflictions is the way to glory, and who so will live godly shall suffer perdition. God's people would make for trials seeing these words are yet unscraped out of the bible: and the history of these times do confirm it; for however there may be difference in the naming of instruments, timing of events, and other circumstances among writers; yet in the main they agree.

Lecture VI.

Verse 6. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.
IN the former three Feals we have heard many sad events prophesied of, to befall the church, every one sadder than the former, till at last death and the grave came as the yondermost step of temporal affliction, so that now men might be in doubt what had become of the many souls that had been murdered for Jesus Christ, and if it had not been better to have wanted the white horse and his rider, or not to have stuck so to the profession of the gospel, than to have suffered so many sad things for it.

The scope of the Feal is to remove that doubt, and to comfort against that temptation, that though persecution should come to the highest he can reach unto, that is to take away the life of the body, yet was not their happiness marred by that: they have souls, unto which persecution cannot reach which after death enjoy blessedness, and therefore their trouble is not to be cared for nor exchanged with the tranquility of worldly men, nor suffering to be shunned for fear of any hazard which accompanies it.

This is the scope, which is here made out in these four. 1. By shewing that the souls of believers have a life after the body is killed, and a comfortable being in the enjoying of God, I saw the souls, &c. 2. By shewing that their death is precious in God's sight, and that vengeance on their persecutors is as certain, as if their cry unto God day and night for that end, were ascending, and he particularly taking notice of it. 3. By shewing the wife ends for which God suspends his vengeance, which proceedeth not from his forgetting of them, but is ordered for the accomplishing of his own designs. 4. By holding forth God's present kindnesses unto the souls of these murdered persons, in clothing them with white robes, so that the fulfilling of God's vengeance upon their persecutors, is no let nor interruption to that present happiness, or comfortable enjoying of God. This is the sum of the words, which were more doctri

believers, and an encouragement against the former great frights as is said. We take up the matter in these two. 1. Something that John saw. 2. In that which John heard, which also hath two parts, First a lad cry. Secondly, A comfortable answer to it. This Feal, differeth from the former Feals in these three: 1. That it hath no type of horse nor rider, as all the former hath. 2. That it hath no voice crying, come and see. 3. That it relateth to no particular time, as the former do, but in its scope, is common to all these persecutions. As when he saith, I saw the souls of them that were slain, &c. it is not to be afflicted to the souls of men, slain at such and such a time, but is applicable to all slain for such a cause especially those under all the former persecutions, as the prayer, How long, &c. because the scope of this Feal, is not prophetically to point out new events and to relate to a particular time, but to lay down some grounds of comfort to God's people, as is said, concerning which these things are clear. 1. That this Feal looketh to the sad condition of the church when souls are so put to it, to cry as if they could not endure no longer. That it relateth to former sufferings, and that not for a short time, but for sufferings of some continuance. Their complaint is that their blood is spilt, implieth their sufferings to be past, and their cry, How long? implieth their continuance under suffering for a time. And therefore must relate to the sufferings mentioned under the former Feals, as is said. 2. That the matter contained here must be understood rather spiritually, as it pointeth at the scope, than literally as the words bear: for properly, souls can neither be seen, nor heard, and so also in other circumstances, but the spirit maketh use of such expressions for setting forth the reality and certainty of the things intended.

More particularly to come to the words, in what John saw, verse 9. These three are to be considered. 1. What he saw. The souls of them that were slain, viz. martyrs. 2. Where he saw them, viz. under the altar. 3. We have the properties whereby he differenceth these martyrs, and differenceth them from others.
they were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

1. By foul here, which elsewhere is called spirit. Acts vii. 59. Luke xxiii. 46. Eccle. xii. 7. is understood that immortal substance which God breathed into man's body when it was made, whereby man became a living soul, 1. Cor. xv. 45. The soul thus understood is contradistinguished from the body, as that which cannot be killed when the body is killed. Matt. x. 28. In this sense it is taken here, where there is a proof given of that which Christ saith thereof that place of Matthew cited. And though the soul be not the object of the eye, yet are they thus expressed as represented to John, to shew the reality of their existence and being, even when separated from the body.

