

LOVE AMONG THE ASHES

CONSOLATION WHEN SUFFERING LOSS BY FIRE



OWEN STOCKTON

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Monergism Books

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**The original title for this work is "*Counsel to the Afflicted: or, Instruction and Consolation for such as have Suffered Loss by Fire: With Advice to such as have Escaped that Sore Judgment: Occasioned by the Dreadful Fire in the City of London, in the Year 1666.*" By Puritan Owen Stockton 1630-1680.

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PREF. To the Reader.

What the Prophet Joel saith of the Famine that came upon Judea, Joel 1:2. The like may I say of the late deplorable Fire which the Lord hath sent upon London, the Metropolitan City of this Nation; Hear this ye old men, and give ear all ye inhabitants of the land, hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your Fathers? God hath often contended with this Land by Fire, but neither in our days, nor in the days of our Fathers hath there been any such dreadful Fire as this, which began in London, Sept. 2, 1666, and continued raging for the space of three or four days together with that fury and violence that none was able to quench it, until it had consumed the greatest part of that renowned City, and had made of a City an heap, of a defensed City a ruin. Elihu speaking of Thunder and Lightning, saith, Job 37:1. At this my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place. And calleth to Job to consider seriously these great works of God, ver. 11. Hearken unto this, O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. If Elihu were thus affected at the sight of Lightning and hearing of Thunder, and would have Job stand still and consider these

wondrous works of God, how should the hearts of all that saw or heard of this dreadful Fire, tremble, and be as it were moved out of their places? How should they be awakened to stand still and consider this wondrous judgment of God? It thunders and lightens every year, these are God's ordinary works; but it is very rare and unusual for God to send such great and terrible Fires. There may be and oftentimes are mighty Thunders and Lightnings, and no man suffereth any damage by them; but many thousands have sustained great loss by this Fire. Now the more unusual and afflicting any judgment is, the more it ought to be laid to heart, and the more we ought to fear and tremble before that God that sent it. When the Fire had devoured the pastures of the Wilderness, and the trees of the Field, this made Joel go and cry before the Lord, Joel 1:19. O Lord, to thee will I cry, for the Fire hath devoured the pastures of the Wilderness, and the flame hath burnt all the trees of the Field. If the Prophet bemoaned the burning of the pastures of the Wilderness, and the trees of the Field, how ought we to bemoan the burning of this famous City? When Hanani told Nehemiah that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with Fire, and his Brethren the Jews were in great affliction, see how he was affected with it, Neh. 1:3,4. It came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven. They that are of Nehemiah's disposition, that is, men fearing God, can do no less upon the sight or hearing of London's desolations, then he did at Jerusalem's; namely, sit down and mourn, and fast, and pray to the God of Heaven, that he would turn away from the fierceness of his anger which is kindled against us, even as the Prophet Isaiah also did in the like case, Isa. 64:9-12. As for such as are of a Gallio like spirit, caring for none of these things, London's Ruins call out to them

as Jerusalem did in the day of her distress, Lam. 1:12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger? From above hath he sent Fire into my bones, and it prevaileth against them —Yea God himself speaketh dreadfully to such persons, Psal. 28:5. Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

Besides being duly and deeply affected with this sad and solemn providence of God, it is every man's concernment to make a good use of it. No man should let such great judgments as this Fire and the late Pestilence pass away, without being some way bettered in his spiritual Estate by them. The best use that we can make of this and those other Judgments of God which of late have fallen upon us, is to turn every one of us from all our sins unto the Lord with all our hearts, and all our souls. For this is the design of all God's Judgments to lead us to repentance. If the fall of the Tower of Siloam, wherein but eighteen persons suffered, be interpreted by Christ to be a call to all the Inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, to repent upon pain of eternal damnation, Luk. 13:4,5. With what a loud voice doth God call to all the Inhabitants of this Land to repent of their sins, by the fall of this great City, wherein many thousands have been great sufferers? The rod calls to repentance, but it seldom works repentance, unless it be accompanied with the word; but when instruction goeth with correction, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. Whilst Ephraim was only chastised he was like a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; but after he was instructed, he repented, he smote upon his thigh, he was ashamed, Jer. 31:18,19. The world never beheld such an amazing sight as when the Lord Jesus, the Lord of life and

glory suffered death, from the sixth to the ninth hour of the day, there was darkness over the whole earth: the Sun was darkened, and the Vail of the Temple was rent in the midst, &c. Yet how few were brought to repentance by these things? One of the Thieves is converted, and a Centurion gives glory to God; but as for the generality of the people, though they were struck with some amazement and remorse for the present, they return everyone to his own way, Luk. 23:48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote upon their breasts and returned. We read nothing of their returning to God, till the Apostle Peter came and preached the word to them, and then follows a great conversion unto the Lord, 3000 are added unto the Church in one day, Acts 2:41. Wherefore we should esteem it a great blessing and singular mercy to be taught and instructed by God, when we are under his correcting hand, according to what the Psalmist saith, Psal. 94:12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastnest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law. And we should readily open our ears to discipline, by what ways soever God shall be pleased to convey his mind to us. God can, and sometimes doth teach us immediately by his Spirit, but most ordinarily he instructeth both those that are in affliction, and others also in the use of means. When the Apostle Paul was in great distress, and at a loss to know the mind of Christ, and cried, Lord, What wilt thou have me to do? He sent him to Ananias, to be instructed what he should do, Acts 9:6. God could have taught Cornelius by his Spirit, or by the Angel that appeared to him, but he chooseth rather to send him for instruction to one of his Ministers, even to Peter, who should tell him what he ought to do, Acts 10:3-6. Amongst other means, reading of the Scriptures and other good Books is one way whereby God seals up instruction to us. Daniel was a man of singular wisdom, full of the Holy

Ghost, greatly beloved of God; yet he had not all his knowledge by immediate inspiration, but much of it was given to him by the study of Books, Dan. 9:2. I Daniel understood by Books. —

At the request and for the use of some worthy Friends, who were great sufferers by the late Fire, I have drawn up an answer to three practical Questions concerning the said Fire, the design whereof is to instruct and excite both such as escaped, and such as suffered by this dreadful Fire, to make an holy use and a Christian improvement of this sad and solemn Providence, and also to quiet and comfort such as are troubled and cast down at the loss of their Estates. The resolution of which Questions are here presented to thy view. Possibly thou mayest have already something of the like nature from more able hands; however if the Lord (who worketh when and by whom he will) shall be pleased by the reading of this small Treatise to convey the least beam of light, or breath any quickening influence into thy Soul, or to promote in any measure thy holiness or consolation, it will be no grief of heart unto thee, that thou wert at the cost to buy, or at the pains to read it.

If thou sayest, I am not concerned in this Judgment, having been no sufferer by it, nor any Inhabitant in the City where this Judgment fell, and so consequently I am not concerned in the matter that is handled in these questions? I answer. 1. If thou art not a sufferer by this Fire, yet, art thou not under other sufferings? If so, there are several things hinted concerning this Affliction, that may be of use to thee under thy Afflictions, of what nature soever they be. 2. If thou art not a sufferer by this or any other Judgment, thou hast the more need to study what thou shalt render to the Lord for his great mercy in sparing thee when his hand lieth so heavy upon so many thousands at this day. And then the third Question is of great concernment

to thee. 3. Though thou hast not suffered hitherto, thou knowest not how soon thou mayest suffer by this very Judgment of Fire. That passage in Isa. 66:15,16, may awaken thee to prepare for fiery trials. Behold, the Lord will come with Fire, and with his Chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; for by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. And as it is our duty to hear for the time to come, Isa. 42:23. So it will be our prudence to read for time to come. 4. Not only the places and persons that suffer by God's Judgments, but all that hear of them are concerned to make a good use of them. When the Lord brought a sore Judgment upon Jerusalem, he calls to all people in all Nations upon the face of the earth, to take notice thereof, and make a good use of it, Jer. 4:18,19. Hear ye Nations, and know, O Congregation, what is among them; Hear, O Earth, behold, I will bring evil upon this people —

If any say, this Treatise seemeth to be born out of due time; it is now several months since London was burnt, the impression of this Judgment begins now to wear off from men's spirits, &c. I answer. 1. I hope better things of the greater part that suffered by this stroke of God, then that they should so soon forget the hand that hath been lifted up against them; but if it should be so, that the impressions of this Judgment should be wearing off from many men's spirits, there is the more need of using means to revive them again. It is to be feared in regard poverty is coming upon many like an armed man, and the sad effects of this Fire are and will be felt more and more by the poorer sort, that discontent and trouble of mind will rather grow and increase then wear off; and therefore to such at least, it will not be unseasonable to minister something by way of consolation, though it be some months since they were brought into a suffering condition. 2. Such

great Judgments as this was, are to be kept in remembrance, and to be improved for the promoting of repentance and the fear of God all our days, and not only as long as we live, but the memory of them is to be conveyed to the Ages and Generations that are yet to come, that they may learn to fear this God, who hath done such great things amongst us. When there was a mighty Famine in Judah, the Lord gives Commandment that the memory thereof should be perpetuated to all Ages, Joel 1:3,4. Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation; That which the palmer worm hath left, hath the locust eaten, &c. We think unworthily of God's Judgments, if we suppose they are to be regarded for a few days, or for a few years only. They are of larger use. Judgments upon particular places and persons, are admonitions to the whole world that hear of them as long as the world shall stand. It is some thousands of years since Lots Wife was turned into a pillar of Salt, yet this Judgment of God on a particular person must not be forgotten by us in this generation, nor by others to the worlds end, Luk. 17:32. Remember Lots Wife. It is generally computed to be above three thousand years since the Israelites came out of Egypt, and passed through the Wilderness into Canaan, and yet their sufferings in the Wilderness are ensamples to us, to deter us from sinning as they did, lest we suffer as they did; and not to us only but to all that shall live between this and the end of the world, 1 Cor. 10:11. Now all these things happened to them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 3. In some cases where grief is great, counsel and comfort takes place best, when the sufferers have had a little space to bemoan their distressed condition. When Jobs Friends came to comfort him, they forbore speaking a

word to him for seven days and seven nights, because they saw his grief was very great, Job 2:11-13.

I shall detain thee no longer with this preface, but commend thee and this work to the blessing of the Lord, after I have craved one request at thy hands, which is, if thou reapest any benefit by this ensuing Treatise, give all the glory to God, and lift up a prayer for him, who is,

Thine to serve the in the work of the Lord,

Owen Stockton.

CHAP. 1. Question 1. How
May such Persons as have
Sustained Great Losses by
the late Fire, bear their
Affliction with a
Contented and a Cheerful
Spirit?

*B*efore I give an Answer to this Question, I shall premise these following Propositions.

1. It is the will of God that we should bear all our losses and all other afflictions with a patient, contented mind: He would not have us murmur or repine at any of his dealings, but in everything, and under every state and condition submit our wills unto his. That this is the will of God may appear evidently from such Scriptures as these; Heb. 13:5. Be content with such things as ye have; Lam. 3:39. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man

for the punishment of his sins? 1 Cor. 10:10. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer; Jam. 4:7. Submit yourselves to God; Luk. 22:42. Not my will, but thine be done; Jam. 5:8. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh; yea, the Lord would not only have us patient, but cheerful under all our sufferings, Jam. 1:2. My brethren count it all joy, when ye fall into diverse temptations.

2. It is not only our duty, but our interest, it conduceth much to our good and welfare, to bear our afflictions with a peaceable, contented, cheerful spirit. Eliphaz persuades Job to bear his afflictions quietly, with this argument, that it was for his good so to do, Job 22:21. Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. Whatever God hath commanded us, tends to our good as well as his glory, Deut. 10:13. Keep the Commandments of the Lord, and his Statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good. If all the Commandments of God be for our good, then this command of being contented in every estate must needs be for our good. When we are contented in our sufferings, the soul is at rest, though the outward man be full of trouble, Matth. 11:29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Whatever the Father laid upon Christ he bore it with a meek and quiet spirit, and submitted his will to the will of his Father; if we follow this example of his, we shall doubtless find rest to our souls. The man that hath learnt how to be content in every estate, liveth a kind of Heaven upon Earth, Phil. 3:20. Our Conversation is in Heaven. If you would know how the Apostle came to enjoy as it were a heaven while he was in this world, you may see that, chap. 4:11. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

3. A man under the power of a froward discontented spirit bereaveth himself of all good: he hath no enjoyment of God, no enjoyment of himself, no enjoyment of any good in any of the creatures. He hath no enjoyment of God; for, They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord, Prov. 11:20. Psal. 18:26. With the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. He hath no enjoyment of himself, but is like a man dispossessed of his soul, Luk. 21:19. In your patience possess ye your souls. He hath no enjoyment of any good in any of the creatures, though he be one that hath great possessions, Prov. 17:20. He that hath a froward heart, findeth no good. He is in continual pain and anguish, like a man that walks among thorns, Prov. 22:5. Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward, he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

4. It is a very hard matter to bear afflictions with a cheerful contented spirit. When a man is crossed of his will, his heart is ready to fret against the Lord, even at such times as he brings afflictions upon himself by his own folly, Prov. 19:3. The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord. When God rebukes us, and binds us in the cords of affliction, we are apt to fret and fume like a wild Bull in a net, Isa. 51:20. Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild Bull in a net, they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God. Nothing less than the mighty power of God will quell and keep down all the risings, fretting's and murmurings of the heart, and make a man patient and cheerful in his afflictions, Col. 1:11. Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness. There is the power the glorious power of God, the power of God put forth in a mighty manner to enable a Christian to suffer afflictions with patience and joy.

5. No man that is destitute of the grace of God, can bear afflictions with a contented spirit. There may be stupidity and insensibleness of God's hand, and there may be a restraining of murmurings in some natural men, but true contentment is found only in godly persons, 1 Tim. 6:8. Godliness with contentment is great gain. As for unregenerate men, when God doth not lay a restraint upon them, they do not only fret inwardly against God, but break out into open blasphemy, when they meet with great and painful afflictions, Isa. 8:21. They shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry, and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God, and look upward; Rev. 16:10,11. They gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

6. The Saints and Servants of God, have found it a hard matter to bear their losses with a quiet contented spirit, when God hath taken away from them those things which have been near and dear to them. When Jacob did but suppose that he had lost his son Joseph, he was over-whelmed with grief, Gen. 37:34,35. Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days, and all his sons, and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, and he said, for I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning, thus his father wept for him. When God took away Absalom, how was David cast down at his death? 2 Sam. 18:33. The King was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son. Jonah was a man that feared God, a Type of Christ, no ordinary man but a Prophet, yet what abundance of discontent, did he manifest for the loss of a gourd, because it was a refreshment to him

by keeping him from the heat of the Sun? He fell into a great passion, fainted, was weary of his life, wished that he might die; and when God reasoned with him about his froward carriage, he stands upon his justification, Jon. 4:8,9.— He fainted and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Yet this gourd came up in a night, and perished in a night, and Jonah had not labored at all for it, neither did Jonah, but God made it to grow, ver. 10. When we find such a man as Jonah, in such a great passion for such a small loss as a gourd, which grew up and perished in a night and a day, we may cry out, Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him! And if we are kept from fretting and discontent at our losses, we must give glory to God, and say, as the Apostle in another case, Not I, but the grace of God which is with me, keeps me from being discontented at my losses.

7. Though it be hard to attain a cheerful, contented spirit in all estates and conditions, yet it is possible to be attained: The Apostle Paul went through variety of afflictions, as hunger, thirst, nakedness, shipwreck, imprisonment, beating with rods, stripes above measure, cold, watching's, &c. 2 Cor. 11:23-27, yet he had learned to be content in every estate, Phil. 4:11,13. I have learned in whatsoever estate I am, therewith to be content: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. And as he was contented, so also cheerful and joyful in all his troubles, 2 Cor. 7:4. I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. Now what the Apostle Paul attained to in this kind, that through the help of Christ we may attain also.

8. A word of counsel and advice suitably and seasonably administered to such as are in a suffering condition, availeth much for the quieting, comforting, and supporting of their spirits under their greatest afflictions

and deepest sorrows, Prov. 12:25. Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, but a good word maketh it glad; Prov. 27:9. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel; Job 4:3,4. Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands, thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees; Prov. 15:23. A word spoken in due season, how good is it?

9. No arguments or other means that are made use of, either in preaching, writing, or private conference, have such force and power to quiet, support and comfort the hearts of those that faint, and are disquieted, and cast down under their afflictions, as those that are drawn from, and bottomed upon the Word of God, Lev. 10:3. Moses said unto Aaron, this is it that the Lord spake—And Aaron held his peace. Aaron's trial was exceeding great, His two eldest sons were consumed by fire from the Lord, when they were in the act of sin; this judgment was so great that all Israel are commanded to bewail the burning, ver. 6, yet Aaron who was most nearly concerned in the affliction, held his peace, and what caused him to do so? Moses put him in remembrance of the Word of God, This is that the Lord spake, see also Job 6:25. How forcible are right words? Now all God's words are right, Psal. 33:4. The Word of the Lord is right —Prov. 8:8,9. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness—They are all right to them that find knowledge. And therefore they are of great force to quiet and comfort such as are in affliction, Psal. 107:20. He sent his Word and healed them. Though a man be ready to die with sorrow and grief under his troubles, the Word of God will revive him; for they of whom the Psalmist speaks, when he saith, He sent his Word and healed them, were such as were ready to die with their troubles, as you may see, ver. 18. God's Word will make the stoutest heart

yield and bow to God's will, Jer. 23:28,29,— He that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully, What is the chaff to the wheat saith the Lord? Is not my Word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? 1 Thess. 4:18. Comfort one another with these words. No words have such force to comfort the afflicted, as what are drawn out of the Scriptures. Wherefore I have endeavored to confirm what I have proposed in answer to these questions, with suitable and pertinent Texts of Scripture.

These Propositions being premised, I shall now answer the first question, and shall divide my Answer into three branches. 1. I shall propose some considerations that may tend to the quieting of their minds, who have sustained great loss by this fire. 2. I shall propose some things by way of practice to help the afflicted to bear their afflictions contentedly. 3. I shall endeavor to remove those pleas and reasonings that hinder those that have been sufferers by this fire from setting down contented under their affliction.

Considerations to quiet the minds of those that have been great sufferers by the late fire.

SECT. 1.