2. The place where they are seen, it is laid he saw them under the altar. There was then no material temple, that of Jerusalem being destroyed. So neither by the altar can be understood any material altar. For in heaven where we must conceive there to be, where there is neither material altar nor temple, and to say that these souls were under any altar on earth (as some think) were to contradict the scope and overturn the consolation that is intended, and would involve many absurdities concerning the nature of the soul, its speaking and being under an altar, which were also literary to be understood, if that concerning the altar were. Both, then must be figuratively understood, to let one or all of these three.

1. The happiness of these souls, which not only have a being, exist in a special, safe and comfortable condition in a special nearness to God, as under his altar, which was so much delighted in and longed after, by the saints in their life. It is like alluding to those places, 1. Cor. 15: 31. 20: 8. 1 Tim. 3: 1. For as the tabernacle was a special sign of God's presence; so the altar was a special part of the furniture of the tabernacle, and it would seem that he looketh on the martyrs as to many sacrifices offered unto God, as Paul speaketh, Philip. ii. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 6, there to hold out a special respect that God putteth upon them, more especially this expression pointed out these souls to be in heaven. The most holy was a type of heaven, as is expounded Heb. 9: 10. And Heb. 9: 12, it is said when Christ entered into heaven, be entered into the most holy. The altar was before the most holy, and therefore we must conceive this must be understood of the glory of heaven, heaven being that where Christ is; and Christ's presence, Phil. i. 21. is the company that they, souls of martyrs are to enjoy; and therefore it must be where he is, which Christ on the cross, calleth, paradise unto the thief. 3. Most especially by the altar must be understood Christ Jesus, by whom we have access to God, of whom the tabernacle and all its furniture, was typical, and who is called our altar, Heb. 13: 10, by whom we and all our services, yea even the deaths of martyrs are sanctified and made acceptable unto God. This we conceive must be understood, because other scriptures hold forth him and nearness with him, to be the happiness of souls departed, and because it is that which made martyrs to despise suffering, that they might be with Christ, Phil. i. 21. and because it agreed best with their own prayers and desires under suffering, as in Stephen Acts vii. 59. All come to this, to shew that they enjoyed a most happy condition and communion with God but is set forth under explications belonging to the service of the tabernacle of the old testament, as many other things of this prophecy are.

The third thing to be considered is the description of these martyrs, which is especially drawn from the causes of their suffering, it being an old maxim, non est mortis, sed causae mortoris, quasi facti martyrum, which is laid down in two explications; the first is, for the word of God, that is the first character to be adhering to the faith of the gospel revealed in the word, and to be a conscientious wanderer of righteous paths according to that name, and not turning to suffer any thing rather than to depart from them; in this they are led, not as to follow their own humours, of to propagate their own inventions, or in any way to seek themselves but of respect unto God did his will revealed in his word. The second is,
For the testimony which they held. This looketh to the outward profession and confession of that truth, which in their heart they believed. Christ calleth it a confesing before men. And Rom. x. he distinguisheth a confession with the mouth, from believing with the heart. Which two being put together hold forth a well ordered conversation both in faith and practice. In faith that they believe right concerning Christ; in practice they were answerable to it, and held forth that word of life by a good example, as witnesses to others, and when called unto it, they did not shun the testifying of both upon any peril. In sum all come to this, by opening the fifth seal was represented to me the happy condition of the souls of the martyrs in heaven, who were accounted by God to have lost their lives, not for the calamities and slanders imputed to them by men, but for testifying unto this truth. This being clearly the meaning of the words, the contrary whereof, viz. the miserable condition after death of those who seem happy in the world, and are not happy in God, is joined with this in the parable of the rich glutton and Lazarus, Luke xvi. there is no ground here of approving of altars under the gospel or of sanctifying them by burying the relics of martyrs under them; which are amongst the superstitions of the Papists. It is a poor altar that is sanctified, and doth not sanctify its offering. Beside neither were there churches or altars in this time, neither could the martyrs who were so numerous be buried under them, but they were decently buried together in places called Cemeterias, as is plain from the history of these times.

From this verse, we may observe, 1. That though God's people be liable to many sufferings, yet their confessions being considered, do far exceed them all, that God's people are not to place their confutation on this side of time, it consisteth most in their comfortable being and enjoying of God after this. That in suffering times they would comfort themselves in the happy outgate of their sufferings, and look more to these things which are eternal, than to the things seen, which are but temporal. 4. It is a certain truth that souls have a life and being, when the body turneth unto dust, and that they exist, being separated from bodies. The soul at man's creation, was differentiated from the body, as not being made of that substance, but in a particular was created and infused by God, Gen. ii. At death the soul is constituted from the body, Matth. xii. 28. the one dieth, the other cannot. After death they are differentiated also, both in respect of the goodly and wicked; do abundantly clear. 5. The soul of believers, especially of sufferers, are in a most happy condition after death, viz. under the altar in paradise, Abraham's bosom, with Christ Jesus &c. God hath a special care of the souls of all his saints, they are precious to him, their reward is great in heaven, Matth. v. and sufferers with him, they do in a special manner reign with him, which being well considered, there would be no great cause to fear at suffering. From the description of martyrs, Observe, That it is not every suffering for every thing which will denominate one a martyr of Christ, it must be for the word of God, and for that testimony, or it is not to be accounted. It is recorded by Baron an. 19. of Diocletian, that in these primitive persecutions, especially that last, that many assumed to themselves out of pride, and had ascribed unto them by others the title unjustly wherefore it was appointed, that any Christians suffered, the cause of their suffering should be diligently observed, that these who were worthy might be enrolled, and that none other but such should be accounted so. This afterward turned to much superstition, and gave occasion to that pusillanimous cannonizing of saints which, afterward followed to the church at Rome; yet it had no honest intent in the authors thereof. As First, To keep the credit of martyrdom from that contempt which came upon it, when men that were scandalous in their conversation were so reputed. 2. To bound that carnal itching pride in many, who because of that honour to be counted martyrs, thrust themselves unwarrantably into suffering. This honour was especially denied to three sorts of sufferers. 1. To those who by
profaneness in their conversation, hereby: in their doctrine, schism in their practice, had walked unbecoming the gospel. Hence the Catholicks, to the Orthodox was called, when they were led to suffering with Marchionites, Novatians or others, such like, for sometimes persecution raged upon all that were Christians by name, did still disclaim all fellowship with these heretics in their errors as not accounting them witnesses to Christ in their sufferings. A second fort that were denied, were such as was without God's call, by their renegades occasioned their own sufferings such as those who being unasked, professed they were Christians and that they had the bible, but would not give it. A third fort refused, were such as had painted in their protestations formerly though afterward they should become sufferers. This was not done, as if they had accounted them not martyrs indeed, but that thereby they might prevent fainting when any should be called to a testimony. So Baron page 740 and 660 where he became down the decree of one Menephtia, a bishop in Africa, ordaining that occasioned their own sufferings to be enrolled, and giving this reason for it, "Quia non divino infinito duce, sed temeritate acto, id faciunt." 7. Observe, that the giving of a Testimony by outward confessing of the truth when called for is necessary, and commendable as well as founds of faith, yea it is oftentimes the outward testifying of the truth before men more than the faith of it before God that bringeth on suffering: and there was nothing more abhorred in the primitive Christians than diffigbling of a testimony to evite suffering, as apparent in Augustine's writings, and the writings of others to that purpose; wherein three sorts that creep in these times are sharply condemned. As first these who called themselves Nicodemites purposely from Nicodemus, who is laid to come to Christ by night; and not openly alleging, it to be enough to be inwardly found and to keep their heart, mind and intention clean though they did not evidence or express that founds to others; such thought they might be Christians, and yet let none other know it.

A second fort were the Priscillianists, who being most vile Heretics, particularly asserting the soul to be a part of God's substance did also maintain and practice this that they might little their opinions, and carry fo with these they conversed with, as if they were of one mind with them. A third fort were such as out of a milled zeal to discover the former, did counterfeit as if they had been maintainers of that error to make their heretics the more freely to communicate their tenets unto them: The primitive fathers utterly condemned all these, as inconsistent with Christian simpiicy, who required a testimony of the mouth as well as faith in the heart.

Observe 8. that every truth of the worst may be a ground of suffering warrantably: for the least thing that hath a truth in it as well as the more concerning fundamental truths are the word of God, and so not to be disfleaded with by his people.

9. Every truth in the word hath an outward testimony joined to it and sometimes may be called for upon very great hazard.

10. When it is called for, this testimony or confession to any truth before men is no less necessary and ought as peremptorily to be held and stuck to as the former; therefore it is called Rom. x. confession unto salvation and called for by a peremptory certification Mat. x. 32, 33.