1. Consider who it is that hath consumed your Houses and taken away your Estates. It is God hath done this thing. Whoever were the instruments of beginning or promoting and carrying on this dreadful fire, that hath destroyed so many goodly buildings, and so much treasure; you must look beyond all instruments at the hand of the Lord. There is no evil befalleth any City, or any family, or any particular person, but it is the Lord which sends that judgment of what nature soever it be, Amos 3:6. Shall there be evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? There is nothing comes to pass

at any time in any part of the world, but it is brought about by the Providence of God, Rom. 11:36. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things. A Sparrow is a bird of small value, yet not one Sparrow falls to the ground without the concurrence of God's Providence, Matth. 10:29. Are not two Sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father; If not one Sparrow suffereth anything but by the Providence of God, then surely there is a Providence that ordereth all the sufferings of every man, who is of more value than many Sparrows. There is no loss more inconsiderable than to lose a hair of our heads, hundreds of our hairs may be taken away and we regard it not; but God is so careful of our persons, and of all our concernments, that he numbereth every hair of our heads, and there doth not fall off one hair at any time but by his appointment, Matth. 10:30. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. And as to this judgment of Fire, we find it oft asserted in the Scriptures, that when Cities or other places are set on fire, it is the Lord which kindleth those fires, and ordereth all circumstances belonging to them. It is the Lord that appointeth the place where the fire shall begin, and how far it shall proceed, and what houses shall be burnt down by it, Amos 2:5. I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the Palaces of Jerusalem; Jer. 50:32. I will kindle a fire in his Cities, and it shall devour all round about him. When a fire rageth with that vehemence that none can quench it, it is God which rendereth it unquenchable, Jer. 17:27. If ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath-Day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath-Day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the Palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched. When any men do set a City on fire, it is God giveth up that City into their hands, and causeth their

enterprises to take effect, Jer. 32:28,29. I will give this City into the hands of the Chaldeans—And the Chaldeans shall come and set fire on this City. —Now the considering and believing that it is God which hath taken away your Houses and Estates by this Fire, will silence all murmurings and repining's, and cause you to bear your losses and crosses with a contented mind. Psal. 39:9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. When Job had lost all that he had in one day, by looking at God's hand in his losses, he bore them very cheerfully, Job 1:21.— The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord; And yet Job lost a very great Estate, for he was the richest man in the East, Job 1:3. He did not only lose his Estate, but all his Children were cut off also, ver. 19, and that whilst they were eating, and drinking wine in their Elder Brothers house, ver. 18, at which meetings Job was afraid lest his Sons should sin, and curse God in their hearts, ver. 5, which made the affliction the more heavy. Now to make this Argument the more effectual towards the producing of contentment, consider who this God is, that hath taken away your Estates from you by this Fire.

1. It is that God that gave you all the good things that ever you did enjoy, 1 Chron. 29:12,14. Both riches and honor come of thee:—All things come of thee; Jam. 1:17. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights; Deut. 8:17,18. Moses biddeth Israel beware of saying in their hearts, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth, but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth. This quieted Jobs mind, when he considered that the same God who took away his Estate and his Children, did formerly give them to him, Job 1:21. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

2. It is God that is Holy. There is nothing of wrong, no injustice, no iniquity in this dispensation, as it proceedeth out of the hands of God, Psal. 145:17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. When God cometh forth in fiery dispensations, we should be so far from murmuring, that we should give thanks at the remembrance of his Holiness, because we know him to be Holy in all his Works, Psal. 97:3,12. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his Holiness. The withdrawing of God's Blessed Presence from our souls, is a far greater loss, than the losing of our Estates, or anything that we enjoy in this world; for there is nothing in the whole world, yea, there is nothing in heaven itself, which a godly man esteemeth so much as he doth the enjoyment of God, Psal. 73:25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Yet we find David quieting himself upon the account of God's Holiness, when he apprehended himself forsaken of God, and the Lord came not to him, though he cried and roared after the Lord, Psal. 22:1-3. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent: But thou art holy. If David was stayed from repining against God, when he apprehended himself forsaken of God, and thought God rejected his Prayers, by considering, that God that dealt thus with him, was a holy God; then surely the consideration of God's Holiness may quiet your minds under the loss of any worldly things, whatever they be. When the laborers that had born the heat of the day, murmured, because others that had wrought but one hour were made equal to them, the householder stilled their murmurings, by saying to one of them, Friend I do thee no wrong,

Matth. 20:11-13. If you find any murmurings in your minds, at God's taking away your Estates, when others enjoy theirs still, endeavor to silence your murmurings, by saying unto your souls, O my soul, God is a just, and holy, and righteous God; he hath done thee no wrong, why then dost thou murmur against him?

3. It is God that hath a Sovereign Power over you, to do with you, and all that belongeth unto you, whatsoever seemeth good in his sight, Job 9:12. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, what dost thou? Jer. 18:6. O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord? Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. Such is the Sovereign Power of God, that he disposeth of all his Creatures, both those that are in heaven, and all that are in all places of the world, Psal. 135:6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and the seas, and all deep places. If the Lord disposeth of all things in heaven and earth as he pleaseth, shall any particular person fret, and think much to have all his concernments disposed of at the pleasure, and by the order of the great God? When the Lord maketh such desolations in any Nation, as that the report of them goeth throughout all the world, this must still and quiet our minds, that it is the great and Sovereign God that doth these things, Psal. 46:8,10. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. Be still, and know that I am God. To murmur at God's fulfilling his own will, is a practical denying his Sovereignty; and to deny the Sovereignty of God, is to deny his Deity. He should not be God, if he were not our Sovereign Lord; his Sovereignty is essential to his Deity.

4. It is God that loveth you, and is the best friend that you have in all the world, that laid these rebukes upon you, and hath taken away your Estates

by this Fire. Every godly man hath God for his Friend, Cant. 5:16. This is my beloved, and this is my friend. And when God rebukes any of his Servants in their Names, Estates, Bodies, or Souls, it is out of love, Rev. 3:19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; Prov. 3:12. Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a Father the Son, in whom he delighteth. Will you take anything amiss that cometh from so good a friend as the Lord is? Especially that which cometh from this friend in love? We are wont to take rebukes that come from friends in good part, though they be such as wound and pierce us to the soul, Prov. 27:6. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; Psal. 141:5. Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head. —Shall we esteem it a kindness to be smitten and reprov'd by righteous men, and fret, and be angry when we are smitten and reprov'd by the righteous God?

5. It is God who is your Father that hath done these things. Never any man drank such a bitter cup as was mingled for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, if we consider all the ingredients that were put into it: yet because it was his Father that gave him this cup he took it cheerfully, Joh. 18:11. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? We submit ourselves to our earthly Parents when they correct us, how much more ought we to be subject to our heavenly Father when he chasteneth us; seeing he hath more power over us than they have, and aimeth more purely at our good than they do? Heb. 12:9,10. We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holiness.

6. It is God who is pleased with all his own works, Psal. 135:6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in Heaven, and in Earth, and in the Seas, and all deep places. God calleth the judgments that he executes upon his enemies his pleasure, Isa. 48:14. He will do his pleasure on Babylon. Yea even those afflictions which God sendeth upon his own children, are the good pleasure of his will. The Prophet, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, saith, Isa. 53:10. It pleased the Lord to bruise him. — Our sufferings are in some respects said to grieve the Lord, Judg. 10:16. His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. But on another account, as they are a fulfilling of his eternal Councils, as they illustrate his Glory, as they promote our good, &c. they may be said to please him. Now that which pleaseth God should not displease us. It is said of David, who was a wise and a gracious Prince, Whatsoever the King did, pleased all the people, 2 Sam. 3:36. The Lord our God infinitely transcendeth David in Wisdom and Goodness; and therefore whatsoever the Lord doth, should please all his people.

7. It is God that made you, who hath taken away your Estates from you, and it is not meet that the Creature should quarrel, murmur at, or find fault with anything that his Maker doth, Isa. 45:9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker; let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth: shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou?

SECT. 2.

2. Consider what it is which God hath taken away from you; and this Consideration will minister several Arguments for the quieting of your minds under all your losses, though they have been very great. For,

1. God hath taken away nothing but that which was his own. Your Houses, your Goods, your Silver and Gold, and all that you have, or ever had, is the

Lord's, 1 Chron. 29:11. All that is in the heaven, and in the earth, is thine; Psal. 24:1. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein; Hos. 2:7. Therefore will I return and take away my corn—and my wine—and my wool—and my flax. What Benhadad said to Ahab, and Ahab replied to Benhadad, 1 King 20:3,4. Thy Silver and thy Gold is mine, thy Wives also, and thy Children, even the goodliest are mine: and the King of Israel answered and said, My Lord, O King, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have. The like may God say to us, Thy Silver and thy Gold is mine, &c. And we may say to the Lord, O my Lord, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have. Now we take upon us to dispose of those things which are our own, as we see good, Matth. 20:15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? And shall not we allow unto God that liberty which we take unto ourselves? Shall we murmur against him when he taketh away nothing from us but that which is his own?

2. God hath taken away nothing from you, but what you were unworthy to enjoy. Jacob was a great man; the Angel that wrestled with him, saith of him, As a Prince hast thou power with God and Men, and hast prevailed, Gen. 32:28. Yet he looked upon himself as unworthy of the least of all the mercies that ever God bestowed upon him, Gen. 32:10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant. As the Woman of Samaria said to Christ, Joh. 4:12. Art thou greater than our Father Jacob? So may I say unto you, Are you greater, and better than Jacob? If not, then you must confess yourselves unworthy of the least of all God's mercies as he did; and if you are unworthy of the least of all God's mercies, then you have no cause to repine at your losses, seeing God hath taken nothing from you but what you were unworthy to enjoy.

3. God hath taken nothing from you, but that which you must of necessity have shortly parted with, though this fire had not consumed anything of your Estates. It is but a very little while, and you must leave this world; and though you have never so much of this worlds goods, you cannot carry one penny with you out of the world, 1 Tim. 6:7. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain, we can carry nothing out: and upon this account the Apostle urgeth Christians to be content, though they have never so little, nothing besides food and raiment, ver. 8. Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. And as we can carry nothing with us out of the world, so it is altogether uncertain, who shall possess what we leave behind us, Luk. 12:20. This night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be that thou hast provided? If we have children to inherit the substance that we leave behind us, yet who can tell but the Extortioner may catch all that they have, and Strangers devour their wealth, Psal. 109:11. Or if they should enjoy what we leave them, yet who can tell whether they will spend it well or ill? Who can tell whether they will be wise men or fools? Such thoughts as these weaned Solomon from the world, and made him repent of all the pains he had taken in erecting stately Buildings, and gathering together much Treasure, Eccl. 2:18,19. I hated all my labor which I had taken under the Sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me, and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored, and wherein I have shown myself wise under the Sun.

4. That which God hath taken from you is but vanity, yea more, that which often proveth a vexation to the Soul and Spirit, which is the better part of a man. Solomon speaking of all worldly things, saith of them, Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity, Eccl. 1:2, and afterwards reckoning up his outward

enjoyments, he doth tell us that his stately Buildings and his great Treasures were vanity as well as other things. Eccl. 2:4,5,8,17. I made me great works, I built me houses—I made me Gardens and Orchards—I gathered me also Silver and Gold, and the peculiar treasures of Kings—All is vanity and vexation of Spirit. Should a wise man disquiet himself for the loss of a vanity? Or vex himself because he is deprived of that which is but vexation of Spirit?

5. Riches are not that which most men think them to be. They have less of good, and more of evil in them than we are aware of. I do not mean that riches are evil of themselves, they are good blessings of God; yet our corrupt natures are apt to turn them to an evil use. Wherefore view your riches which you have lost, not according to that estimation which men of the world have of riches, but according to the judgment which the Holy Ghost giveth of them in the Scriptures, where they are styled, Deceitful Riches, Mar. 4:19. Uncertain riches, 1 Tim. 6:17. The Mammon of unrighteousness, Luk. 16:9. Vanity and vexation of Spirit, as was hinted before. Thorns, Matth. 13:22. That which is not. That which should be so far from disquieting our hearts, that they are not worthy that such a noble creature as man should set his eyes upon them. Prov. 23:5. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven. The Scriptures inform us, that all that disquiet themselves about riches, disquiet themselves in vain, Psal. 39:6. Surely every man walketh in a vain show, surely they are disquieted in vain, he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. If this be the nature of riches, if they be like thorns, deceitful things, not worthy the fixing of the eye upon them, &c. Why should you be

perplexed in your minds for the breach which God hath made upon your Estates.

SECT. 3.

3. Consider that God hath wise, and gracious, and merciful ends in this dispensation, and intendeth you much good by taking away your estates from you. When David was robbed of all that he had, and his City of refuge was burnt with fire by the Amalekites, he found that this as well as his other afflictions wrought for his good, Psal. 119:61,71. The bands of the wicked have robbed me—It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. There is much mercy to the people of God in those paths that carry the greatest appearance of severity, Psal. 25:10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his Covenant and his Testimonies. It is an unquestionable truth that God designs the doing his people good in every affliction which he layeth upon them, Rom. 8:28. We know that all things work together for good unto them that love God —And if all work together for your good, then also your late losses though very great shall work for your good. And is it not an unreasonable thing that you should be discontented when God dealeth mercifully with you? That you should be discontented when God is doing you good? What though you cannot see for the present how your losses should work for your good? You may see it hereafter, Joh. 13:7. What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. God may have several merciful ends, and design your good several ways in taking away your estates; I will hint three or four gracious ends of God in cutting of his people short in outward things, in order to their spiritual good, and leave it to you, to judge which of these God designs in your losses.

1. God sometimes diminisheth his people's wealth, because he seeth that if he should have continued them in the enjoyment of their estates it would have been for their hurt, Eccl. 5:13. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the Sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. Riches may be hurtful several ways. As 1. When they make us high-minded and rough in our speeches and carriages towards the poor. This sin is very incident to rich men, Prov. 18:23. The rich answereth roughly. 1 Tim. 6:17. Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded. —2. When they draw off our hearts from God, and cause us to set them upon our riches, then they prove hurtful. Now the more we have of the world, the more apt we are to set our hearts upon the world, Psal. 62:10.— If riches increase set not your heart upon them. 3. When they hinder our trusting in God, and living by faith, and we by reason of the multitude of our riches trust in them. Now the more riches we have, the more apt we are to trust in them, Psal. 52:7.— But trusted in the abundance of his riches. 1 Tim. 6:17. Charge them that are rich in this world that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. 4. When they fill our minds with cares, and disturb our peace; and this is usual with many rich men, to have their minds disturbed about their estates both day and night, Eccl. 5:12. The abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. 5. When they draw a man to, or drown him in any sinful lusts as idleness, sensuality, pride, security, &c. they become hurtful, 1 Tim. 6:9. They that will be rich fall into a temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. Now if God foresaw that your estates would have been hurtful to you any of these ways, or any other way, and thereupon took them away, that they might not do you hurt, you have no cause to complain, but rather to be

thankful. If you say, there is no fear that a good man should be hurt by his riches. I answer, Agur was a good man, yet he was afraid lest riches should cause him to deny the Lord, Prov. 30:8,9. Give me neither poverty nor riches,—lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord. —Is it not better that God should deny us the enjoyment of riches, than leave us in process of time to deny him.

2. God sometimes diminisheth our estates, and brings us low, because he intendeth to call us to great sufferings, even to forsake all that we have. The more a man hath of the world, the harder it will be to part with all that he possesseth for Christ, Mar. 10:21,22.— Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor—And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. The Apostles who were poor, and had but little to leave at the call of Christ, immediately left all and followed him, Matth. 4:20, Luk. 5:28. This forsaking of all for Christ is so necessary when we are called to it, that without it we cannot be Christ's Disciples, Luk. 14:33. Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple. Suppose God foresaw that if he had not brought you into a low condition, you would rather have forsaken Christ than your Estates; Hath he not dealt mercifully with you in taking away your Estates, which would have hindered you from becoming Disciples of Christ?

3. Riches oft times prove great hindrances to our salvation, and God takes them away that he may make our passage to Heaven more easy, Matth. 19:23,24. Jesus said unto his Disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And again, I say unto you, It is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. Suppose God saw your riches to be clogs to you, and that they would have hindered your salvation, Was it

not good for you that God should take them away? Is it not better that you should lose your Estates than lose the Kingdom of Heaven?

4. God diminisheth our Estates that he may increase our Graces, Heb. 12:10. He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Ordinarily poor men are richer in grace than great men, Jam. 2:5. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith? Grace is better than riches, and have they then any cause to complain, whom God maketh poor, that he may make them rich in grace and holiness?

5. God diminisheth our outward worldly comforts that he may increase our inward and spiritual comforts, Hos. 2:7,14. I will take away my corn,—and my wine,—and my wool,—and my flax,—I will allure her and bring her into the Wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. I might mention others of a like nature, but I forbear; by these you may see that God may intend his people much good, when he depriveth them of their estates.

SECT. 4.

4. Consider that though God hath taken much from you, he might with equity and justice have taken away a great deal more from you, and therefore you have no cause to repine that God hath taken away so much, but rather to be thankful that God hath taken away no more from you. For,

1. God might have taken away your lives as well as your estates. When Sodom was burnt, Lot lost his house and his goods, as may be gathered from Gen. 19. It was evening before the Angels came to him, ver. 1, and in the morning about the time that the Sun rose God rained fire and brimstone upon the City, ver. 23. Some time was spent in entertaining the Angels, in going to his sons in law to acquaint them with the purpose of God to destroy Sodom, in fleeing to Zoar, so that he saved very little, if any of his goods; for, what could a man, that had such short warning of Sodom's

destruction, and was forced to flee for his life, carry along with him? Besides the loss of his goods and his house, he lost his wife, ver. 26, and his sons in law, and his daughters that were married to them, ver. 14, only Lot and his two Daughters that were unmarried got to Zoar: yet he doth not murmur at his losses, but looketh upon it as a great mercy, that God had spared his life, Gen. 19:19. Behold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shown unto me in that thou hast spared my life. —When the Jews were carried captive into Babylon, and Jerusalem was burnt with fire, though they had lost their liberties, and their dwellings were consumed, they did not murmur because of their losses, but looked upon it as a great mercy that themselves were not consumed also, Lam. 3:22. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. And notwithstanding their sufferings were very great, such as could scarce be paralleled by any that lived in former ages, as we may see, Lam. 1:12, yet they acknowledge that they had no cause of complaining, seeing God had spared their lives, Lam. 3:39. Wherefore doth a living man complain? When the Ship in which the Apostle sailed was cast away, and all the goods were lost, he makes a light matter of their losses seeing their lives were preserved, Acts 27:22,25. I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the Ship,—Wherefore Sirs be of good cheer. He calls upon them twice, notwithstanding their losses, to be of good cheer, because their lives were preserved.

2. God might have taken away your souls and cast them into everlasting burnings, for you have sinned, and The wages of sin is death, Rom. 6:23. The Angels are more glorious creatures than man, yet as soon as they had sinned, God cast them into Hell, 2 Pet. 2:4. God spared not the Angels that

sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. Now if God had dealt thus with you, if instead of burning your houses, he had taken away your souls and cast them into everlasting burnings, your loss would have been incomparably greater than now it is, though you had been owners of the whole world; For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Mar. 8:36.

5. God might have taken away his loving kindness from you, as he did from the Jews, Jer. 16:5. I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the Lord, even loving kindness and mercies. Now that would have been a far greater loss, than the loss of your estates, yea than the loss of your lives; for God's loving kindness is better than life, Psal. 63:3. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. David spoke this when he was in the Wilderness of Judah, as appears from the title of the Psalm, and in this Wilderness he was destitute of all worldly comforts, as appears by calling this place, a dry and thirsty land where no water is; yet enjoying God's love in this desolate Wilderness, he doth not murmur for want of what he enjoyed, whilst he lived at home with his father, or in Saul's Court, but praiseth God for the sweetness and satisfaction which he enjoyed in the sense of God's love. And as David did, so may we bless God if he hath not taken away his loving kindness from us, whatever it be which God hath taken from us, because his love is better than all other things.

SECT. 5.

5. Consider how you have sinned against the Lord, and what you have deserved for your sins. The reflecting upon your sins, will make you patient under this and all other sufferings, Mic. 7:9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, —Lam. 3:39. Wherefore doth

a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? The calling to remembrance our sins may cause us to take patiently and contentedly the greatest afflictions on several accounts, I will mention two.

1. How great soever our sufferings are, they are far less than our sins have deserved. God never punisheth any man in this world, either the godly or the wicked, according to the desert of their sins, Psal. 103:10. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Job's sufferings were very great, he was the greatest man that lived in the Eastern part of the world, and had all his estate taken from him in one day, he did not only lose his estate, but his children also; his body was smitten with painful and noisome boils and sores, his soul also was full of trouble, as he himself expresseth it, Job 6:4. The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit, the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me: yet Job's sins had deserved greater things from God, than what God was pleased to lay upon him, Job 11:6.— Know that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth. The afflictions which the Jews endured at the destruction of Jerusalem, and during the time of their captivity in Babylon (which lasted 70 years) were exceeding great, so great as scarce any people in the world endured the like, as we may see by these two Texts of Scripture, Lam. 1:12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger. Dan. 9:12. Under the whole Heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem; yet Ezra confesseth that all that they had suffered was far less than they deserved, Ezra 9:13. After all that is come upon us, for our evil deeds and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us, less than our iniquities deserve. —Our sins deserve eternal damnation,

Ezek. 18:4. The soul that sinneth shall die. They deserve to be punished with the loss of God, and the loss of the Kingdom of Heaven to all eternity, 1 Thess. 1:9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, —Matth. 7:23. Depart from me ye that work iniquity. Now what are the losses and crosses that we meet with in this world compared with the eternal loss of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, and with the torments of Hell, that must be endured to all eternity?

2. Whatever we suffer for our sins, we ourselves are the causes of those sufferings, and therefore have no reason to blame the Lord, but ourselves for provoking the Lord to lay such afflictions upon us, Jer. 2:17. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord that led thee by the way? Hos. 13:9. O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, —Jer. 30:15. Why criest thou for thine affliction?—Because thy sins were increased have I done these things unto thee.

SECT. 6.

6. Consider what abundance of mercy you have enjoyed in former times, as well as what afflictions you under go at present; this was one argument wherewith Job quieted himself, and wherewith he labored to quiet his wife when she advised him to curse God and die, Job 2:10. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God and not evil? As God in the way of his Providence intermingleth prosperity with our adversity, and sets the one against the other, that no man may find out any cause of complaining against the Lord, Eccl. 7:14. In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider, God also hath set the one against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. So should we for the taking away of all occasions of murmuring under our afflictions, set our mercies against our crosses; our former and present mercies against our present

afflictions, and that will convince us that we have much cause of thankfulness, but no cause to murmur under our greatest afflictions. For,

1. We may wonder more that God bestoweth one mercy upon us, than at his sending of a thousand afflictions, for we are altogether unworthy of the least of all God's mercies, Gen. 32:10, and have deserved all sorts of judgments, Dan. 9:7. To us belongeth confusion of faces, —

2. Though we deserve all kinds of misery, and no mercy, yet they that have met with most and greatest afflictions, if they take a view of God's dealings with them from the day that they were born to this present time, shall find that their mercies have been far more and greater than their afflictions. Do we meet with some cross or other every day? If we do, yet the mercies of the day are greater than the crosses, for God sends new mercies every day, Lam. 3:23. They are new every morning. We enjoy so many mercies every day, that we are said to be loaded with them, Psal. 68:19. Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with his benefits. Have our afflictions lain long upon us? God's mercies have been of a longer date than our afflictions, Psal. 103:17. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. There are intermissions in our afflictions, He doth not always chide, Psal. 103:9, but there is no intermission in God's mercies, there is not one moment all our life long but he is conveying some good things to us, Isa. 27:3. I will water it every moment. Lam. 3:22. His compassions fail not.

3. Every affliction that we meet with in this life, is allayed and tempered with mercy, yea the bitterest cup that ever God's people drink of, hath more of mercy than it hath of judgment, Psal. 145:9: His tender mercies are over all his works. Psal. 25:10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his Covenant and his Testimonies. If we consider the sharpest

affliction that God lays upon his servants, in their procuring cause, which is sin, if with the good intended by them, if in the principle from which they flow, which is God's love to their souls, we shall be easily convinced that there is more of mercy than severity in them, and so consequently that we have much cause in everything, even in every affliction to give thanks, but no cause at all to murmur at the hand of the Lord.

SECT. 7.

7. Consider that it is the will and command of God, that we should be content with such things as we have; Heb. 13:5. Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. It was but little which those persons possessed, to whom the Apostle wrote this Epistle, for they had suffered much for Christ, their goods were spoiled and taken from them, as we may see Heb. 10:34, yet he telleth them it was the will of God that they should be content with such things as they had. If we have nothing more than food and raiment, we ought to be content, 1 Tim. 6:8. Having food and raiment let us be therewith content. It is not said, having dainty meat and rich attire, let us be therewith content; but having food and raiment, though never so plain and mean, we ought to be therewith content. Though you have lost much, and have very little left, yet there are weighty reasons that may persuade you to be content with such things as you have. As,

1. Though you have very little left, you have more left than you brought with you into the world, and more than you can carry with you out of the world, 1 Tim. 6:7. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Job 1:21. Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.

2. Though you have very little, you have as much, it may be, more than Christ, or the Apostles of Christ had when they were in the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ lived in a very poor condition when he was in the world, 2 Cor. 8:9. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. He was so poor that he had not a house to dwell in, Matth. 8:20. The Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. His diet was mean, when he had nothing but barley bread and two small fishes for himself and his Disciples, and them that came to hear him; he was not discontented because he had no better provision, but gave God thanks for what he had, though it was but barley bread, Joh. 6:9,11. He was so poor, that he received contribution from well-disposed persons, Luk. 8:2,3, when the Tax-gatherers came to him for tribute, he had not wherewith all to pay them without working of a miracle, Matth. 17:24,27, yet this δίδραχμα, this Tribute money which was demanded of him, was no great sum, not above fifteen pence of our money. Now shall we murmur, or be discontented, when we are as well or better provided for, as to worldly things, than Jesus Christ our Lord and Master was? The Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord; It is enough for the Disciple, that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord. And as you have as much as Christ had, so you have as much or more of this worlds goods than the Apostles had, 1 Cor. 4:11. Even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place, and labor, working with our own hands. Paul speaketh here of himself, and the other Apostles, as you may see, ver. 9. And though they were so poor, that they had scarce anything that they could call their own; yet they were as well contented as if they had possessed all

the world. 2 Cor. 6:10. As poor, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Phil. 4:11,12. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere, and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need.

3. Though you have very little left, yet you have more than you are worthy of, as hath been hinted already, from Gen. 32:10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth that thou hast shown unto thy servant.

4. Though you have but little, you may live as long, and may live as blessed and comfortable a life, as you might do, if you had all the world. You may live as long, Luk. 12:15. Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of those things that he doth possess. You may live as blessed and comfortable lives, though you be poor, as they that have great Estates, Luk. 6:20. Blessed be ye poor —The Apostle Paul, who was so poor, that he had nothing, was always in a joyful condition, 2 Cor. 6:10. David had not more satisfaction when he sat upon the Throne, enjoying all the delights that his Kingdom could afford, than he found when he was in the Wilderness of Judah; for when he was in this Wilderness, he tells us that his Soul was satisfied as with marrow and fatness, whilst his thoughts and meditations were taken up about God, Psal. 63:5,6. Yet in this Wilderness he was destitute of all worldly comforts. He calls it a dry and thirsty Land, where no water was, ver. 1. Many laboring men that work hard all the day to get their living, enjoy more comfortable days and nights than they that have great riches. Eccl. 5:12. The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

5. Though you have but little, yet it is far better with you, than with those that want the Grace of God, and enjoy great Estates, Psal. 37:16. A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked: For what a righteous man hath, he enjoyeth it with the love and favor of God; but a wicked man is hated and abhorred of God, Psal. 5:5. Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Now it is said, Prov. 15:17. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled Ox, and hatred therewith. A righteous man when he hath but little, hath that which sufficeth him, Phil. 4:11,12. But a wicked man is dissatisfied and straitened in his mind, under his greatest abundance, Job 20:22. In the midst of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.

6. Though you have but little, God can bless your little, that it shall become a great deal before you die. Jacob had but little when he went to Laban, but God sent him away with a great Estate, Gen. 32:10. With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. It is the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, Prov. 10:22. And it is all one with God to bless a man that hath little, as him that hath much. Bildad telleth Job after he had suffered great losses, that if he would seek unto God, Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase, Job 8:5,7. But if God should continue you in a low Estate, yet he can so bless that little that he hath left you, that you shall have enough to maintain you as long as you live. As it was with the Manna that fell in the Wilderness, 2 Cor. 8:15. He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack, So it falls out by the providence of God towards his people, that though they have but little, yet they have no lack of what is good for them, Psal. 34:10. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. It may be some will say, we have so little, that we have much ado to live, though provision be plentiful and cheap; but suppose times should grow

hard, suppose God should send a Famine, how should we do then that have so little, that have much ado to live now?

Ans. If God send a Famine, he promiseth to take care of all such as fear him, and hope in his mercy, Psal. 33:18,19. Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in Famine. Psal. 37:16 & 19 ver. compared. In the 16th ver. the Psamist speaketh of the happy condition of the righteous, though they have but little: and whereas some might think, but what shall become of us that have but little, if a Famine should come? He adds, ver. 19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of Famine they shall be satisfied. Job 5:20. In famine he shall redeem thee from death, and ver. 22. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh. When there was a famine in Israel, God did so bless and multiply the widows handful of meal, and her little oil in a cruse, that she, and the Prophet, and all her house were nourished therewith many days, even till God sent plenty in Israel, 1 King. 17:9-17.

SECT. 8.

8. Consider that God hath left you more and better things then he hath taken from you; and therefore how great soever your losses have been, you may well be content. I will put you in mind of some things which God hath left you, which are far better than those things which he hath taken from you.

1. God hath left you his Holy Word, in the reading and meditation whereof, you may delight yourself night and day, Psal. 1:1,2. Now God's word is more worth than all the Gold and Silver in the world, Psal. 119:22. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of Gold and Silver. And with this David comforted himself when he was robbed and spoiled of

his goods, by the means of wicked and ungodly men, ver. 61. You may see also Psal. 19:10, and Psal. 119:14.

2. God hath left you himself for your portion, and though a man hath lost all that he had in the world, as long as he hath God for his portion, he is well enough. When the Jews who were carried captive into Babylon, were spoiled of all their goods, and had seen their dwellings burnt with fire, they comforted themselves with this, that they had God still for their portion, Lam. 3:24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him. All things in all Nations compared with God are less than nothing and vanity, Isa. 40:17. All Nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. And why then should a man that enjoyeth this great God for his portion not rest satisfied in God, but disquiet himself for that which is less than nothing and vanity?

3. God hath left you his Spirit which is in you, and shall abide with you, to teach, sanctify, and comfort, you as long as you live. Joh. 14:16,17. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth—he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. When David had offended the Lord in the matter of Uriah, he was more afraid of having the Spirit of God taken away, than of losing his Kingdom; and therefore he doth not pray, take not my Kingdom, but take not thy Holy Spirit from me, Psal. 51:11. And though he was told by Nathan, that the Sword should never depart from his house, and that God would raise up evil against him from his own house, 2 Sam. 12:10,11. Yet he resolveth if God would but pardon his sin, and continue his Holy Spirit with him, his tongue should sing aloud of his Righteousness, Psal. 51:12,14.

4. God hath left you the true riches which are far better than all the riches of this world. To be rich in Grace, is better than to be rich in Money, or

Houses, or Lands, or any other worldly thing. He that is rich in worldly Possessions, but is not rich towards God, is a miserable man, Luk. 12:19-21, but he that is rich in Grace, though he be a very poor man as to worldly things, is a happy man, for he is an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jam. 2:5. There is not any one Grace of the Holy Spirit, but it is much better than all the Riches of the world. I will instance in three or four Graces by which a man may give judgment of the rest. 1. Wisdom and Understanding by which we know God and the things of God, is of such a precious Nature, that there is nothing in the world worthy to be compared with it. Prov. 3:13-15. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. 2. Faith is more precious than all the gold in the world, 1 Pet. 1:7. That the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perisheth. Faith is not only as precious, but more, much more precious than Gold. 3. The fear of the Lord that is precious treasure, Isa. 23:6. The fear of the Lord is his treasure. 4. A meek and a quiet spirit is a rich ornament far above gold or silver; for these only commend us to men, but a meek and a quiet spirit is an ornament of great price in the sight of God, 1 Pet. 3:3,4.

5. God hath left you all the promises, he hath not taken away one promise from you. The covenant which comprehends under it all the promises, is in all things ordered and sure, 2 Sam. 23:5. When God makes the greatest alterations in our conditions, there is no alteration in his covenant. Psal. 89:34. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Isa. 54:10. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my

peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee. Though you should have lost all that you have, you are as rich in promises as ever, and the promises are more worth than the whole world; and may you not then quiet your minds with what promises God hath left you, seeing you have promises not only for the life to come, but also for the supply of all your wants in this present life? 1 Tim. 4:8, Phil. 4:19.

6. God hath blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ, where they shall not, where they cannot be taken from you. You have lost only earthly blessings, you have not lost any one spiritual blessing. Now this may be a great comfort to you, that notwithstanding what you have lost, yet you are still blessed with all spiritual blessings. The Apostle Paul who had suffered the loss of all things for Christ, Phil. 3:8, was not troubled for his losses, when he considered what God had laid up for him in Christ, but breaks out into blessing and praise, Eph. 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

SECT. 9.

9. Consider what God hath laid up for you in Heaven, and that will quiet and comfort your hearts, though your goods be spoiled, and your houses burnt, and you have lost all the estate that you have in the world, Heb. 10:34. Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves, that ye have in Heaven a better and a more enduring substance. There are such excellent things treasured up for you in Heaven, that the tongues of men are not able to express the goodness or the greatness of them, Psal. 31:19. O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee? We have seen many desirable and excellent things with our eyes, and possibly we may have heard of better things than ever we saw, and we

can conceive of better things in our minds than ever we saw or heard of, but those things which the Lord hath prepared for us in Heaven are far better and more excellent than ever we saw or heard of, or can conceive in our minds, 1 Cor. 2:9. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Such is the excellency of those things which God hath laid up in Heaven for us, that the thoughts and hope of enjoying the glory and joys of heaven, may fill our hearts with joy and comfort under all the losses and crosses that we meet with in the world, Rom. 5:2,3. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also. 1 Pet. 1:3,4,6. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Though a servant of God hath lost never such a fair Inheritance on Earth, yet he hath more cause of rejoicing in that incorruptible Inheritance that fadeth not away, which is reserved for him in Heaven, than of being troubled for the loss of his earthly Inheritance,

SECT. 10.

10. Consider what a great evil it is to murmur, and to be discontented at your losses, and how pleasing and acceptable it is unto the Lord that you should be content and patient under this affliction, which it hath seemed good unto the Lord to lay upon you. The Israelites went through many difficulties whilst they wandered up and down by the space of forty years in the Wilderness, and because they murmured, multitudes of them were destroyed, neither the greatness, nor the long continuance of the affliction

did excuse them from punishment; and this example of God's justice on them is set down for an example to us, that we might forever be deterred from murmuring under any of our afflictions, 1 Cor. 10:10. Neither murmur ye as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. To murmur because God hath taken away our Estates, is the ready way to provoke God to take away our lives, Psal. 106:25,26. They murmured in their Tents,—Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the Wilderness. There is more evil in one repining discontented thought, than there is in all your losses though they be very great; for the one hath only the evil of punishment, the other hath in it the evil of sin. And there is more of evil in the least sin than in the greatest punishment. All God's dealings towards his people are managed with infinite wisdom and infinite love, in order to the promoting of their good and his own glory; and what a heinous sin, and how offensive to God is it for a man to murmur when God is doing of him good, and bringing glory to his Name? Seeing also that whatever way God takes to bring about our good, is contrived with infinite wisdom, and is accompanied with infinite love.

And as it is a great evil to be discontented at any of God's dealings, so it is an excellent, heavenly frame of spirit, and that which is highly pleasing to God, for a man in all things to submit himself to God, and to lie at his foot and to be content with his will, and to say in his heart, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. That is of great excellency which is an ornament to a man in the judgment of a wise, holy, judicious man, that may be deemed more excellent, which is accounted an ornament by the Angels of Heaven; but that is most excellent which is an ornament in the sight of God, and of this nature is a meek and quiet spirit, 1 Pet. 3:4. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. When

the Lord hath brought us to lie at his foot, he is so pleased with this submissive frame of spirit, that he is wont to bestow very great blessings on such as are brought to his foot, and are content that he should do what he pleaseth with them, Isa. 41:2. Who raised up the righteous man from the East, called him to his foot, gave the Nations before him, and made him Ruler over Kings? Contentment under the cross makes great afflictions to seem but small ones, and small afflictions none at all. The Apostle went through very great sufferings, as we may see, 1 Cor. 4:9-13, 2 Cor. 11:23-27, yet having learnt in every estate to be content, Phil. 4:11, he maketh a light matter of all his afflictions, 2 Cor. 4:17. Our light affliction, &c. Rom. 8:18. I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. But a discontented mind thinketh small afflictions great and intolerable burdens. The loss of a gourd which sprang up in a day, and withered in a day, was but a small loss, yet Jonah being under a discontented mind, is so troubled at this loss, that he faints under it, and wisheth that he might die, and is angry with God, and justifieth himself in his frowardness, and saith, I do well to be angry even to the death, Jon. 4:7-9. Discontent is like a nail in a yoke which frets and galls, and pains the neck far more than the yoke itself doth. When God layeth the yoke of affliction upon us, discontent troubles and perplexeth the soul far more than any affliction can do.

SECT. 11.

11. Consider how patiently and contentedly others of God's servants have endured, and gone through far greater losses and sorer troubles than you have met withal. Job lost a very great Estate, and seven Sons and three Daughters, even all that he had in one day, yet all these losses did not provoke Job to repine, or speak one foolish word against God, or do any

other iniquity, but he bore all with such a quiet spirit, that instead of fretting and repining, he blesseth God, Job 1:21,22. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord, in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly: When David was driven from Jerusalem by his son Absalom, who conspired against him, to take away not only his Crown and Kingdom, but his life also; this was a very great affliction, and it was the more heavy, because it was his own son that came forth of his bowels that sought to take away his life, 2 Sam. 16:11, and this affliction came upon him for his sin in killing Uriah, which he knew very well, being foretold of it by Nathan the Prophet, 2 Sam. 12:9-11, yet he submits himself to God under all that was come upon him, and is willing that the Lord should lay whatever else he saw meet, though he should say of David, I have no delight in him, 2 Sam. 15:26. If he thus say, I have no delight in thee, Behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. It was a sad message which God sent to Eli by Samuel, it is ushered in with this Preface, 1 Sam. 3:11. Behold! I do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle; yet Eli upon the hearing of the whole message lieth down at God's foot, and speaketh not one repining word against the Lord; ver. 18. Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. The sufferings of Jesus Christ were exceeding great, yet how patiently did he bear them, Isa. 53:7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. We are exhorted to take notice of the patience of God's servants in their afflictions, in order to the helping us to bear our afflictions with patience, Jam. 5:8,10,11. Be ye also patient—Take my Brethren the Prophets, who have

spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold we count them happy that endure, ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

CHAP. 11. Q.1. Continued:
Some Things by Way of
Practice for the Obtaining
and Promoting a Quiet,
Cheerful, and Contented
frame of Spirit under this
Affliction, of the Loss of
your Estates, Useful also
for other Afflictions.