Observe 11. That these who are found in the faith of the word, will be also exceeding tenacious of their testimony. In scripture and in primitive times, we will find the fains sticking at and hazarding themselves on things which appear of very small moment yet were to them of great concernment, because of the testimony which was involved in them which they would not let go. Such was Mordecai, Esther iii. Daniel vi, his not shutting of his windows. When this persecution of Diocleian began the persecuters fought but the bibles, the poor coats, money, or cups, wherewith they served to be given them, as some evidence of their ceding: but they refused to accept deliverance upon these terms: yea when the soldiers partly wearying to be so bloody, partly de-
desirous of seeming victory over Christians did profess themselves content to take any old paper or clout in place of the Bible, or poor coats: they refused to give any exvoto as it was called from the Greek ekkalloo or cast away clout: yet when soldiers would violently pluck such things from them against their wills, they would follow them professing their adherence unto the truth, and that they had not any way willingly delivered these things as is to be seen in Baronius An. 393. page 748. It is reported of one Marchus Arethius, who was put to torment under Julian because he would not build the idol temple, which he had formerly demolished; when they were content to accept some part of the expenses from him and to spare his life he refused to give, obolum Magd. cen. 4. page 797, and 833. Tertullian also de corona militis maketh mention of a Christian soldier who when others after their victory carried their crowns upon their heads for honour of their idols, he notwithstanding of all hazard, carried his in his hand, professing himself to be a Christian: By which and many other instances we may see how resolutely they held fast their testimonies from which especially they were called Martyrs, or Witnesses: and by which often, not only many weak ones were strengthened, but also many percutiend convinced, and made to cry out certainly great is the God of the Christians, while as they saw that no allurements from the one side, nor terror on the other could make them loose their grips, but still truth and Christ were borne witness unto and well spoken of by them. That is a good word which Polycarp had to the proconsul who took much pains to draw him to pity himself, and to deny Christ by his wearing by the life of good fortune of the emperor he refused saying, these four score and six years have I served him and he hath never once done me wrong how then can I deny him?

VERE 10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long O Lord, holy and true doth thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!

11. And white robes were given to every one of them, and it was laid unto them, that they should rest yet for little a season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

WE come now to the second thing in this seal, that is, what John heard, in these two 1. A serious fut. 2. A gracious yet a wife return. The fut is in those words, vere 10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long O Lord, dost thou not avenge our blood? &c.

Concerning this cry we would permit these generals, 1. WE are not to conceive that souls audibly speak to the ears of men, more than they are visible to their eyes seeing they want material organs; it is therefore to be understood with respect to the lope only, as we said in the former. 2. Neither have souls in glory any sense of sufferings, as if they were affected with them; It is no content with that happy estate wherein they are as absolutely free of all tribulation and anxiety, and will not admit of any such thing. 3. Nor do they carry any regentful thoughts to heaven to delire vengeance for particular wrongs done unto them; that agreeeth not to fants as fants on earth, much less in heaven where there is a perfect purity. 4. Neither are they conscious of the particular suffering of fants on earth Isaiah XLII. 16. yet may this cry of vengeance be applied to them in a threefold sense, 1. As it expresseth their respect to their head Christ, whose final victory they in a holy way long for desiring to have all his enemies under his feet, as will be at the last day which is the day of their full redemption 2. As
it proceedeth from their sympathy with the rest of
the members of Christ's body: in which respect
they may be said to long for the perfecting of the
bride and the vindicating of her in general from all
her sufferings. 3. It may be understood of the
guilt that sticketh to their persecutors from their
innocent suffering which in some sense pleased for
vindication from God on the persecutors even after
their death, as it is said of Abels blood Gen. iv. that
it cried to God against Cain; to which it is like
this doth allude: so that crying for vengeance, signi-
fieth the much that the innocent sufferers are not
forgotten by God, but are as effectual to procure
vindication from him who is holy and true as if
they were daily crying for it.

More particularly, this prayer hath three parts. 1.
The petition itself, viz: vengeance. 2. The object against
whom they pray. 3. The arguments whereby this
petition is enforced.

The petition is in these words, laid down by way
of complaint, doth thou not avenge our blood? In-
cluding in it a desire that our blood might be avenged
in the sense formerly laid down. We take it mainly
to respect God's final sentencing of the persecutors at
the last day of judgement. 1. Because many of these
whole guilt made them liable to this vengeance during
the former persecutions, were already dead and so
were without the reach of temporal judgements. 2.
Because it is such a vengeance, which is fought, that
puteth an end to persecution, as the reason of sus-
pending this vengeance, which is given in the an-
swer, cleareth, viz. that their brethren and fellow-
ervants they were yet to be killed, and therefore
their being hooved to be a suspending to satisfy that
judgement; and the ends mentioned, viz. Christ's
final victory, and the saints, absolute freedom, do im-
port no less; yet may it have its partial fulfilling by
temporal judgements at particular times upon par-
cular persons, as might contribute in part to the vin-
dicating of truth and the former ends, such as God's
judgements upon persecutors under the following
zeal may be laid to be, always referring the full deci-

Notion at the great day, wherein this petition shall be fully satisfied.

2. The object of this petition, the men that dwell
on the earth not as if all that dwell on the earth,
not is if all that were upon the earth were included
under this imprecation, their many godly, then living
in the world, but they are so described. 1. Because
often and particularly in these times, the generality
of the men of the world are, persecutors, and by
acting conniving, approving delighting, or such like
ways, do make themselves guilty one way or another
of the blood of saints. 2. They are so stiled, to shew
what sort of men they mean, viz. wicked men or
great men, who aimed no further than this earth and
to have a portion in this world, and are contradistin-
guished from the godly, who though they so journey
on the earth, yet do not dwell, nor have their con-
versation there, but in heaven. In which respect
John 17. 16. they are not laid to be of the world, as
the former, Psa. 17. 14. are described by this, that
they are men of the world, which have their portion
in this life, &c.

3. The motives, whereby petitions is preat express-
ly, are in these words, How long, O Lord holy and
true? which we may take up these three, two of
them being from two essential attributes of God,
made use of here as most strengthening and encour-
ging to their faith in this petition. The first is from
God's holiness; O Lord holy, &c. Lord say thou thy
art holiness in thee, and cannot but approve of holiness
in others, and disapprove wickedness where it is,
seeing thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity
Psa. 11. 7. Can it be then that innocence and right-

eousness shall suffer? And their violence and oppre-
ッション go unpunished? There is reason from thy
holiness to expect the contrary, and therefore we may
pray for it. The second motive is drawn from God's
faithfulness, and truth. This respecteth God as he hath
engaged himself in his word, as if they said, Thou
haft promised to own them that own thee as we have
done, and thou hast threatened judgment against them
that wrong thee or thine, as these persecutors have

5 M
done, and thou art true in performing and executing whatever thou hast promised or threatened, therefore thou must avenge our blood upon them. Each of these grounds dost strongly by itself plead in this case, there being in them a twofold obligation, if we may say, on God in reference to this end. His holiness sways him to maintain his people's innocency, and to reprove their enemies' malice; this truth also engageth him to make out his promises to his people and his threatenings to his enemies. But when these two go together, God's holiness and God's truth, in such a case there is inexplicable comfort to be drawn from them. There need no other middle to plead God, but what is in God himself. His own attributes considered in themselves, and as flowing unto us, and accessible to us by his truth, as he hath revealed them in his promise and covenant, do furnish all manner of consolation. And these two ought never to be separated, in our pleading with God. 1. What he is in himself. 2. What he hath graciously engaged himself to be in his word. The first is the fountain or ocean wherein is needful to us, broodeth and abounds. The second is, the streams, whereby what is in him, as the fountain is communicated to us. The first giveth us ground to conceive largely of the fulness that is in him. The second, viz. his truth, giveth us access to approach unto him for partaking of it, seeing without this, God considered in himself, would be terrible unto us, as we are now in our sinful condition. And this is the reason why these two attributes are considered together in this place. The third motive is these words, How long Lord, &c. which is not to express any complaint on God, or any unbelief in them, the title they give to God do clear both these, but the words considered with these titles, do enforce the suit thus. Our sufferings have not been for a short time, but we have layen long under them, and they are now come to an height that almost we can bear no more. Therefore is thy holiness and faithfulness the more concerned to avenge us, and not permit us to suffer, and the enemy to triumph alway. So that as these words,

do imply, the continuance and height of a sad condition, they do also plead pity, and a favourable return exceedingly from God, who doth sympathize in his people's grief, therefore is the word How long, used by the faints, when they are as it were at an extremity here on earth.