*T*hus much may suffice by way of consideration, I shall now advise you
*some things by way of practice for the obtaining and promoting a
quiet, cheerful contented frame of spirit under this affliction, of the loss of*

your Estates, which may be useful under other afflictions which the Lord doth at present, or may hereafter try you withal.

SECT. 1.

1. Lay hold on God's Covenant, wherein he hath promised to give his people contented and satisfied minds under all his dealings with them, even when he afflicts them most sorely, and taketh away their most endeared comforts and enjoyments from them. I will mention some promises to this purpose, Psal. 37:19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied: Famine is one of the sorest of God's Judgments, it is worse than War, which is also a very heavy judgment. David chose the Pestilence rather than War, as being the lesser evil, but famine is worse than War, Lam. 4:9. They that be slain with the sword, are better than they that are slain with hunger. Yet in the evil time, in Famine, though the Famine last many days, God promiseth that his righteous servants shall be satisfied. Isa. 58:11. The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought —or as 'tis in the Margin, in droughts. The Prophet useth the plural number to signify that God will satisfy his people's souls in all droughts, or in the greatest drought that ever did, or ever shall come upon any place. When God promiseth to satisfy our souls in drought, it implies, 1. That he will give us satisfied minds under the penury and want of all outward comforts; for drought brings a consumption upon all earthly enjoyments, Hag. 1:10,11. 2. That he will stay, and support, and satisfy our minds under our greatest sorrows. No afflictions bring greater sorrows than Famine which is the companion of drought, Jer. 14:2-4,17,18, Lam. 2:11,12,18,19. 3. It implieth that God will give us satisfied minds when we walk in the view of death, when we see our children and relations dying, and ourselves are ready every hour to faint, and give up the Ghost for want

of bread. The Prophet describing the Famine that was in Jerusalem, saith, Lam. 2:11,12. The children and the suckling's swoon in the streets of the City, they say to their Mothers, where is corn and wine? When they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the City, when their soul was poured out into their Mothers bosom. The wilderness which was a land of drought is called a land of the shadow of death, Jer. 2:6. In times of drought God takes away that which is the stay and staff of a man's life; Isa. 3:1. The Lord doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water. Drought consumes our corn, and wine, and oil, as was hinted before from Hag. 1:11. And of these the Psalmist saith, Psal. 104:15. Wine maketh glad the heart of man, and oil makes his face to shine, and bread strengtheneth man's heart. So that when the Lord promiseth to satisfy our souls in drought, there is implied in this promise, that when the joy of our hearts, when our glory and strength is taken away, when all means of supporting life fail, when we are in the most desolate places, or desolate conditions imaginable, he will under all our troubles give us satisfied minds. The Lord hath not only promised to give us contented satisfied minds under all our troubles, but he hath promised to continue us under a contented frame of spirit, that whatever changes or alterations we pass through, we shall abide satisfied and contented in all estates and conditions. Prov. 19:23. The fear of the Lord tendeth to life, and he that hath it shall abide satisfied, he shall not be visited with evil. The latter clause of this promise is not to be understood, as though they that fear God should not meet with any afflictions, but when God doth visit them with afflictions, they shall have such abundant satisfaction in God, and from God, that they shall not feel any evil in their afflictions. Another promise of the like nature made to such as fear God, we have Psal. 25:13. His soul

shall dwell at ease —dwelling implieth the continuance of the ease and quiet that their souls shall enjoy that fear the Lord, though their outward condition may be full of trouble, yet their souls shall dwell at ease, Psal. 119:165. Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. Which promise Junius interprets to this effect. They that love the Law of God shall enjoy such great peace and tranquility of mind, that nothing that doth befall them shall take away their peace. They may, and do fall into troubles and afflictions as well as other men, but their troubles shall not take away their peace from them. To be content in all estates and conditions is one way whereby we partake of the divine nature, and do resemble God; now it is by and through the promises that we become partakers of the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1:4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature —wherefore in order to the obtaining of a contented spirit under this and all other afflictions, be much in meditation upon the promises of God, and apply them to your own souls, and plead them daily with God, until you have obtained all that fullness of grace and peace which is contained in them.

SECT. 2.

2. When you feel any discontented thoughts arising in your minds, any fretting or repining against God, labor to subdue all such risings of heart, and all discontented, troubled thoughts.

1. By calling to mind such Scriptures as these, Jam. 4:7. Submit yourselves unto God —Lam. 3:39. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Jam. 1:2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations. Heb. 13:5. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he

hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Psal. 46:10. Be still and know that I am God. Joh. 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled, Zech. 2:13. Be silent, O all flesh before the Lord —Rom. 9:20. Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou formed me thus? 1 Sam. 3:18. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

2. Call off your eyes and your thoughts from your temporal losses, and look within the veil to those eternal blessings which are prepared and reserved in heaven for you. Overmuch pondering upon our losses, will stir up grief and sorrow, and cause dejection. Lam. 1:2. She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; and that which among other things caused her sorrow, is mentioned, ver. 7. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction, and of her miseries, all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old—David also found that the remembrance of his losses stirred his sorrows. Psal. 42:4. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me. But the diverting of our minds and thoughts from those good things which we have lost, and those evils which we suffer, and looking to those great things that are reserved in heaven for us, is an excellent means to keep us from fainting and sinking under our sufferings. 2 Cor. 4:8-11,16,18. We are troubled on every side—we are perplexed—persecuted—cast down—always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus—are always delivered unto death —yet in all these sufferings he adds, ver. 16. We faint not —He telleth us also whence it came to pass that he did not faint, ver. 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

3. Chide and rebuke your souls for being cast down and disquieted about worldly things, and call upon them to hope in God, who is your portion, and is able to revive you under your greatest troubles and sorrows, Psal. 42:11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

4. Look unto Jesus Christ to quiet your spirits, he can take down all the risings of the heart, and bring every thought into subjection unto his Holy Will. 2 Cor. 10:4,5. 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 God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Our strength to resist and overcome sinful motions, doth not lie in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ. As we are not sufficient of ourselves to think one good thought, 2 Cor. 3:5. So neither can we of ourselves cast out one evil thought; but through Christ Jesus we shall be able to do all things. The Apostle Paul passed through variety of conditions, he suffered the loss of all things, he was frequently in prisons, in deaths oft, &c. yet he had learned in whatsoever estate he was, therewith to be content; and how did he attain to this? It was by Christ, Phil. 4:13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

SECT. 3.

3. Trust in the Lord at all times, and for all things; live by faith upon the promises, and stay yourselves continually upon God: this will be an excellent means to keep your souls in a quiet, peaceable, contented, satisfied frame, under all the losses and crosses that have befallen you, or may befall you for the time to come. Isa 26:3. Thou will keep him in perfect

peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Psal. 36:7,8. How excellent is thy loving kindness; O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings, they (that is, they that trust in thee) shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures. Though they that trust in God meet with many bitter and sharp afflictions, yet those draughts which God giveth them of the rivers of his pleasures do so sweeten all their afflictions, that they remain abundantly satisfied under all God's dealings with them: See also to this purpose, Jer. 17:7,8. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. Here the Lord promiseth those that trust in him, such a stayed satisfied mind, that they shall be no more disturbed or disquieted by their afflictions than if they met with none at all— And shall not see when heat cometh —though it should be a time of drought, and the drought should continue not only days, or months; but years, yet God will keep their minds from being perplexed and disquieted with cares,— And shall not be careful in the year of drought.

SECT. 4.

4. Labor daily to mortify all inordinate affections to worldly things. Most of that disturbance which ariseth in our minds when we meet with losses or other afflictions, proceedeth from inordinate affection. If neither our desire, nor fear, nor hope, nor love, nor delight, nor any other affection were carried out immoderately after worldly things, crosses and disappointments would not create any great trouble to us. The Apostle Paul who was crucified to the world, was as well content in his wants as in his greatest

abundance, and in his abasements as when most highly honored. Gal. 6:14, compared with Phil. 4:11,12. It was Jacob's immoderate love to his Son Joseph, that did so much deject him, and cause him to mourn so excessively for his supposed death, that though all his Sons, and all his Daughters rose up to comfort him, he refused to be comforted, Gen. 37:33-35. It was Baruch's inordinate desire after great things, that caused him to be so restless in his afflictions, and to faint under his trials, Jer. 45:3,5. David went through many troubles, yet kept his heart in a quiet frame; and one great means whereby he quieted himself, was by getting and keeping his affections weaned from worldly things, Psal. 131:2. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his Mother, my soul is even as a weaned child.

SECT. 5.

5. Give up yourselves to the doing of works of righteousness. Do all the service that you are able for God, and for your generation. Abound always in the work of the Lord, and be ready as far as you have opportunity and ability to do all the good you can for all men; hereby you shall obtain a quiet peaceable frame of spirit under all your troubles and afflictions. Isa. 32:17. The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. The Prophet had threatened great troubles, and of many years continuance, ver. 9-11, and then tells them, how they might retain quietness under all their troubles, namely by working righteousness, ver. 17, and then tells them farther of the blessedness of such as did sow besides all waters, (that is, who took hold of all opportunities to be doing good) they should enjoy peace and quietness when God's judgments came down as thick as hail round about them, ver. 18-20. Working of righteousness promotes contentment in all estates several

ways. I will mention one or two. 1. As it produceth the joy of the Lord in our souls. God is wont to put joy and gladness into the hearts of those that work righteousness, Psal. 45:7. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Psal. 97:11. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Now when God puts joy and gladness into our hearts, we do not much feel the sorrows and troubles that we meet with in this world, Eccl. 5:20. He shall not much remember the days of his life, because God answereth him in the joy of his heart. What Solomon saith of wine and strong drink, Prov. 30:6,7. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts; let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. The like I may say of the joys of the Holy Ghost, when God hath made us to drink of the rivers of his pleasures, though we be poor, and heavy of heart, and ready to perish, they will make us forget our poverty, and remember our sorrow no more. 2. Working righteousness promotes contentment on this account, because they that work righteousness have many sweet visits from God, and enjoy much of God's presence, and the soul is never better at ease, or enjoys more contentment, than when it enjoys God, Isa. 64:5. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways. Joh. 14:23. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

SECT. 6.

6. Take up your rest and contentment in God, and that will keep you from fretting, and vexing, and being discontented under your losses, and all other afflictions, Psal. 37:7. Rest in the Lord—fret not thyself —There is no better way to prevent fretting and vexing at cross providences, than for a

man to take up his rest in God, for he shall find such sweetness in God, that he shall not feel any great bitterness in affliction. When the Spouse was a Lily among Thorns, encompassed with sharp and piercing troubles, when she was scorched with heat of Persecution, she found such sweetness in solacing her Soul with Christ, that she makes no complaints of her Sufferings, but maketh her boast of what she found in him, Cant. 2:3. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. She spoke this, when Christ resembled her to a Lily among Thorns, ver. 2. Now in regard it conduceth much to the helping of us to be contented under all the troubles of this life for a man to take up his rest, and satisfaction, and contentment in God. I shall enlarge a little upon this Head, and show first, That there is enough in God to give the soul of a man full satisfaction and contentment in every state and condition. 2. I shall show how a man may take up his rest and contentment in God.

1. There is enough in God to give the soul of a man full and complete satisfaction; how poor, how afflicted, how desolate soever his condition be in this world: and this may be demonstrated several ways.

1. God is a suitable good; he answers all the wants, all the desires, all the workings and breathings, and motions of the soul of man. All that the soul wants, is to be found in God, Phil. 4:19. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ. All that the soul desires is in God, Isa. 26:8,9. The desire of our soul is to thy name—with my soul have I desired thee in the night. Psal. 73:25. There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Now where there is a supply of all wants, and an accomplishment of all the desires of the soul, there is full satisfaction. That which the soul travelleth after, that which it laboreth for, that which it mainly pursueth and followeth after, is, that it may enjoy God, Psal. 63:8.

My soul followeth hard after thee —which shows, that satisfaction is to be had in God: for when a man hath obtained that which his soul travelleth after, he is satisfied, Isa. 53:10. He shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. God is the center to which all the motions of a sanctified soul do tend. The enquiries of the soul are after God, Cant. 3:3. Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? Joh. 12:21. Sir we would see Jesus. The panting's, and thirsting's, and breathings of the soul are after God, Psal. 42:1,2.— My soul panteth after thee, O God, my soul is athirst for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God? The mourning's of the souls are after the Lord, Zech. 12:10. They shall mourn for him, 1 Sam. 7:2.— All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. The seeking's and cries of the soul are after God, Psal. 63:1. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. Psal. 84:2. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. The main thing the soul hopeth and waiteth for, is God, Psal. 71:5. Thou art my hope —Psal. 39:7. Now Lord what wait I for? My hope is in thee. Psal. 130:5,6. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, in his word do I hope; my soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say more than they that watch for the morning. The expectations of the soul are from him, Psal. 62:5. My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. The boastings and triumphing's of the soul are in God, Psal. 34:2. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. Isa. 25:9. Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. The like may be proved of all other motions of the soul, they tend to God as their center; whence it followeth, that the souls rest is in God, for all things are at rest when they come to their proper center.

2. God is an eternal good. If a man be possessed of never such an excellent portion, if there be fear or danger of losing what he enjoyeth, this is a disturbance to his mind, and hindereth in some measure, the fullness of his contentment; but as for God, there is no cause to fear our losing of him when once we have gotten God for our portion; for when he bestows himself upon a person, he gives himself for a portion to that person forever, Psal. 48:14. This God is our God forever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death. Psal. 73:26. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. The soul of man being of an immortal eternal nature, no less good than that which is eternal can give it satisfaction.

3. God is an all-sufficient Good. Such is God's all-sufficiency to satisfy all the desires of the soul, that a man that enjoyeth God for his portion, need not desire anything either in heaven or earth, to add to his happiness besides God, Psal. 73:25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Such is God's all-sufficiency to satisfy the soul, that if a man be deprived of all worldly comforts and enjoyments, there is enough in God to fill his soul with joy, though all his outward comforts be taken from him, he may still rejoice in God, Hab. 3:17,18. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Such is the all-sufficiency of God to satisfy the soul, that the soul may rejoice and delight itself in God, not only when it wants the good things of this world, but also when it is surrounded with many evils, Rom. 5:3,11. We glory in tribulations—we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we

have now received the atonement. Psal. 44:8. In God we boast all the day long —and this was spoken under a time of great affliction, as may be seen from the following verses, especially ver. 22. For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. We may boast in God all the day long, though it be in such a day, wherein we go in danger of our life all the day long, or wherein we meet with afflictions as hard to be born, and as bitter as death itself.

4. The Lord is able to satisfy the desire of every creature, Psal. 145:16. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. There is that in God which doth or may satisfy all the Saints and Servants of God upon the face of the earth, 2 Cor. 12:9. My grace is sufficient for thee. — This was spoken to Paul, when he was in great perplexity, being buffeted with the messenger of Satan, which was as irksome to his soul, as any thorn can be to the flesh, and God's grace that was sufficient for Paul is sufficient for all that trust in him, not only to give them satisfaction, but such abundant satisfaction that they need not ask anymore, Psal. 37:8. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house—David was so overjoyed with what he met with in, and from God, that he could not ask more than God had given him, 2 Sam. 7:20. And what can David say more unto thee.

5. There is that in God which satisfieth all the Saints and Angels in heaven, Psal. 17:15. As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. The Saints and Angels in heaven are of larger capacity than we are, their faculties are more raised than ours, they can take in far more joy than we are capable of whilst we dwell here below, yet they are as full of joy as they can hold; and this their joy ariseth only from the fruition of God, Psal. 16:11. In thy presence is

fullness of joy —for after they come to heaven, they have no enjoyment of any worldly things, Eccl. 9:6, Luk. 20:35,36, neither do they find any need of anything that is under the Sun, to augment their happiness, Rev. 21:23.

6. God is ἀντάρκης, self-sufficient, and therefore he must needs be παντάρκης, all-sufficient for all his creatures. There is no creature on the earth, nor no Saint or Angel in heaven partaketh of such blessedness, such joy and delight, as the blessed God; and whence ariseth that blessedness and contentment which God enjoyeth? Only from himself, as may be proved by several arguments; I will mention three. 1. Before ever there were any creatures in being, either Men, or Angels, or other creatures, he was God blessed in himself, and lived as happy and blessed a life as he doth now, he hath an innumerable company of Angels to wait upon him. He was God, the same God that now he is, before ever the creatures were produced into being, Psal. 90:2. He ever was, and ever will be infinitely and eternally blessed; and therefore being infinitely blessed in himself, before the world was created, the creatures added nothing to his blessedness. 2. It is evident that God is self-sufficient, and that his happiness and blessedness proceedeth from himself, and that he needeth nothing that any of his creatures can do, to add to his happiness, because the creatures have nothing, and can do nothing but what they have from him, and do by those influences they receive from him. Acts 17:24,25. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all, life and breath, and all things. 3 If all creatures should be annihilated and reduced to their first nothing, God would still continue the same that ever he was, and be as blessed as he is at this day, Psal. 102:25-27. Now seeing there is enough in

God to satisfy every living thing, to satisfy all his servants on earth, and all his Saints and Angels in Heaven; yea, seeing he is self-sufficient, and hath in himself that which sufficeth for his own happiness; is it not unreasonable for any man to doubt, whether there be that in God which may give him full and complete satisfaction in all estates and conditions whatever?

7. As there is full satisfaction to be had in God, so true rest and contentment is to be had nowhere but in God. Take every creature upon the face of the Earth a-part, or take them all together adorned with all their excellencies, and if you consider them abstracted from God and Christ, they are all vanity and vexation of spirit, Eccl. 1:2. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Eccl. 2:17. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. This judgment and determination concerning what is in all creatures, was given by Solomon, one of the wisest of men that ever lived; it was given by Solomon that had as much as his heart could wish, of the things of this world, and made it his work and business to search into, and study what was in the Creatures that might delight and content the heart of man, Eccl. 2:3, and in this his scrutiny, he tells us, ver. 10. Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy —Yet after all his diligence and all his experiments to try what was in the creatures, he gives this account, All is vanity and vexation of spirit: yea which is more than what hath been said, He was a Penman of holy Scripture, he was inspired by the Holy Ghost when he gave this judgment of the creatures, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Now what wise man would seek for his rest in that which is vanity and vexation of spirit? As it was with Noah's Dove when gone out of the Ark, Gen. 8:9. The Dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him, into the Ark. So it will be with us, though we seek for rest everywhere, we shall find

it nowhere but by returning to God in Christ. It is said of the Jews, Jer. 50:6. They have gone from Mountain to Hill, they have forgotten their resting place. If we think to find rest in any place, or any condition, and do not seek it in God, we do but delude ourselves, with vain hopes, for it is to be found only in him, Matth. 11:28,29. Come unto me, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Seeing then that satisfaction is to be had in God, and nowhere else but in God, it is impossible that any man should have true and lasting contentment that doth not take up his rest in God; and therefore whosoever would learn to be content in all estates, must learn how to satisfy himself in and with the Lord, and that is the next thing I am to inquire into, namely,

How we may come to take up our rest and satisfaction in God, in all Estates and Conditions.