The other thing that John heard, viz. the return of this suit, followeth verse 11. fully consolatory having these two things in it, serving to that scope, 1. Something is done unto them. First, Before anything be said unto them, for God dealeth not by bare words with a praying people who are in grief. White robes were given unto every one of them. The thing given is, White robes, which, chap. iii.

4. they shall walk with me in White is clear to be understood of heavenly glory, souls being capable of no other raiment. It is said to be given them not as if they had been at any time without it, all things here not being literally understood in the time more than in the thing that is given, but to shew that God's delaying of vengeance upon persecutors doth not prejudice the present happiness of martyr's souls but that this delay is abundantly compenated by God who freely giveth them heavenly glory, so that the other is no ground of complaint to them. This is the scope, as appeareth by what is said, that they shall rest for a little season, &c. as if grace should give them the bud or bire of glory to satisfy them in the mean time. It is said, robes were given to every one of them not as if all martyrs had an effectual share of glory though every one getteth a robe, yet there may be difference in robes but it is to shew, 1. That none is misled whether their parts or place be great or small. high or low. Christ taketh notice of every one that suffereth, and rewardeth them. 2. It is to shew that whatever be the measure that every one getteth, yet all get what is fitting to them or becoming them. Glory is shapen out to them, as cloaths are to men; so that in heaven every one getteth their own coat, as it were and the cloaths that are made for them, according to their stature in Christ, and each one may see their own measure, becometh them better than
the measure of one taller than they. In sum, it is
all are contentedly happy and none grumble at God's
disposing what is his own; although heavenly
are the things principally intended here, as the
thing was the thing petitioned for in the
former words, yet as in them we include temporal
judgments in some respect, so here we may take in
under white robes, God's owning and vindicating of
the martyrs that were dead, and servants that were
living, from the many vile slanderers and calumni
imputed to them, by which formerly they were
made black, as is hinted at in the third seal. In
which respect now they may be said to be made
white, because their innocence was manifested, and
their zeal put upon them even before men: which
event was fulfilled in the days of Constantine immedi
ately thereafter, and often he hath given particular
goods of them, by vindicating in an extraordinary
manner some of his eminent servants, who were not
only overwhelmed with the reproaches of adenities,
murders, witchcraft, &c. But by malice firing up
false accusers, witnesses and judges, were condemned
judicially, or in hazard to be to, of such crimes,
especially by the Arian's means, until God by terror
on the confessions of accusers and witnesses, or
other extraordinary ways, brought truth to light; to
the greater credit of his servants, as in the case of
Basilicius bishop of Nicomedia, and Athanasius
bishop of Alexandria, with divers others wonderfully
vindicated by God in their afflictions before men
is clear.

The other part of the consolation is contained in
that which was laid unto them, comprehending four
arguments of comfort to quiet them under the delay
of God's final judgment on the persecutors, beside
what is already laid. It is laid unto them, that they
should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow
servants also, and their brethren that should be killed
as they were, should be fulfilled.

The first and principal reason of the delay, may
be thus conceived, God's time of final judgment is
not come. He hath more sufferers to perfect, a cer
tain number are enrolled for suffering as well as for
heaven many of which, especially those who are to
suffer under Antichrist have not yet obtained their
crown, though those who cried had obtained theirs.
And therefore in respect of God's purpose and decrees,
there is a necessity, that those of theirs should be
fulfilled. This is the force of the reason, which
goeth upon these grounds, as is hinted, 1. That there
is a determinate roll of sufferers particularly con
firmed on by God. 2. That suffering hath a special
dignity and honour unto sufferers. It is a gift bestow
ed by God on some, and not on all, yea upon
some of the Lord whom he hath loved, and not to
all. Phil. i. 29. 3. That God's purpose and decrees
must stand, nothing can alter that, known unto him
are all his works from the beginning, and in times
he hath no new counsel to take concerning any
of these things. There must that appointment concerning
the number of sufferers and manner and circum
stances of their suffering, be fulfilled. 4. That
all God's decrees even those that seem hardest to
bear as this of suffering doth, are and graciously
levied at his own glory and the good of his people
and therefore ought and must be quietly and com
tentedly submitted unto by them.