1. We must get acquaintance with God. We must acquaint ourselves with his greatness, his transcendent goodness, his infinite mercy and loving kindness, and the rest of his glorious attributes. Raised and right apprehensions of God lay a good foundation for our taking up our rest in God, Job 22:21. Acquaint thyself with him and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto thee. Joh. 14:8. Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us. We can desire no more in order to our satisfaction, than to be filled with all the fullness of God: Now the knowledge of God's loving kindness conduceth much towards the obtaining of this fullness, Eph. 3:19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

2. We must oftentimes set ourselves in a solemn and serious manner to meditate upon the glorious attributes of God; the more we think and contemplate upon God, the more sweetness and satisfaction we shall find in him, Psal. 63:5,6. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness—

when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Psal. 17:15. I will behold thy face—I shall be satisfied —Psal. 104:34. My meditation of him shall be sweet —Our contemplating on God will change us into the image of God, and make us like God, 2 Cor. 3:18. We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Now the more of God's image is found upon us, the more like we are to God, the more satisfaction we shall find in him, Psal. 17:15. I shall be satisfied with thy likeness. But here it will not be amiss to mention two or three cautions to be observed when we set ourselves to contemplate on God, as 1. We must not be curious to pry into God's Essence, but must content ourselves to contemplate on his Attributes. When Moses desired to see the Glory of God, he tells him, Exod. 33:20. Thou canst not see my face — which many expound, thou canst not see or know my Essence; and in way of answer to Moses his request, he proclaims his name, and thereby discovers his Attributes, Exod. 33:19, Exod. 34:5-7, which teacheth us, that if we desire a sight of God, the best course that we can take to behold him, is to take a view of his glorious Attributes, whereby he hath discovered and made known his name to us. 2. We must regulate all our conceptions of the Attributes of God by the Scriptures. This caution is necessary, because Satan can transform himself into an Angel of Light, and present false Ideas or Representations of God to our minds, instead of true ones; he dealt thus with our Parents in innocence, he mis-represented God to them, as though he had envied their happiness, and were not a God of his Word, Gen. 3:1,4,5, and he will much less fear to try us with the like temptation in our fallen estate. It is necessary also, because of the vanity and corruption of our minds, which are apt to form strange, idolatrous notions concerning

God: divers instances might be given of this. Some have thought God to be altogether such a one as themselves are, Psal. 50:21. Others have fancied God to be like the Birds or Beasts, Rom. 1:22,23. But when we conceive of God according to that revelation which he hath made of himself in his word, then we may be sure we conceive of him aright. 3. We must contemplate on God according to that discovery which he hath made of himself in Christ Jesus, of which the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 4:6. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ; for we cannot find sweetness in God out of Christ; it will fare with us when we consider God out of Christ, as it did with the Psalmist, Psal. 77:3. I remembered God and was troubled. A man that hath been a sinner can take no comfort in God without reflecting upon Christ, for he is in himself a consuming fire. But when we look upon God, in and through Jesus Christ, then we may see him to be a reconciled Father, 2 Cor. 5:19, and to be the Father of Mercies, and the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. 1:3.

3. If we would take up our rest in God, we must labor to get and to keep God's Presence with our Souls. When we enjoy God's gracious and blessed presence, we find that in God that giveth us rest and satisfaction under our greatest troubles, Exod. 33:14. My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Moses had been brought up by the space of forty years in Pharaohs Court, where he had fared deliciously every day, and he was now in a dry, barren, solitary Wilderness, which afforded nothing that was good, but was attended with many evils, as Serpents and Scorpions, &c. What manner of place this Wilderness was, we may see, Jer. 2:6, Deut. 8:15. Here he was to continue and wander up and down by the space of forty years, and that in the midst of a perverse and froward people, that in all their

straits did murmur against him for bringing of them out of the Land of Egypt, his troubles sometimes were so great, that we find him praying to God to kill him out of hand, and to make a sudden dispatch of him that he might not see his wretchedness, Num. 11:15. Yet though the troubles he met with in the Wilderness were exceeding great, and many, and of long continuance, viz. forty years his soul had rest in God by virtue of the Divine Presence that went along with him. We may see also the virtue and power that is in God's Presence to quiet and satisfy the Soul in the times of greatest trouble, in Jer. 46:27,28. Jacob shall return and be in rest, and at ease, and none shall make him afraid: fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee —In the former part of the Chapter the Lord had threatened very sore calamities, that they should be compassed about with fear on every side, ver. 5, that the Sword should devour round about, and be satiate, and made drunk with blood, ver. 10,14, &c. and though these calamities should fall most upon other Nations, Jacob was not to go wholly unpunished, but was to have a share therein; yet Jacob having a promise of God's presence, should thereby have rest and ease in all his troubles.

4. We must maintain and keep our communion with God. The oftener we draw near unto God, the oftener we shall find him drawing near to our souls, according to what we find, Jam. 4:8. Draw nigh to God, and God will draw nigh to you —and the oftener God draws nigh to our souls, the more delight and contentment we shall find in him. The Psalmist speaking of such as approach unto God, saith, they shall be satisfied with the goodness of God's House, Psal. 65:4. Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts, we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy Holy Temple. There is

much in conversing with good men, for the filling and satisfying the spirit of one that is truly gracious, he hath his greatest delight in the company of the Saints and Servants of God, Rons. 15:24.— If first I be somewhat filled with your company. Psal. 16:2,3.— My goodness extendeth not unto thee, but to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. If there be such delight and satisfaction in conversing with good men, there must needs be much more in conversing with the great God. One main cause of the disturbance of our minds when we meet with crosses, is immoderate thirsting after the things of this world: communion with God will take off this kind of thirst from the souls, Joh. 4:14. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The oftener we go to God, the more we shall ask and crave of him; and the more we ask of God, the more and better things we shall receive from him in order to the satisfying of our souls, Psal. 105:40. The people asked—and he satisfied them with the bread of heaven. Were but our desires after God greater, we should find more abundant satisfaction in him; for, He satisfieth the desire of every living thing, Psal. 145:16.

5. If we would take up our rest and satisfaction in God, we must set our love upon him. As it is between a man and his Wife, if a man have an entire love to his Wife, he will be so satisfied in her, that he will have no hankerings after any other women: so much is implied, Prov. 5:18,19. Rejoice with the wife of thy youth, let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe, let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love. So it is between a man and God, when a man hath an entire love to God, he will be so abundantly satisfied in God, that he will have no great desire after any other thing besides God: compare Psal. 18:1,

with Psal. 73:25. I will love thee O Lord my strength. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee? When God hath set his love upon his people, he resteth satisfied in them, Psal. 87:2. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion—The Lord hath chosen Zion—This is my rest forever —Psal. 132:13,14, Zeph. 3:17. He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. So also it will be with us, when we have set our love upon God, we shall then take up our rest in God.

6. We must labor to get good evidences of God's love to our souls, and get our interest in God made clear. Clear and well-grounded apprehensions of our interest in God, and of God's love to our souls, do tend much to the bringing of our souls to take up their rest and satisfaction in God, Deut. 33:23. O Naphtali satisfied with favor —Psal. 90:13. O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may be glad and rejoice all our days. Joh. 14:8. Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us. When we know the Father, and know him to be our God and Father in Christ, we have enough, we have that which sufficeth us.

7. If we would take up our rest in God, and abide satisfied in him, whenever anything disquiets our minds, and we have any load and burden upon our Spirits, we must repair to Jesus Christ, and cast ourselves and our burdens upon the Lord Jesus, in so doing we shall find grace and virtue coming out of the Lord Jesus to preserve and sustain our souls in a quiet, peaceable, satisfied frame, in all our troubles, Psal. 55:23. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Matth. 11:28. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

8. We must take up our dwelling in God. He must needs dwell at ease who dwells in God, Cant. 2:3. I sat down under his shadow with great delight. —

Setting implieth continuance. When we do not only come to Christ's shadow, but sit down under it, that will bring great delight to our souls. What is said of God's dwelling in Zion, Psal. 132:13,14. The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation; This is my rest forever, here will I dwell. The like may be said of the people of God, when they have chosen God for their habitation, and taken up their dwelling in God, he will be their rest forever. If any say, when may we be said to take up our dwelling in God? I answer, 1. When we live, and walk, and dwell in love, then we dwell in God, 1 Joh. 4:16. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and he in him. 2. When we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Christ before men, then God dwelleth in us, and we in him, Eph. 3:17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. 1 Joh. 4:15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Understand this of such a confession of Christ as is accompanied with a hearty belief in him, Rom. 10:9,10. And of such as are not afraid to confess Christ in the face of dangers; for it did expose a man to great dangers, and sufferings, to confess the Lord Jesus to be the Christ, in the first breaking forth of the Gospel, as we may see, Joh. 9:22. 3. We take up our dwelling in God, when we maintain an obediential frame of heart, and have respect to his Commandments, 1 Joh. 3:24. He that keepeth his Commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him. The Commandments which the Apostle doth chiefly hint at in this place, are faith and love, as appears from ver. 23.

9. When we feel our souls wandering from the Lord, and seeking their rest in other things besides God, we should say to them as the Prophet said to the Jews, Mic. 2:10. Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest. And we should call upon them to return unto God; and seek their rest in him only,

Psal. 116:7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul —Psal. 37:7. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

10. We must labor after God's Image and likeness, to be holy as God is holy, and merciful as God is merciful and pure as God is pure; for the more like we are to God, the more satisfaction we shall find in God, Psal. 17:15. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.

11. Let us urge God with his promises, where he hath promised to cause us to take up our satisfaction in himself. Jer. 31:14. My people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord; which promise implieth, that when we have the good things of this world we shall not take up our rest in them; and when we want them, we shall not be disquieted for the want of them, but our souls shall rest satisfied with the goodness of the Lord, whether we want or enjoy the good things of this world, Isa. 65:16. He who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth; which implieth, that God will give his people such a spirit, that they shall not count themselves happy and blessed, because of their prosperity, or any outward enjoyments, but in their enjoying the true God for their portion; and if they shall account themselves blessed in the enjoyment of God, then they may bless themselves in all estates and conditions, for God is their portion forever, Psal. 73:26. I might quote more promises to this purpose, that God will cause his people to take up their satisfaction not in any creature comforts or enjoyments, but in himself, as Psal. 36:8. They shall be abundantly satisfied, with what? With corn, and wine, and oil? With riches, and preferments? No, but with the fatness of thy house; thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures. Isa. 58:14. Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord —But these may suffice.

SECT. 7.

7. Give yourselves unto Prayer. Whenever you feel any troubles or burdens upon your minds, repair to the Throne of Grace, and lay open your hearts, and all your maladies and grievances before the Lord, and crave his assistance, that will bring speedy relief to your souls, and keep them in a quiet, peaceable, contented frame in all conditions, Phil. 4:6,7. Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God. And what shall we get by so doing? A settled abiding peace; as the following words hold forth, And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. When we are compassed about with many sorrows, by Prayer we shall have all our sorrows dispelled, and our hearts shall be filled with joy, Joh. 16:24. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. In the 21st ver., Christ faith to his Disciples, Ye shall weep and lament, ye shall be sorrowful —and then tells them, ver. 24, how they should get their sorrows turned into joy, Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. Much of the disquietment of our minds ariseth from troubled thoughts. Dan. 5:6. His thoughts troubled him —Now committing of ourselves and our affairs to God by Prayer, is a great means of establishing our minds, and quieting all troubled thoughts, Prov. 16:3. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

SECT. 8.

8. When we find any discontent or disquietness arising in our minds, we must search into the grounds and reasons thereof, and endeavor the removal of those things which are the causes of our discontent. David took this course to quiet his spirit when it was in a disturbed condition, he inquireth into the cause and reason of that dejection which was upon his soul, Psal. 42:11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted

within me? Hope thou in God. I might here instance in several things which do cause murmurings under affliction, I will mention two or three.

1. Pride of Spirit. Our contending's with God, and quarrelling at his Providences, as well as our contention with our fellow creatures come from the pride of our hearts, Prov. 13:10. Only by pride cometh contention. If our discontent, when God taketh away any mercy, or layeth any affliction upon us, do arise from the pride of our hearts; the way to remove it, is to look upon ourselves to be unworthy of the least of all God's Mercies, and to judge ourselves to have deserved the greatest and severest of all God's Judgments. We are not greater than our Father Jacob, yet he saith of himself, Gen. 32:10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth that thou hast shown unto thy servant. We are not better than those Jews that were captives in Babylon, for there were many of God's precious Servants, as Ezekiel, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (who chose rather to be cast into a fiery Furnace, than to fall down before an Image) Nehemiah, Ezra, &c. yet they acknowledged that they had deserved all the evils that they suffered, and a great deal more; and that it was merely from the mercy of God, that they were not consumed. Daniel acknowledged the sufferings they met with to be so great, as that they could not be paralleled, Dan. 9:12, yet he saith, ver. 14. The Lord our God is righteous in all his works. The Prophet Jeremiah lamenting the great evils that were come upon the Jews, acknowledgeth, that though their sorrows were such as scarce any met with the like, Lam. 1:12. Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow; Yet he saith, Lam. 3:22. It is of the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed. If we were fully convinced that we are less than the least of all God's Mercies, we should not repine when God taketh away our Estates, our Health, our Friends, or any other mercies from

us. And if we were fully convinced that we have deserved to be destroyed, and cast into everlasting burnings, we should not repine when God sends poverty, sickness, or any other evils upon us.

2. Mis-judging of the nature and quality of God's Providences, and of the ends and designs of God in afflicting, causeth some to murmur and repine at those Providences; for which if they understood them aright, they would bless and praise God. God's bringing Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, was a great mercy, his leading them through the Wilderness, was to bring them into the Land of Canaan, and the straits they met with in the Wilderness, were to humble them, and prove them, and do them good in their latter end, Deut. 8:15,16. Yet because they judged amiss of this Providence of God, and thought they were brought into the Wilderness to be slain; when they were in straits they murmured against the Lord, Num. 14:2,3, Exod. 16:2,3. If our discontent spring from this root, the way to remove it, is, 1. To judge nothing before the time, but to wait with patience till we have seen the end as well as the beginning of our afflictions. God's dispensations towards Job were very terrible at the first coming of his troubles, but the end of them was very comfortable and full of mercy, Jam. 5:11. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. 2. We must judge of our afflictions by Faith, and not by sense; we must judge of them according to that sentence which is given of them in the Word of God, and not according to the opinion of the world, or of our own corrupt minds. Sense saith it is a miserable thing to be in affliction, but the word saith, Job 5:17. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth, Jam. 1:12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the Crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Sense

looketh upon afflictions as hurtful things, but faith judging according to the word, saith, Psal. 119:71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. 3. We must look at the wholesome fruit of afflictions as well as their present smart, Heb. 12:11. No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. As the cloud that parted the Israelites from the Egyptians, had a dark side, and a bright side, Exod. 14:20, so have our afflictions: now if we would not sink under our trials, we must look at the bright side as well as the dark side of them, at the spiritual and eternal advantages that we reap by our troubles, as well as the smart and inconveniences that our outward man sustaineth by them.

3. Unbelief and distrust of God is another cause of murmuring when we are brought into straits, Psal. 106:24,25. They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents. If our discontent arise from unbelief, the way to remove it, is to do what we can to strengthen our Faith in the Attributes, Providence, and Promises of God; for if we can but stay our minds, and rest our souls upon God, he will keep them in perfect peace, Isa. 26:3.

I might instance in other grounds and causes of discontent, but because they will fall more properly under the next head, I shall now proceed to the third and last branch of my answer to this question, which is, The answering of those Reasonings and Objections that arise in the minds of those that have suffered loss in their Estates by the late Fire, which hinder them from sitting down contented under this hand of God.

CHAP. III. Q.1. Further Continued: Objections that Hinder the Contentment of those that have Suffered Loss in their Estates, Removed.

S ECT. 1.

Object. 1. My loss is exceeding great, I have lost thousands of pounds, if I had lost but a small matter I could have born it, but in regard my loss is so great, it troubleth my mind exceedingly, and I know not how to bear it with patience.

Answ. 1. Your loss is not greater than Jobs, who was the richest man in the Eastern part of the world, and lost all his Substance, and his Children too in one day, yet he did not repine at the greatness of his loss, but quietly submitteth himself to God, Job 1:21. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

2. How much soever it be that you have lost, God is able to give it you again, and much more also, 2 Chron. 25:9. But what shall we do for the hundred talents? God is able to give thee much more than this. Though God took a great Estate from Job, yet it is said, Job 42:10,12. The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.—The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. Though you should be brought to poverty, yet God oftentimes raiseth poor men to such a high degree, that he maketh them equal to Princes, Psal. 113:7,8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set them with Princes, even with the Princes of his people.

3. It may be God saw that you had too much, and therefore out of his infinite Wisdom, and Love, he hath brought you low. There is danger in having too much, as well as too little. Agur prayeth against too great riches, as well as against poverty, Prov. 30:7,8. Give me not riches lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord. God brought Gideon's Army of two and thirty thousand to three hundred, and gave this reason, they were too many for him to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel should vaunt himself, saying, Mine hand hath saved me, Judg. 7:2-4,7. Possibly for some such reason God hath lessened your Estates, lest you should vaunt yourselves, or think that you were maintained by your Estates, and not by the Providence of God. It may be God saw that your Estates were so great, that they would have hindered your entrance in at the strait gate, Matth. 19:23,24, and therefore he lessened them that you might have a safer and more easy passage into the Kingdom of Heaven. Would you be angry with that Physician that should draw away a great quantity of blood when as it did endanger your lives? You have far less cause of being angry with God

for taking away a great part of your Estates when they did endanger the salvation of your souls.

4. Though your losses have been very great, yet take heed of murmuring and repining against God, lest he take away greater things from you. By murmuring you will provoke God to take away your lives, 1 Cor. 10:10. Neither murmur you, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now to lose life, is a far greater loss, than to lose an Estate. By murmuring you are in danger to lose the favor of God, Num. 11:1. When the people complained, it displeased the Lord, and the Lord heard it, and his anger was kindled. To lose God's favor is more than to lose our lives, for Psal. 63:3. Thy loving kindness is better than life.

SECT. 2.

Object. 2. I have lost all that ever I had, and am quite undone; though my losses had been great, if I had anything left I should have been contented; but will you blame me for being discontented when I have lost all that I was worth in the world, and am quite undone.

Answ. 1. God saw it was needful and expedient for the accomplishing of his designs in order to the promoting of your good, to take away all that you had; for God sends no more of any affliction than we need, 1 Pet. 1:6.— for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. It may be God saw nothing less than the taking all that you had would take off your affections from the world, or lead you to repentance, or put you upon living by Faith; you may be assured, that upon some account or other God saw it needful to take away your whole Estates from you, else he would not have dealt thus with you.

2. By undoing you, God aims at saving of you. He hath undone you in your outward Estates, that he may save your Souls, 2 Cor. 1:6. Whether we

be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual (or as it is in the Margin, is wrought) in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer. The Apostle telleth us here, that the Corinthians enduring the same sufferings which he suffered, was an effectual means of working out their salvation. Now a great part of the Apostles sufferings lay in the suffering the loss of all things, Phil. 3:8. It is God's design to prevent our being undone to all eternity, when he chasteneth us in this world, 1 Cor. 11:32. When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Hath that man any cause to complain whom God undoeth here, to prevent his being undone to all eternity?