The particular motives which the Lord addeth
to satisfy them to be quiet, though his sovereignty
were enough, are these four, as is said, 1. That
for the time their rest was not fulfilled until, the
fulfilling of his purpose, but that good ground was
given to them of acquiescing in the happiness be
flowed on them: They shall rest, &c. 2. The time
of that fulfiling was not long, but for a season.
Therefore it might be the better born. All the
time of suffering, though seeming long to sufferers,
yet being compared with eternity, is but short and
for a moment. 3. That whiles fulfillment is not in
vain, but for good ends. Even then God is pro
mowing his design of perfecting his saints, and mak
ing ready for that final judgment upon his adver
saries, and their cup is filling up for that end.

A fourth argument is, from the persons who are
thus to be dignified with suffering. They are
brethren and fellow servants, sons of that father,
employed in the service of that same master with them, and therefore they, out respect to them, might quietly wait for the fulfilling of God's purpose of crowning them, and making them partake of the dignity, with themselves.

These reasons are express'd not so much for the comforting of saints in heaven, as for the clearing and encouraging of saints on earth against the continuance of sufferings, they might patiently under them, wait for God's final vindicating of them, and judging of their enemies.

From this seal we may gather, 1. That there hath been much suffering of God's people before this time; and therefore the former seals which implied sufferings must be understood of the churches sufferings, this cry, How long, &c. being brought in here as the result of those. 2. That these sufferings were such as proceeded from men, sinfully acting therein, by which they became liable to God's vengeance, and were not to be understood of famine, pestilence, &c. Or such judgments as do immediately flow from God's hand. These could not have procured a cry of vengeance against the men of the earth as in this seal, if they had not been actors in these evils. We may gather that the churches condition hath been generally suffering before that time and that there hath not been any solemn and universal judgment on persecutors before this, this cry, How long, O Lord, &c. implyeth so much. And therefore this seal as it expresseth suffering, must relate unto the time of the church before Constantine. At which time God gave a visible testimony of his owning of the church, and of his indignation against persecutors, as we will see in the following seal. 4. It expresseth the churches extremity, and that immediately going before her change from outward persecution to external peace, the vehemency of the cry, the comfortableness of the answer compared with the matter contained in the following seal, do confirm this, as if this were the very crisis and turn of the condition. That the following seal is not to be looked upon as a description of the day of judgment, seeing that day which is by that seal, for a time suspended, doth not immediately succeed to heathenish perfection; but the reason given here of the suspension of that day, viz. that all their enrolled number of martyrs must be fulfilled, which in a great part is to be accomplished in the time of Antichrist's tyranny, will confirm this there being no impossibility of including that perfection of Antichrist before the terrible events mentioned in the following seal.

In the opening of the words we have hinted at several doctrines, which now we shall not reume but shall shortly point at these observations further.

1. That there is no sin that more effectually pleads for vengeance from God, or more certainly and severely shall be punished by him, than the sin of persecuting and wronging of the saints. Wrongs done to any innocent men in the world have their cry before God, and God, is the avenger of thee; but wrongs done to his saints, cry louder than the wrongs of any even though kings. God cannot as it were but hear and avenge, as is clear from the parable, Luke xxxviii. 7. And from experience this hath been found that persecutors even often in this life have been remarkably plagued of God, as Cain, Pharaoh, Babylon, Antiochus, Herod the great who was horribly plagued of God before his death: Pontius Pilate, who was degraded and banished; Herod the tetrarch, miferably perished Acts xvi. Nero, Domitian and many others brought death upon themselves, as is clear from scripture, history of Josephus, ecclesiastical story, especially Cent. Magd. De penis persecutorum. It is true, God's way in this is sovereign and unsearchable in respect of the manner and time of this reckoning, sometimes he will suffer great persecutors to die in worldly credit and peace as Nebuchadnezzar did, and in latter times the duke of Alva the great persecutor in low countries; sometimes he will pardon the persecutor as he did Manasseh; yet ordinarily doth he manifest his displeasure, even before the world, by temporal plagues of infamy, and judgments upon them or others as may make the world know that he abhoreth that sin; such was
Go'd's thrilling Nebuchadnezzar for a time to th' heads of the field: such was God's plaguing of Manasseh for his blood in his own imprisonment, and in denuding of his children of the kingdom. This proceedeth partly from the greatness of the sin of persecution partly from the nature of it: God is more eminently and singularly engaged against it here in some manner persecuted in his people, so that we may say that the blood of martyrs foundeth alway with that word before God, with Zechariah the son of Jehoiada expressed at his death. 2 Chron. xxiv. 22. The Lord look upon it and require it, this is the language of their blood, even then when they're tongue may be praying with Stephen Acts vi. 66. Lord lay not sin to their charge.

Obf. 2. That God's people may continue long under, and be brought unto great trials by persecution, as this cry importeth, and the openings of the former three leaves make them appear. For until the days of Confinantine, from the entry of the gospel into the world, the church for the space of three hundred years and some odds was under persecution, and had little breathing time for these many years, which is evident from history: wherein these two things are clear. 1. That during that time the church was visited by ten stated persecutions. The first by Nero, which began anno 54. The second by Domitian, anno 95. The third by Trajan, continuing as is written for 19. years, anno 100. The fourth was under Hadrian and Ant. Pius, as is reckoned by some, and began anno 126. The fifth by Antonius Philippus, and his coligae L. A. Verus, beginning anno 168. The sixth was under Severus, which began in the year, 208. The seventh was under Maximinus, 236. The eight was under Decius, 251. The ninth was under Gallus and Volusianus, 258. The tenth under Diocletian, anno 300 or thereabout. These persecutions are reckoned by some who account that persecution of Aureianus to be one. Be cause his edict was immediately recalled, he being terrified by God by a terrible thunders in the very instant of putting off the same. Upon which he afterward befriend the Christians, so as he interposed his authority for making effectual the sentence of the Synod of Antioch against Samolatus.

Obf. 3. That God's people in a holy way may pray for vengeance upon persecutors as is often used in Psalms: not from self revenge, or from a carnal spirit, but from love to the glory of God, the vindicating of themselves and the truth maintained by them, and fear of men from this sin persecution, and hazard that followed upon it. Obf. 4. That God may suffer the blood of his saints for a long time to be unpunished, as if he took no notice of their prayers in respect of the effect. Obf. 5. Even then when God seemeth to neglect his people, and to take notice of their prayers, he is holy and true, and is to be acknowledged so. Though sene would say the contrary, faith ought to lay this ground at the entry, Lord thou art holy and true, &c.

From the answer, verse 11. Observe, 1. That though God do not instantly grant the particulars that his people do pray for; yet their prayers are not-lost. Here the thing sought is delayed, yet a comfortable return of their prayers is made out unto them, and their prayers are not without fruit even for the time.

Obf. 2. God's peremptory decrees, and the prayers of his people are not inconsequent, yea his decree may aim at one thing, and the particular prayed for by his people as it is circumstantiated, aim at another thing, upon the matter, inconsequent with that: yet may these prayers be acceptable to God, and they in them, as is clear from Abraham's praying for the blessing to Ishmael, while God had appointed for another. The reason is, because our prayers and our practices are accepted, not because they are conformed to God's secret will and decree, but as they agree with his will revealed in his word which is the rule of our duty. Obf. 3. Though prayers prevail not to alter God's decree, which must stand, yet prayers may procure much present quietness and satisfaction for the time. God's decrees are to wisely ordered for the good of his people, that it were no advantage, but prejudice to them to have them altered. Obf. 4. The most raging persecutions 5 M
have their bounds set by God, and the number of martyrs are determined, and all the persecutors from the beginning of the world, to the end, shall not exceed in one person. Which, as it notably hold forth God's sovereignty and providence to the greatest confusion of the world; so doth it exceedingly contribute to the comfort of God's people under them. Obs. 5. That the filling up of this roll, or the ending the sufferings of God's people here on earth, and the coming of the great day of judgment come together, Or the final judgment of the world, shall immediately follow the fulfilling of the suffering of martyrs. The reason given of the suspension here, is that their fellow servants, who were to be killed must be fulfilled: and the term that is set for the answering of their power viz. until the fellow servants, &c. doth confirm this. For there is no delay to put to judgment then, and there is no more to intervene the martyr perfecting, and this vengeance on true persecutors. These two are joined, Mat. xxiv. 29. The ending of the affliction of God's people, and the coming of judgment; immediately layeth the Lord, after the tribulation of these days shall the sun be darkened, &c. There is therefore no temporal peace or millenary kingdom, altogether free of suffering to be expected before that time, which is the day of redemption from these sufferings.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.