3. If ever you forsook any of your enjoyments for Christ, or gave anything to the poor Members of Christ, or any other poor people for Christ's sake, then you have not lost all; for whatever you have given to the poor, or forsaken upon the account of Christ or the Gospel, all that is yours still; it is money laid up in a safe hand, which shall be returned to you with an hundred fold increase, Prov. 19:17. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again. That which is given to the poor is not lost, it is but lent, and it is lent to one that will pay what is lent, with interest. You that could not see the poor lack when you had wherewithal to relieve them, God will not suffer you to lack anything that is good for you, Prov. 28:27. He that giveth to the poor shall not lack. And what is said of that which is given to the poor, the same may be said of that which hath been forsaken upon the account of Christ and the Gospel, it is not lost, but put out to interest, and shall be rendered to us again with a hundred-fold increase; if not in the same kind, in some other thing as good, or better, Matth. 19:29. Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands

for my Names sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. And that this hundred-fold is not meant of the recompense that we shall have in heaven, but of that reward that we shall have in this present life; besides eternal life in the other world, is evident from Mar. 10:29,30, Luk. 18:29,30.

4. Though you have lost all that you had, yet you have not lost any of the Promises or the Providence of God. You are as rich in promises as ever. You have God in many Bonds, which are of more value than the whole world. Though the Fire had consumed all your Goods, yet it hath consumed none of your Bonds, I mean none of the Promises wherein God hath bound himself by promise, that you shall want no good thing, but that he will stand by you all your days, and supply all your needs. I will put you in mind of two or three of those many promises that the Lord hath made to this purpose, which are more worth than all the Gold and Silver of the world, Phil. 4:19. My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ. Heb. 13:5. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Matth. 6:33. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. All these things—that is, food and raiment, and all things that are necessary for this life, of which Christ was speaking in the foregoing verses. And as you have not lost the promises of God, so neither have you lost his providence; he will take as much care of you now your Estates are gone, as he did when you enjoyed them, 1 Pet. 5,7. Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. It is not said, who did care for you, but he careth for you; implying, that God doth, and ever will continue his care for his people.

5. Though you have lost all, yet it is possible for you to be as contented as if you had all the world. The Apostle Paul suffered the loss of all things for Christ, Phil. 3:8, yet he was as full of contentment in his greatest wants, as in his greatest abundance, Phil. 4:11-13. When he had nothing, he was as well content as if he had enjoyed the whole world, 2 Cor. 6:10. As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

6. Have you not forfeited all that ever you did enjoy, either by your unthankfulness, or by not serving God cheerfully for the abundance of all things, Deut. 28:47,48, or by some other means? If so, you have no occasion to complain of God for taking away all that you had from you.

7. Though you have lost all your Estates, say not, we are undone; for if ye be such as have Faith in Christ, and live godly lives, God is yours, and Christ is yours, and Heaven is yours, and this world is yours, and things present, and things to come, are yours, yea, all things are yours, 1 Cor. 3:21-23. All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

SECT. 3.

Object. 3: I do not know how I shall do to live, now I have lost my Estate; if I could but tell how to live, I could be content, though my losses had been very great; but because I cannot tell how I shall live, now my livelihood is taken from me, this perplexeth and troubleth my mind very sorely.

Answ. 1. You have as much left you as you brought into this world, for 1 Tim. 6:7. We brought nothing into this world —we brought not so much as a rag to cover our nakedness withal, Job 1:21. Naked came I out of my Mother's womb. —And though you came into the world in this poor condition, yet you have lived comfortably and plentifully, many days, yea

many years together; and cannot God provide comfortably and plentifully many years more, though all that ever you had be taken from you. If you say, when I was born into the world I had a Father, and a Mother, and other Friends, that took care of me, to provide food, and raiment, and all things for me; but now I have no Friends that will take care for me. I answer, It was not your Parents, or your Friends, that fed you, and clothed you, but God, by them. Jacob lived many years in his Father's house, and afterwards with his Uncle Laban, about 20 years; yet he doth not say his Father fed him for so many years; and then his Uncle Laban nourished him; but he saith, it was God that fed him all the days of his life, Gen. 48:15. The God which fed me all my life long unto this day.

2. How did you live before, by your Estates, or by the Providence of God? Not by your Estates, but by the Providence of God; if you think otherwise, consider such Scriptures as these, Acts 17:28. In him we live, and move, and have our being, Deut. 8:3. Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live. Psal. 66:8,9. O bless our God, ye people—which holdeth our soul in life. Psal. 36:6.— O Lord thou preservest man and beast. Now if it be God, and not your Estates that have maintained you hitherto, why should you distrust him for the time to come? Is the Lord's hand shortened? Is he not as able to provide for you as ever he was?

3. Remember the counsel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Matth. 6:25. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? If the life be more than meat, then doubt not but that God who hath given you your lives, will give you meat to

maintain your lives, and he who gave you your bodies will give you raiment to clothe your bodies withal.

4. If all that you have be consumed, and you have nothing to live upon, live by Faith upon the promise and providence of God, Hab. 2:4. The just shall live by his Faith. We are not to live by Faith for spiritual blessings only, but also for temporal. And we ought to trust God as firmly by virtue of his promises, when we have nothing left, as well as when we enjoy greatest plenty.

SECT. 4.

Object. 4. I do make a shift to live for the present, but now I have lost my Estate, I am afraid I shall come to want before I die, and the fear of want lieth heavy upon me; were it not that I feared I should want, my losses would not much trouble me.

Answ. 1. If you fear want now your Estates are gone, and did not fear any such thing while you enjoyed your Estates, this is a sign that you made your riches your confidence, and not God, and that is a fearful sin, Job 31:24,28. If I have made gold my hope, or have said unto the fine gold, Thou art my confidence—This were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God that is above.

2. Have you not food and raiment sufficient for the day? If so, do the work of the present day cheerfully, and bear the crosses of the day patiently, and cast the care of tomorrow upon God: By tomorrow you may be in heaven, where you shall need none of these things, Matth. 6:34. Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

3. Consider your relation to God. 1. God is your Shepherd, and thereupon you may be assured that you shall not want, Psal. 23:1. The Lord is my

Shepherd, I shall not want. David doth not say I am King of Israel, I shall not want, or I have a great Estate, or I have rich Friends, I shall not want; but he grounds his confidence that he should not want upon this, that God was his Shepherd. Now every godly man in his lowest estate hath God for his Shepherd, and thereupon may be confident that he shall never want. 2. God is your Father, and Fathers will not see their children want when it is in the power of their hands to relieve their wants, Luk. 11:11. If a Son shall ask bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent. When the prodigal Son began to be in want, and goes to his Father for relief, though he had been an ungracious Son, that had spent all his substance in riotous courses; yet when he came to his Father, he calls for the best Robe, and fatted Calf, and entertains him in a very bountiful manner, Luk. 15:15,18-23. 3. You are members of God's household, Eph. 2:19. Ye are of the household of God. Now amongst men it is an infamous thing for a man not to provide for those that are of his own house, 1 Tim. 5:8. If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an infidel. Therefore fear not but God will provide for you, seeing you are of his household.

4. God hath given you many precious promises to assure you that you shall not want, Psal. 34:9,10. O fear the Lord, ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The young Lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. Psal. 37:3. Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed. If your money to but in provision should fail, then God will take care that your bread shall be given you. Isa. 33:16. He shall dwell on high, his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks, bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure.

More promises to this purpose you may see, Matth. 6:33, Phil. 4 19, Heb. 13:5.

5. Consider God's providence towards his creatures, that is a great means to quiet the heart against the fear of want, as 1. Consider God's providence towards the birds, and beasts, and other inferior creatures. There is not one living creature that flieth in the air, or creepeth on the face of the earth, but God taketh care of it, and provideth it food, Psal. 145:15,16. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season, thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. Psal. 104:27,28. These all (that is, all sorts of creatures spoken of in the foregoing Verses) wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season, that thou givest them they gather, thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. There is an innumerable company of these creatures, Psal. 104:25, yet God feedeth them all, and giveth everyone its proper food, and that in due season, and as much in due season as satisfieth them; as is implied in the fore-quoted Scriptures. The birds have no barns, nothing laid up before hand, they have nobody to look after them, they have young ones to provide for; yet God feeds them in the hardest Winters as well as in the warm Summer, Matth. 6:26: Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them, are ye not much better than they? God values a man much more than any other creatures, Luk. 12:7. Ye are of more value than many sparrows. Matth. 12:12. How much better is a man than a sheep? The care that God taketh for man is far greater than the care that he taketh for his other creatures, 1 Cor. 9:9,10. Doth God take care for Oxen? Or faith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written. Now if God provideth bountifully for those creatures that are far inferior to man, and for

whom he doth not care so much as he doth for man, why should we fear he will not provide for us? 2. Consider God's providence towards wicked men, he makes their cup to run over, they are oftentimes full of Wealth, Psal. 17:13,14. Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy Sword—whose belly thou fillest with hid treasure, they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. Wicked men are God's enemies, godly men are his friends: If God fill the bellies of his enemies with his hid treasure, shall we think that he will let his friends starve? 3. Consider God's providence towards the poor, he taketh a special charge of such as are poor, and in distress, Psal. 146:9. The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless, and widow. Psal. 132:15. I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread. The widow that had but a handful of meal, and a little cruse of oil, was maintained therewith, both herself, and her household, as comfortably as those that were owners of Olive-yards, and had great Estates, 1 King. 18:12-15. 4. Consider God's providence towards yourselves in particular, when you hung upon your Mothers breasts, before you knew God, or had an heart to seek him, he took the care of you, and provided for you, and do you think that he will forsake you, and cast you off, now that he hath made known himself unto you, and poured out a spirit of grace and supplications upon you.

SECT. 5.

Object. 5. I have not only lost all that I had, but I have lost much of other men's goods, I am greatly in debt, and by my late losses, I am disabled from paying my debts, and this troubleth me exceedingly when I think how much I am in debt, and that I see no way how I should be able to pay my debts before I die.

Answ. 1. We should avoid running into debt what we can, and when we have contracted any Debts, we should labor to pay them so soon as we can: for this is according to the Apostles rule, Rom. 13:8. Owe no man anything, but to love one another; and therefore in regard of the great uncertainty of all human affairs, we should take heed of grasping after too great things beyond what we can reach with our own stock, and which will necessitate us to borrow great sums of money, lest we should be cut off before we can accomplish the payment of our debts.

2. A man may be a just man, and live and die with a good conscience, though he should not have wherewithal to pay his Debts, provided that he bear this mind to pay every man his own as far as he is able, and purposeth in himself, that if ever God make him able, he will pay all his debts, and to the intent that he may be able, he liveth frugally, and followeth his calling diligently, and seeketh God's blessing upon his labors, Heb. 13:18. We trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly. That man that hath a good conscience, who is willing in all things to live honestly. Justice is defined to be *Constance & perpetuavoluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi*. So that he is to be esteemed a just and righteous man, that hath a constant and perpetual will and desire to give unto every man his own, though some invincible impediments may lie in his way, whereby he may not be able to perform that which he would do. It is true that the Psalmist giveth it for a character of a wicked man to borrow, and not to pay what is borrowed, Psal. 37:21. The wicked borroweth and payeth not again. But this is to be understood of such as fraudulently detain what was borrowed, or disable themselves from paying their debts by idleness, luxury, prodigality, &c. and not of such as would pay all that they owe, but are disabled by God's providence.

3. Cry to God that he would find out some way for you, and raise up some supplies whereby you may be able to pay you Debts. When one of the Sons of the Prophets was felling a beam, and the axe head fell into the water, he cries out to the Prophet, 2 King. 6:5. Alas Master, for it was borrowed. And the widow that was in debt, cries to Elisha to help her, and he did help both the one and the other. The God of Elisha is more merciful, and can do greater things than Elisha; therefore do you that are in debt cry unto the Lord, and see what he will do for you. The willingness of God to help poor Debtors to get out of Debt, may be seen several ways. I will mention two, 1. God wrought two Miracles for this end, to enable those that were in debt to pay their debts. The one was the multiplying the Widows oil, 1 King. 4:1, to the 8th ver. The other was the making iron to swim, that the axe that was borrowed might be restored to the owner, 1 King. 6:5-7. Now God's working Miracles to help poor people pay their debts, may encourage those that are in debt to cry to God to help them. 2. God commandeth us to own no man anything, Rom. 13:8. And we need not doubt but God is willing to help us to keep his Commandments.

And as you should cry to God to help you out of debt, so also humble your souls for your sins; for sometimes contracting of debts is inflicted as a judgment for sin, Deut. 28:15,43,44. If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all his Commandments—The stranger that is within thee shall get above thee very high, and thou shalt be very low, he shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him, he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. The Lord hath promised concerning such as are careful to keep his Commandments, that he will not only help them to pay their debts, but he will so bless them that they shall have no need of borrowing, but shall be in a capacity to lend to others, Deut. 15:4-6. The

Lord thy God shall greatly bless thee—Only if thou carefully hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God—and thou shalt lend unto many Nations, and shalt not borrow. The like is promised, Deut. 28:12,13. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven, to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand, and thou shalt lend unto many Nations, and shalt not borrow, And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail, and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath, if that thou hearken unto the Commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day to observe, and to do them. Plead these promises with God, and encourage yourselves to hope in God to find out some way whereby you may pay your debts. And if God do answer your Prayers, and raise up means for you whereby to get out of debt, pay off your debts as fast as you can. When God had multiplied the oil of the widow that was in debt, the Prophet giveth her this advice, 1 King. 4:7. Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy Children of the rest.

4. It hath been the lot of men, fearing God, to die in debt, and not to leave wherewithal to pay their debts. We read of one of the Sons of the Prophets who did fear God, that died in debt, and left no goods behind him, not anything in the house but a pot of oil; so that the Creditors came to seize upon his Children for bond-men, 2 King. 4:1,2. There cried a certain woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord, and the Creditor is come to take unto him my two Sons, for Bond-men; and Elisha said unto her, What hast thou in the house? And she said, thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil. So that if after all your endeavors you should not be able to pay your debts, but should die in debt, and leave nothing behind you, this may be some

comfort, that this hath been the condition of some eminent Servants of God; for such was this widows husband, he was one of the Sons of the Prophets, he was known to be a man fearing God, Thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord. Yet he died in debt, and left not anything to pay his debts withal.

5. If you should be unable to pay your debts that you owe to men, yet make sure you get your debts, that you owe to God, blotted out of God's Book of Remembrance. Our sins are our debts, Matth. 6:12. Forgive us our debts, compared with Luk. 11:4. Forgive us our sins. We should be more solicitous about getting these debts paid than any whatever; and because we have nothing of our own to pay, we should go to the Lord Jesus, who is our surety, and desire him to undertake for us. What is said of the men of Israel's resorting to David, 1 Sam. 22:2. Everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them. The like should we do, when we have anything burdens, and discontents, and troubles our minds, whether it be debt, or any other distress, we should resort unto Jesus Christ, and he will give us ease, Matth. 11:28, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

SECT. 6.

Object. 6. I am brought into much misery and great straits already by my losses, and may in a little time go through a great deal more, and this doth much disquiet my mind.

Answ. 1. Murmuring will not lessen your misery, but increase it; for there is more evil in the least sin, than in the greatest affliction: murmuring will not procure you enlargement out of your straits, but rather cause God to lay

more burden upon you, until he hath humbled and subdued your spirit, and caused you to accept of the punishment of your iniquity.

2. Call not your afflictions, wherewith God correcteth you for to promote your spiritual and eternal welfare, your misery; rather account them a part of your happiness, Jam. 5:11. Behold we count them happy which endure, Job 5:17. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth, therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. Psal. 94:12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy law. We should be so far from disquieting ourselves, because of our afflictions, that we should account it a matter of great joy when God is pleased to exercise us with diverse temptations, Jam. 1:2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations.

3. Observe in this time of your affliction, what sins God sets before you, as the ground and cause of your present straits, and be excited by the smart of the rod to humble your souls, and set upon the work of repentance, and God will soon turn your adversity into prosperity, and your straits into enlargement, Job 36:8-11,16. If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their work, and their transgression, that they have exceeded, he openeth also their ear to Discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasure—Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness, and that which should be set on thy table, should be full of fatness.

SECT. 7.

Object. 7. My Family is undone by this loss: if I were a single person, and none but myself were concerned in it, I could bear it cheer fully; but I have

Wife and Children, and if God should take me away, I can leave them nothing, and this troubles me.

Ans. 1. It is the duty of Parents to provide for their Children, 2 Cor. 12:14. Children ought not to lay up for their Parents, but Parents for their Children; and such persons as spend their Estates in Gaming, Drinking, or other riotous courses, whereby they beggar their Children, are worse than Insiders, 1 Tim. 5:8. If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel. But if a man out of conscience towards God hath endeavored to make provision for his Children, and God doth frustrate his endeavors, this is his affliction, but not his sin.

2. Though you can leave your Children little or nothing, yet God may raise them up to great Estates, and to high Preferments after you are dead and gone, Job 14:21. His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not. Psal. 113:7,8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with Princes, even with the Princes of his people, Psal. 112:1-3. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his Commandments, his seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed, health and riches shall be in his house.

3. Though you can leave your Children little or nothing, possibly it may be as well, or better for them, than if you had left them great Estates; for their Estates might have been temptations to others to have made a prey of them, and temptations to themselves to have lived in Idleness, Luxury, &c. Children that are left with great Estates, do as frequently miscarry, as those that are left with less.

4. If your Family should be undone by this loss, yet seeing it is the Lord's doing, you must submit yourselves to God. You must leave all your Family concernments as well as personal, to God's disposal. God threatened Eli with the ruin of his Family, and tells him that his offspring should crouch for a morsel of bread, 1 Sam. 2:36. There were such heavy things denounced against his Family, as were enough to make both the ears of everyone that heard thereof to tingle, 1 Sam. 3:11-14. Yet Eli bears all patiently, because it was the Lord's doing, 1 Sam. 3:18. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. As David comforted himself under his Family afflictions, by virtue of God's Covenant, made with his own soul, 2 Sam. 23:5. Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. The like consolation may every godly man draw from God's Covenant, when his Family is, or he foreseeth it is like to be in an afflicted condition.

5. Say not, your Family is undone, though you have lost all your Estate, so that you can leave your Wives and Children nothing; for though a godly man can leave his Children no visible Estate, yet he leaveth them that which is far better than hundreds, yea, than thousands by the year: For,

1. He leaveth his Children in Covenant with God, Gen. 17:7. I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God to thee and thy seed after thee. He leaveth them heirs of the Promises, Acts 2:39. The promise is unto you, and to your Children, Now to be left an heir of the Promises, to be left in Covenant with God, is far better than to be left worth millions of money; for the blessings of the Covenant are better than all riches, and they are also more certain and durable blessings.

2. He leaveth them a stock of alms. God will recompense upon the children the alms, that have been given by their Parents, Onesiphorus his house fared the better for his refreshing of Paul, 1 Tim. 1:16. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me. And the Psalmist telleth us, that the seed of a godly man fareth the better for his acts of mercy, Psal. 37:26. He is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his seed is blessed.

3. He leaveth his Children a stock of Prayers. All the Prayers that he hath put up for his Children's welfare, either civil or spiritual, are kept in God's remembrance, and shall fall down upon their heads and hearts in due time.

4. He leaveth them God's blessing, which is more worth than the whole world, Prov. 20:7. The just man walketh in his integrity, his Children are blessed after him. The fruit of his holy walking shall fall upon his Children, and Children's Children, even to a thousand generations, Exod. 20:6. Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my Commandments. A godly man leaves his Children better than if he left them as great Estates as any men have in the world, better than if he left them a Temporal Crown, or an earthly Kingdom.

SECT. 8.

Object. 8. I have formerly lived high, and in good credit, and esteem, and have kept a plentiful and bountiful Table, and now I am brought low, and must fare hard, and expect to be slighted and disregarded, and I know not how to bear this; had I always lived in a poor mean way, I could have born it better than to go from a high to a low condition.

Answ. 1. It is God that hath brought you low, 1 Sam. 2:7. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich, he bringeth low, and lifteth up. Psal. 75:7. God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another. Now no man

must find fault with any of God's works, Rom. 9:20. O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?

2. It is for our good to pass through variety of conditions, for thereby God awakens the fear of his Name in our hearts, and shakes off our security, and promoteth the holiness of our hearts and lives. A continued course of prosperity, without some changes, oftentimes breeds a great deal of security and forgetfulness of God, Psal. 55:19. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. Jer. 48:11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed. If God by this change beget, or promote the fear of his Name in your souls, that will be better treasure than any that you lost by the late Fire, Isa. 33:6. The fear of the Lord is his treasure.

3. The Lord would have us be so far from being dejected at our crosses, that he would have us esteem them a ground of joy, Jam. 1:2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations. He would have men of high degree rejoice when they are brought low, as well as men of low degree to rejoice when they are exalted, Jam. 1:9,10. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low.

3. Remember how contentedly our Lord Jesus Christ bore his state of humiliation. Though he was Lord of all things, yet for our sakes he became poor, and took upon himself the form of a Servant, and made himself of no reputation to bring us unto eternal glory, 2 Cor. 8:9. Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich, Phil. 2:5-7. Let this

mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant. Yet there never came one discontented word out of Christ's month, neither did there arise one repining thought in his mind, throughout all the days of his humiliation. Observe also how contentedly the servants of God have born their changes, when God hath brought them from a high, to a low condition. When David was driven from his Kingdom, and necessitated to flee to save his life, he quietly submits himself to God, 2 Sam. 15:26. When he that was honored by all the Princes and Elders of Israel, had a man of Belial came and cursed him to his face, David puts up all his railing language with a meek and quiet spirit, 2 Sam. 16:5-11.

5. Though you be brought very low, and those that were your friends in the day of your prosperity, should now slight and dis-regard you, yet if you continue to serve the Lord, he will respect and regard you as much as ever he did, Psal. 136:26. Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth forever, Psal. 106:43-45. They provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity, nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembered for them his Covenant, and repented, according to the multitude of his mercies. If your hearts be lowly, as well as your conditions low, the most high God will respect you more than all the great men upon the face of the earth that are of a proud spirit, Psal. 138:6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar off. Whatever account men may have of the Servants of God, the Lord esteemeth very highly of them. He counts them his Jewels, Mal. 3:17. It is said of them, Isa. 62:3. Thou shalt be a Crown of Glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal Diadem in

the hand of thy God. This high esteem that God hath of you, may abundantly satisfy you under all the slights and dis-respect that you meet with from men.

6. If you be brought to fare hard and meanly by this providence, whereas before you had a very plentiful table, this should not trouble you: for 1. God can make a course and mean diet conduce as much to your health and nourishment, as the richest fare in the world. Daniel and his three companions, who eat nothing but pulse, and drank water, were of a fairer countenance, and fatter in flesh, than all the children which did eat the portion of the Kings meat, Dan. 1:12-15. 2. Though you should be brought to fare very hard, yet as good, and better men than you are, have fared harder than you, and yet did not murmur against God. We read of a hundred men that were the Lord's Prophets, that lived in a cave with bread and water, 1 King. 18:13. John the Baptist was a great person: Our Savior telleth us, that among them that were born of women, there was not a greater than John the Baptist, Matth. 11:11. Yet both his habit and diet were very mean. John had his raiment of Camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey, Matth. 3:4, and he drank neither wine nor strong drink, Luk. 1:15. Our Savior himself eat very course diet, and yet was thankful for it. When many of his friends were about him, that came to hear his word, he had nothing to refresh himself after his labors, and to give to his Disciples and those that followed him, but Barley Bread and Fish, and they had no seats to sit upon at their meat, but the grass; yet Jesus Christ lift up his eyes and gave thanks, Joh. 6:9,10,11. Another time being weary and thirsty, he had nothing better than water to quench his thirst, and he could not with once asking obtain a draught of water to quench his thirst, Joh. 4:6,7,9. Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat on

the well. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink: then saith the woman, How is it that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria? 3. The meaner your diet is, the less will be your temptation to excess. Such as fare deliciously every day, are under a great temptation to make their belly their God, which is a fin that will bring unavoidable destruction, Phil. 3:19, whose end is destruction, whose belly is their God. 4. God hath given such of you as are his servants, his Son who is the bread of life, the bread that came down from heaven, Joh. 6:48,51, and the water of life, Joh. 4:10, and why should you be discontented, because your diet is mean, who have meat to eat that the world knows not of, hidden Manna? Yea, who have the bread of life, and the water of life?

SECT. 9.

Object. 9. I had a very sweet and commodious dwelling, where I lived very comfortably, and now I am greatly unsettled; I know not well where to bestow myself, I cannot light of a house that pleaseth me, but am put to great straits, and am much troubled for the loss of my former habitation, and the inconvenience of my present abode.

Answ. 1. You have as good dwellings still as many servants of God had, who were too good to dwell in the world, Heb. 11:38. Of whom the world was not worthy, they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth. You are as well provided for as the Apostles of Christ. Paul speaking of himself and the other Apostles, saith, 1 Cor. 4:9,11. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place. You are as well, and better provided for in this respect, than Christ himself was when he was in the

world, Matth. 8:20. The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

2. Every godly man hath God for his habitation, and they that have God for their habitation, may well be contented, how inconvenient soever their habitation be in this world. When the Israelites wandered in a desolate Wilderness, by the space of forty years, where they had no houses to dwell in, they were abundantly satisfied in this, that God was their dwelling place, Psal. 90:1. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. That this Psalm was penned when the Israelites were in a wandering unsettled condition in the Wilderness, appeareth both from the Title, and several passages in the Psalm.

3. When you are troubled at the loss, or for the want of a convenient habitation here on earth, comfort yourselves with the thoughts and hope of that glorious house which God hath prepared for you in heaven, 2 Cor. 5:1. We know if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The Disciples had left their houses, and all that they had for Christ, and Christ to comfort them, tells them of the mansions that were prepared for them in heaven, Joh. 14:1,2. Let not your hearts be troubled—In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. The like may I say to you, let not your hearts be troubled at the loss of your houses, though never so convenient, but comfort yourselves with the expectation of those glorious mansions that are prepared for you in heaven.

4. Had not God unsettled you by this Providence, it may be you would have settled upon your Lees, Jer. 48:11. It may be you would have said in your heart, it is good being here, and would have neglected seeking the

Kingdom of God; and therefore God out of mercy to your souls might unsettle you, to cause you to shake off a worldly spirit, and to stir you up to make sure of an eternal habitation in heaven.

5. If you seek unto God, though your houses be laid waste, and yourselves much unsettled, and know not where to fix your habitations, God will provide you as good habitations as ever you had, Psal. 107:4-7. They wandered in the Wilderness in a solitary way, they found no city to dwell in, then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses, and he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Ezek. 36:9,10. Behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you—and the Cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be built. But he adds withal that he expected they should inquire of him to bestow this, and what other mercies are promised in this chap., ver. 37. Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do this for them.

SECT. 10.

Object. 10. I am by this providence disabled from following my Calling, and thereby rendered useless and unserviceable in my Generation, and this is that which most of all troubles and disquiets my mind.

Ans. 1. We should covet earnestly to do God and our Generation much service those few days we have to live in the world, 1 Cor. 15:58. Be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord— It is a sore judgment when our days are spent unprofitably, and inflicted as a punishment of other sins, Psal. 78:32,33. They sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works; therefore their days did he consume in vanity. It argues great displeasure in God, when he suffers us to spend our days in an unprofitable manner, Psal. 90:9. Our days are passed away in thy wrath, we

spend our years as a tale that is told. This Scripture implieth that it is a great token of God's wrath, when we spend our years as a tale—Now then we may be said to spend our years as a tale, when we spend them idly and unprofitably; for there comes no profit in telling of Tales, 1 Tim. 4:7,8. Tales have this Epithet given them in the Scripture, Idle Tales, Luk. 24:11, what our Translation renders, At a tale that is told: some Translations, as the Greek, Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic render, As a spider, or, As a spiders web. The sense is the same, namely when our years are spent in fruitless labors, whereby neither we ourselves, or others are the better for them; this is from the wrath of the Lord.

2. If we do earnestly desire and endeavor to serve the Lord and our Generation, and do long for abilities and opportunities of doing service, and the Lord grant them not; or after he hath made use of us awhile, shall lay us aside, we must in this case submit ourselves to God, and say as David did, 2 Sam. 15:26. If he say thus, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him. There is good reason that we should submit ourselves unto God, if he should refuse to employ us in doing him any farther service, though we have never such strong desires to be serviceable in our Generation: for 1. We are altogether unworthy to be employed in any service for God and Christ, though the meanest that can be thought of. What meaner service could anyone have, than to stoop down and untie Christ's shoes, or to carry his shoes after him. Yet John the Baptist who was a great person, none that was born of women was greater than he, according as our Savior testifieth of him, Matth. 11:11. He was filled with the Holy Ghost from his Mother's Womb, Luk. 1:15. He was such a holy man, that Herod the King of the Jews stood in awe of him, Mar. 6:20. Yet this great, this holy man thought himself unworthy to do the least or

meanest service for Christ, he thought himself unworthy to untie, or carry his shoes after him, Luk. 3:16. One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, Matth. 3:11. Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. 2. When it is in our hearts to do any service for God or our Generation, God approves of what is in our hearts, though we are not able, or want opportunity to effect and bring to pass what we desired to do, for the advancing of the Glory of God, and promoting our own or others good, 2 Cor. 8:12. If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. Though God did not permit David to build him an house, yet God was pleased that there was a desire and purpose in his heart to have done this thing, and commends him for it, 1 King. 8:18,19. The Lord said unto David, whereas it was in thine heart to build a house to my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart, nevertheless thou shalt not build the house— 3. God is the Lord and master of the whole world, and it belongs to the master of the house to take what servants he pleaseth, and to set them about what work he pleaseth, and put them out of his service when he pleaseth. We that are masters of Families take this liberty to ourselves, and shall not we grant that to God which we take to ourselves?

3. If you are troubled because you are disabled from serving God and your Generation, use what means you can to prevail with God to call you again into a way of service, and to render you useful in your Generation, I will commend to you some means whereby you may prevail with God to make use of you to do him service in your Generation. 1. Purge out your sins, and labor for sanctified hearts and lives: Sanctified persons are meet for God's use, and he delighteth to employ them in his Service, 2 Tim. 2:21. If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor,

sanctified and meet for his master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 2. Act your faith upon the promises of God, wherein God hath promised to make his people useful in their places, and serviceable to him in their Generation. I shall name one or two to this purpose, Deut. 30:9. The Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand—for good. Here are two blessings promised, the one is, that we shall be full of employment; the other is, that good shall come of what we take in hand. Something of this nature is implied in that promise, Mine Elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands, Isa. 65:22. God hath promised to make us serviceable all the days of our life, Luk. 1:72-75. To perform the mercy promised—that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. 3. Mourn over your unserviceableness, and cry unto God to admit you into his service, and offer yourselves to undertake any employment that he shall cut out for you, and promise the Lord, that if he will put you into his service, that you will serve him with an upright heart, as David did, Psal. 75:2. When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly. When the Lord seeth such a spirit as this in us, he will soon employ us in some way of service, as Deborah said, Judg. 5:9. Mine heart is toward the Governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. So is God's heart towards such persons as freely offer themselves unto his Service; the Lord ordained it for a Law, that if a Levite came to minister with all the desire of his mind, he should be admitted to minister in the name of the Lord, Deut. 18:6,7, God will assuredly provide work for those that do so highly prize his service as to cry and mourn after it.

4. If you are by this providence disabled from following your former Calling, then follow some other Calling; for God would have no man live without a Calling. When Adam was in Innocency, God would not permit him to be out of employment, but gave him a Calling to employ himself in, Gen. 2:15. And the Lord took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it. Choose rather the meanest Calling, than to live without a calling. And if God so order it, that you must of necessity take a meaner, less honorable, and more laborious calling than you had before, be not discontented at it, but comply thereto with a ready and quiet mind. Moses that was delicately brought up in a Kings Court, by the space of forty years, and was so tenderly nursed up by Pharaohs Daughter, as if he had been her own Son, did not disdain to serve his Generation for several years in a very mean Calling, viz. the Calling of a Shepherd, Exod. 3:1. Now Moses kept the Flock of Jethro his Father-in-law. It is said of David, that he served his Generation according to the will of God, Acts 13:36. When it was the will of God that he should serve his Generation as a Shepherd, he was content to be a Shepherd, and when it was the will of God that he should serve his Generation as a King, he was content to be a King, when afterward God drove him from his Kingdom, and put him into the condition of an Exile, he was content with that condition also, 2 Sam. 15:25,26. It is probable that our Savior himself wrought in the Calling of a Carpenter some time before he entered into the Calling of the Ministry (and that is both a mean and laborious Calling) and this may be gathered from his Countrymen's upbraiding him with this Calling, Mar. 6:2,3. From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to him, that even such mighty work are wrought by his hands? Is not this the Carpenter; the Son of Mary?

If you say we would willingly follow some other Calling, now we are disabled from following our former Callings, but we do not know, what Callings to fix upon. How shall we come to understand our way, and to know what Callings God would have us make choice of, now he hath disabled us from following our former Callings?

Answ. 1. Ask counsel of God what Callings he would have you make choice of, that so you may serve your Generation according to the will of God, and not according to your own will. The Lord hath promised to direct you in your choice, if you seek to him for counsel, Prov. 3:6. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Psal. 25:12. What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

2. Consider your own abilities, both in respect of parts and skill, and also in respect of your stock that you have left to trade withal; and what Calling you find yourself best able to manage, that you may make choice of, and look upon it as God's mind that you should embrace it; for God's distributing of abilities for an employment is one principal ingredient in those things which concur to the making out of our call to that employment, 1 Cor. 7:17. As God hath distributed to every man, as God hath called everyone.

3. Consider how God inclines your heart after you have sought him, for God's call to an employment may be gathered by his inclining of the heart unto it, as in the case of the Levite, Deut. 18:7,8. The ardent desire of his mind was one way of evidencing his call to minister in the Name of the Lord his God.

4. Observe God's providence, which way that guides and leads you, whilst you are waiting upon God for counsel, for that is one way by which God guides and directs us, namely by his providence, Psal. 32:8. I will

instruct, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye. By the eye of God, with which he will guide us, we may understand his providence, for so the eye of God is oftentimes used to signify his providence, as Psal. 34:15, Psal. 33:18,19. It is true, many men run into great mistakes, by pretending to follow providence; but this doth not hinder, but that such as regulate their lives by the word of God, may in many cases receive light and direction from his Providence.

5. Consider what Calling hath least temptations and snares in it, and choose that rather than a calling where you are like to be exposed to many temptations. We ought as much as in us lieth to avoid temptations, else why do we pray, Lead us not into temptation: Matth. 6:13.

SECT. 11.

Object. 11. I am afraid this Judgment came in wrath, and that God is angry with me, because he hath consumed and burnt all my Estate, and that is it which most of all disquiets and troubles my mind; namely, that I look upon this Judgment as coming in wrath, and do apprehend God is angry with me.

Ans. 1. When God sends such great and dreadful Judgments upon any place as the late Fire was, it is a token of his fierce anger, and of his hot displeasure, Psal. 78:21. The Lord heard this and was wrath, so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel: Isa. 66:15. Behold the Lord will come with fire to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

2. If this Judgment did come upon you in wrath, yet you must bear it with a patient submissive spirit, Mic. 7:9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. To fret or murmur at the taken of God's wrath, is not the way to appease, but to increase the indignation of the Lord.

3. If you conceive that God is angry with you, do what you can to pacify his anger. Solomon observes, Prov. 16:14. The wrath of a King is as messengers of death, but a wise man will pacify it. The wrath of God is more dreadful than the wrath of all the Kings in the world; and therefore if you do apprehend God to be angry with you, endeavor to get the Lord's anger pacified and turned away from you. If you ask, How shall we get God's anger pacified and turned away from us. I answer, 1. Turn from your sins, and God will turn away his anger from you; Jon. 8:9. Let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands, who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? Jer. 3:12. Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you. When the people of Israel did at the call of God, turn from their sins, God saith of Israel, Mine anger is turned away from him, Hos. 14:1,2,4.

2. Turn to the Lord Jesus, embrace and lay hold on Christ by a lively Faith, and then God's anger shall be turned away from you, and the Lord will be at peace with you, Isa. 27:5. Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me. By God's strength here understand Christ, who is called, 1 Cor. 1:24. Christ, the Power of God, and the wisdom of God. By taking hold of God's strength, understand believing in Christ, if then you desire to make your peace with God, follow the counsel which God himself giveth you to this purpose, namely, take hold of his strength, for upon so doing, you shall make peace with him. God testifieth concerning Christ, Matth. 3:17. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. If you flee for refuge from the wrath of God, unto Jesus Christ, and cast yourselves into his arms, the Lord will be well pleased with you. 3. Yield yourselves to God to do and suffer his will,

what Solomon saith, Eccl. 10:4. Yielding pacieth great offenses. 'Tis true in this case, though you have greatly offended God, if you yield yourselves unto the Lord, he will be pacified towards you, and turn away his wrath from you, 2 Chron. 30:8. Be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord—and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

4. Though this Judgment be the effect of God's wrath, yet there may be much love in it to many persons that have been great sufferers by this Fire. The Lord showeth love when he takes away our outward comforts and enjoyments, and chasteneth us with his rod, as well as when he loadeth us with his benefits, Heb. 12:6. Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. Psal. 107:39,43. They are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow; who so is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. Now if you would know whether this affliction whereby you have been deprived of so great a part of your Estates, came in love, I will mention two or three things whereby you may know this, and they will be of use to you in other afflictions also. 1. Such afflictions as draw your souls nearer to God, come from love; for it is God's love which causeth him to draw our souls to himself, Jer. 31:3. With loving kindness have I drawn thee —Hos. 11:4. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. Now how do you find it with yourselves in this respect? Do your losses put you upon seeking reconciliation with God? Do they stir you up to seek communion with God? Do they cause you to live and depend more upon his providence and promises? If in any respect you find them drawing your souls nearer to God, you may conclude, that God hath taken away your Estates out of love to your souls. 2. Such afflictions as make us zealous in renewing our

repentance, come from love, Rev. 3:19. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent. 3. Such afflictions as make us more humble, more heavenly minded, or any other way promote the holiness of our hearts and lives come from love, Heb. 12:10. He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. The Apostle speaketh of such as are chastened out of love, as we may see, ver. 6. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; whence it appears that such chastening's as make us partakers of God's Holiness come from his Love.

SECT. 12.

Object. 12. My loss hath been so great, that I am thereby disabled from giving anything to the poor, and this troubleth me very much, that I am by this providence cut off from exercising Charity, and that I cannot relieve the poor as I was wont to do heretofore.

Answer. 1. Though you have lost much, yet if you have anything left, you must will be doing good, according to your ability, Heb. 13:16. To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. This is spoken to such as had suffered the spoiling of their goods, Heb. 10:34, and notwithstanding their sufferings, the Apostle tells them, they must not forget to do good, and communicate to such as were in greater distress than themselves. Such as have nothing to live upon but their labor, should give something out of their earnings, Eph. 4:28. Let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. If any say, but if I that have but little, should give anything to the poor, I may come to want myself. I answer, Never fear being brought to want by doing acts of Charity, Prov. 28:27. He that giveth to the poor shall not lack. If any reply the times are like to prove bad and hard, and therefore I that have but little, had not need give away anything,

but rather ought to lay up all that I can against a hard time. *Answ.* The uncertainty of the times and the evils that are like to come upon the earth, should not hinder our Charity, but make us more abundant in works of Mercy, Eccl. 11:2. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. Lo here the Holy Ghost would have us give frequently, and give bountifully, a portion, and that not to one or two, but to seven, and also to eight, when any evils are like to come upon the earth.

2. Though you have lost much, and have but little left, you may give as much as you did before, I mean that which God will count as much. The widow that gave but two mites, cast more into the Treasury in Christ's account, than those rich men that cast in abundance, Mar. 12:41-43. Jesus sat over against the treasury, and behold how the people cast money into the Treasury, and many that were rich cast in much, and there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites which make a farthing; and he called unto him his Disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, then all they which have cast into the treasury. God looks at the heart more than the gift, and the more freedom of heart and willingness of mind there is in our gifts, the better they are accepted with God. A man of a mean estate may give with as free a heart as a Prince, 2 Sam. 24:23. All these things did Araunah, as a King, give unto the King. Yet he was but a mean man compared with David, he called David his Lord, and stiles himself David's servant, ver. 21, both he and his Sons were at hard labor when David came to them, they were threshing wheat, 1 Chron. 21:20. The Churches of Macedonia were very poor, and under many afflictions, and yet in the depth of their poverty and their greatest afflictions they abounded in liberality, 2 Cor. 8:1,2. We do

you, to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3. Be not discouraged from acts of Charity, because you can give but very little in comparison of what you did before; for the least and smallest acts of Charity done in a right spirit, shall have a great and glorious reward. What a small matter is it to give a cup of cold water, yet such as give a cup of cold water only, having nothing more or better to bestow, shall in no wise lose their reward, Matth. 10:42. Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a Disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. Our Savior's rule is, Give alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you, Luk. 11:41. They that have much must give much, and they that have but mean things must not be discouraged, because it is but little and inconsiderable that they can do, but must give alms of such things as they have. If there be a willing mind to give much, God accepts of a man's willing mind, though he be able to give but very little, 2 Cor. 8:12.

4. If your losses be so great that you are able to give nothing to the poor, yet you are not disabled from exercising of your Charity. You may pity them as much as ever you did: and it is said, Prov. 19:17. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord. You may draw out your souls to them, which shall not go unrewarded, Isa. 58:11. If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day. You may pray for them, you may stir up others to relieve them. You may give much spiritual alms when you are so low in the world that you have not one penny of money to give, as Peter said, Acts 3:6. Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee.

So though you have no silver nor gold to give, yet you may give that which is far better. Though you be poor you may enrich your Families, and your Relations, and your Neighbors with spiritual riches, 2 Cor. 6:10. As poor, yet making many rich. By your godly discourse you may minister grace to those that hear your discourse, Eph. 4:29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. To minister grace to any man is a thousand times better than to minister the good things of this world to him. It is said, Prov. 10:21. The lips of the righteous feed many, and ver. 20. The tongue of the just is as choice silver. When you have not bread to feed the hungry withal, feed as many as you can with the fruit of your lips. When you communicate instruction and knowledge to any persons, you communicate that which is more worth than all the silver and gold in the world, Prov. 3:13-15, Prov. 8:10,11.

SECT. 13.

Object. 13. If it had been purely the hand of God that had taken away my Estate, I could have born it, but it was my folly and indiscretion to betrust my Goods in such hazardous places; if I had had my wits about me, and not have left my Goods where I did, I might have saved all, or most of them; and in regard that I lost them by my indiscretion in the ordering of my affairs, this is that which doth chiefly trouble me.

Answ. 1. Who is it hideth wisdom and counsel from men in time of straits? Is it not the Lord? Job 12:17,20. He leadeth counselors away spoiled, and maketh the Judges fools. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. When a wise man's understanding faileth him, it is because God taketh it away, 1 Cor. 1:19. I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the

understanding of the prudent. What is said of the Ostrich, she leaveth her eggs in the earth, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them, because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding, Job 39:14-17. The like may be said in your case, if you left your Goods in any place for security, and did forget, or not consider the hazard and danger that was in that place, or suffered damage by any other indiscreet action, it was because God deprived you of wisdom, and did not impart understanding to you to order your affairs for your outward advantage. The hand of God is not only in all our afflictions, but in every circumstance of every affliction, Rom. 11:36. Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. If you take not heed, while you fret at your own indiscreet carriage, you will be found guilty of fretting against the Lord, who withheld wisdom and counsel from you.

2. Though you managed your affairs indiscreetly, yet God managed everything that befell you, and every other person in this dreadful Fire with infinite wisdom, Eph. 1:11.— Who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. There is not only the will, but the eternal counsel of God, in all the acts of his providence. That of the Psalmist, O Lord how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all, Psal. 104:24, may be applied to the works of God's providence, as well as of creation. Therefore let this satisfy and quiet your minds, though you carried yourselves indiscreetly, God managed everything that befell you with infinite and eternal wisdom.

3. If there were anything of folly and indiscretion in the loss of your estates, make a spiritual improvement of the hand of God that went out against you, by reason of your imprudent management of your affairs, and

then your loss will turn to your great gain. I will hint two or three things to you for this purpose. 1. Do not think yourselves sufficient to manage your affairs without asking counsel of God, Jer. 10:23. O Lord I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Had you asked guidance of God how to dispose of your Goods, and not gone upon your own heads, it may be he would have directed you to some other course, whereby your substance might have been preserved. 2. Dread walking in your own counsels for the time to come, and be afraid of undertaking any business of moment, how wise and prudent soever you apprehend yourselves to be, until you have asked and received counsel from God. To walk after our own counsels, is well-nigh as bad as to walk after the lusts of our own hearts, they both speak an evil state, Psal. 81:12. I gave them up unto their own hearts lust, and they walked in their own counsels. It may be you thought such and such places very secure, and thereupon you bestowed your Goods there, without asking of God to guide you, and they were all burnt; if so having smarted for leaning to your own understanding, learn with the burnt child to dread the fire. Never venter more upon your own wisdom in any business of moment till you have sought God, and are directed by him what to do. 3. Learn hence to live by faith for guidance and direction under all sudden and unexpected emergencies of God's providence. We have a promise of being guided continually by God, Isa. 58:11. The Lord shall guide thee continually. We had need be daily eying this and such like promises, because we know not what difficulties and unexpected trials every day may bring forth.

SECT. 14.

Object. 14. I have been a man very industrious in my Calling, and by God's blessing on my labors, I had gotten a very fair Estate, wherewith I

and mine lived comfortably, and it troubleth me much that I should lose in one day what I have been laboring for many years.

Ans. 1. When God bloweth upon our labors, and all our earnings are like that which is put into a bag with holes, he calleth upon us to consider our ways, Hag. 1:6,7. Ye have sown much, and bring in little, he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. If the loss of all that ever you earned do stir you up to the practice and exercise of repentance, ye will say one day, It is good for me that I was afflicted.

2. Though you have lost all that ever you earned in your Callings, you have not lost the reward of your diligence, industry, and faithfulness which you used in following your Callings, for that shall have an eternal reward in heaven. As it is with servants, besides, that wages, and temporal reward which they have from their Masters for their work, they shall have an eternal reward from Christ in heaven, Col. 3:24. Knowing that of the Lord, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. So it is in other Callings, they that serve Christ faithfully and diligently in any Calling, though never so mean shall be rewarded forever in heaven for their service, besides those temporal blessings which are cast in upon them in this life, Matth. 25:23. Well done good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Therefore I may say to you that are mourning, because you have lost all that you have labored for, as the Prophet Jeremiah did in another case. Jer. 31:16. Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord.

SECT. 15.

Object. 15. I am conscious to myself of much unrighteousness in the getting of my Estate, and now my Estate that I get unrighteously is gone, my guilt remains, and I am full of horror in my conscience, because of my sins, and especially for this sin of unrighteousness.

Answer. 1. Such as have been guilty of unrighteousness in their dealings, have great cause of being troubled, for they have committed a heinous sin, which without repentance will most certainly shut them out of the Kingdom of Heaven, 1 Cor. 6:9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. It is a sin which brings down great wrath from God, 1 Thess. 4:6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. It makes a man an abomination to God, Deut. 25:16. All that do unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord thy God.

2. If you be troubled in conscience for your unrighteousness in your dealings with any man, your way to get the trouble of your Conscience removed, and to get true and solid peace, is to do these things.

1. Confess your sin to God. You have wronged God as well as your neighbor by your unrighteousness in your dealings, and therefore 'tis meet that you should confess your sin to God, and humble your souls in his sight, and if you do confess your sin to God, he will pardon this sin of unrighteousness as well as other sins, 1 Joh. 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. Leave off, and cease from all unrighteous courses for the time to come, and then the Lord will pardon all your former unrighteousness, although your sin in that kind hath been exceeding great, Isa. 55:7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return

unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, Isa. 1:16,18. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil—Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

3. Flee to the Lord Jesus Christ, and lay hold on him by a true and lively Faith. Jesus Christ hath satisfied his Father for all our unjust dealings, and all our other sins, 1 Pet. 3:18. Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. And such is the efficacy of his death and sufferings, that whatever guilt troubleth the Conscience, the Blood of Christ is able to remove it, 1 Joh. 1:7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin. And everyone that believeth in Christ, shall partake of the virtue and efficacy of his Blood, for they shall be justified from all things whatsoever they have done, either against God or men, Acts 13:39. By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. The Corinthians were guilty of unrighteousness in their dealings, 1 Cor. 6:8. You do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. And ver. 11. Such were some of you, that is, unrighteous, thieves, covetous, extortioners, &c. as is expressed, ver. 9,10, Yet he adds, ver. 11. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Whence you may see, that the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all kinds of unrighteousness, as fraud, theft, extortion, &c.

4. Labor to get into Covenant with God. It is one branch of God's Covenant to pardon his people's unrighteousness, Heb. 8:10,12. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel—I will be merciful to

their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.

5. Make restitution to those whom you have wronged, whatever you have taken from any man, by fraud, or extortion, or any other unjust way, restore it to him again, Ezek. 33:15,16. If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die, none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him, he hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Without restitution where God gives ability, and opportunity, there can be no true peace of Conscience, Job 20:18-20. According to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein, because he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor, because he hath violently taken away an house which he built not, surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired. Other Scriptures concerning restitution you may see in Lev. 6:2-7, Luk. 19:8. If any say, we are not able to make restitution, the wrongs we have done are so great, and we have so little left us by the Fire. I answer, 1. The Scripture even now mentioned may give some direction in this case, According to his substance shall the restitution be. If you are not able to restore the whole, restore as far as you are able. 2. If you be not able for the present, resolve as soon as God makes you able, that you will restore whatever you have gotten unjustly, and perform your resolution, and God will accept of your willing mind, although you want ability to perform what your mind stands to, 2 Cor. 8:12.

SECT. 16.

Object. 16. I am one that serve God, and make conscience of keeping his Commandments, and both I myself, and many others that walk close with

God, have lost all our Estates, and are undone by this Fire, when as many that have no fear of God before their eyes, but live profane and dissolute lives, have suffered nothing at all by this Fire, and this troubleth me very much, when I consider how God hath dealt with many of his servants, and let others that serve him not, go free: I am ready to fret at the prosperity of the wicked, and to repine at my own afflictions.

Ans. 1. Such a temptation as this did sorely assault David, when he looked upon his own afflictions, how he was plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning, and looked also upon the prosperity of the wicked, and saw that they were not in trouble, or plagued like other men, he was envious at the foolish, and ready to stumble at this providence, and was almost brought to say, that all the pains he had taken in Religion was to no purpose, Psal. 73:2-5,12-14. And if such an eminent servant of God as David was assaulted with this temptation, we need not wonder if some of God's servants in these days meet with the like.

2. When we are puzzled, and ready to stumble at the mysteriousness and unaccountableness of any of God's providences, either towards the wicked or the godly, it is good for us to have recourse to the word of God, which is the best commentary in the world to explain the nature of God's Providence. When David was under the forementioned temptation, he got relief by going into the sanctuary, Psal. 73:16,17. The word fully sets forth the miserable estate of the wicked in the height of their prosperity, and the happy condition of godly men in their greatest adversity, which may take off the Servants of God from repining at their own afflictions, or fretting at the prosperity of wicked men.

3. It is not meet that we should take upon us to find any fault with God in his governing the world. It is enough for us to mind our own duty, we must

let God alone to do what seemeth him good. Christ rebuked Peter when he having heard what should befall him, was curious to know what suffering John should meet with, Joh. 21:21,22. Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. You may see enough in yourselves to justify God in all that he hath brought upon you, and which if God saw meet to spare some remarkable sinners, to try if his longsuffering and goodness, and the riches of his Grace will lead them to repentance? Shall your eye be evil because God is good? It is expressly against the mind of God that you should fret at the prosperity of wicked men, Psal. 37:1,7. Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity—fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

4. They that are the servants of God have no cause to repine at their own afflictions, or the prosperity of wicked men, as may appear on diverse accounts, as 1. When the servants of God are chastened here, it is that they may not be condemned hereafter, 1 Cor. 11:32. When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. But when wicked men enjoy a constant course of prosperity, and the goodness of God doth not lead them to repentance, it is a token that God intends to destroy them forever, Psal. 92:7. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever. 2. The Servants of God get more good by their afflictions than wicked men do by their prosperity, for Prov. 1:32. The prosperity of Fools shall destroy them; but the Servants of God can say with David, Psal. 119:71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. 3. The blessings of this life are all the portion that God intends to give unto wicked

men, Psal. 17:13,14. Deliver my soul from the wicked, from the men of this world, that have their portion in this life; but as for godly men, God hath laid up wonderful great things for them in heaven, Psal. 31:19. O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee. He hath laid up for them such things as we never saw with our eyes, nor ever heard with our ears, 1 Cor. 2:9. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. He hath made godly men heirs of himself and of all that he hath, Rom. 8:17. If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ. Now Christ is Heir of all things: Heb. 1:2, and if Christians be joint heirs with Christ then are they also heirs of all things: As the Father of the Prodigal Child quieted his eldest Son, when he repined and was discontented with the bountiful Provision that was made for his Brother, the fatted Calf, and the best Robe, a Ring, &c. when himself had not a Kid to make merry with his friends, Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine, Luk. 15:31. The like may be said to such of the servants of God as are under a temptation to repine and be discontented, because they have but little, and many that follow the same course that the Prodigal Son did, enjoy abundance, and have sustained no losses, ye shall ever be with the Lord, and all the blessings of Heaven are yours, and shall be your portion forever. And is not this enough to satisfy you.

SECT. 17.

Object. 17. It is not my own private loss that troubleth me, I could have born that contentedly, if only I and my family had suffered and been undone by this fire, but I am much afflicted to see London the glory of England, the chief and principal City of this Nation laid in ashes, and to see so many magnificent Buildings, so many goodly Churches, stately Halls, fair

Houses, useful Hospitals, &c. demolished, It grieves me to think of the many thousand families that are ruined by this fire, and of the great difficulties and hardship that many good people are like to meet with, who lived very comfortably whilst this City stood in its glory. It troubleth me to think of the decay of Trade, and poverty, and misery, that is like to follow this dreadful fire. If it had not been such a general, sore, and dreadful judgment I should not have been so much troubled at it as now I am.

Ans. 1. It is the duty of all the Inhabitants of this Land to lay to heart, and to be much affected with this solemn hand of God. When the Amalekites had burnt Ziklag with fire it is said, 1 Sam. 30:1,4. David and the people that were with him lift up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. Ziklag was not comparable to London, and if David and his men wept till they could weep no more for the burning of such a small place as Ziklag, How ought we to be affected at the burning of this famous City? When but two persons Nadad and Abihu had suffered by fire that came out from the Lord and devoured them, God calls to all Israel to lament the burning, Lev. 10:1,2,6. Let your Brethren the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. How much more are we concerned to bewail this burning wherein so many thousand families have been sufferers? When Nehemiah heard of the affliction of the Jews, and that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the Gates thereof burnt with fire, he sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed, Neh. 1:2-4, yet then Nehemiah was in a very good condition in respect of his own concernments, he was in great favor at the Court, he had a great place, he was the Kings Cupbearer, and when the King demanded of him, why his countenance was so sad, seeing he was not sick, he replied, Neh. 2:3. Why should not my countenance be sad, when the City

the place of my Fathers Sepulchers lieth waste, and the Gates thereof are consumed with fire? We have many instances of the Servants of God, lamenting God's judgments on others though they themselves have escaped, Isa. 22:4,5. Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, labor not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the Daughter of my People, for it is a day of trouble and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord God of Hosts in the Valley of Vision. It was not his own loss or damage that the Prophet thus lamented, but the spoiling of the Daughter of his people; so Jeremiah bemoans the sufferings of the Jews as if they had been his own, Jer. 8:21. For the hurt of the Daughter of my People am I hurt, I am black, astonishment hath taken hold on me. He did not only weep for the miseries of the Jews his Country-men, but even for the Moabites, when God was sending great judgments upon them, Jer. 48:31,32. Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab, mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres. O Vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer. —

2. Though we may and ought to mourn, yet we must not repine at the desolations that are come upon this famous City, or at the sufferings that any Persons or Families, or the Nation in general hath sustained, or may sustain by this fire, but we must all acquiesce in the will of God, and to promote our submission to God under this dreadful judgment. I will suggest some few considerations, and so conclude my Answer to the first Question.

1. It is God that hath done this great work, the hearing whereof maketh our ears to tingle, and therefore though it cause never so much sorrow to ourselves or others, we must not say one word by way of murmuring and complaint against God, Isa. 38:15 What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it, I shall go softly all my years in the

bitterness of my soul. Psal. 46:8,10. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the Earth,—Be still and know that I am God. The reason that made Eli submit, when God did to his particular family such things as made both the ears of everyone that heard thereof to tingle, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. 3:11,18. The same should make us submit, when such things befall a City or Nation, as maketh the ears of all that hear thereof to tingle. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

2. God will bring glory to his Name by this sore judgment which he hath brought upon this great City, Isa. 25:2,3. Thou hast made of a City a heap, and of a defensed City a ruin—Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the City of the terrible Nations shall fear thee. So also Isa. 5:16, in some of the former verses the Prophet had been speaking of God's judgments, as ver. 9. Many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair without Inhabitant. And ver. 13,15. Their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst; the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, —then he tells us, that all these judgments should make for the exalting of God's glory, ver. 16. But the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. Now the exalting of God's glory is of more concernment, than all the Cities, or Kingdoms of the whole world. All things are and were created for God's pleasure, and therefore it is meet that he should glorify himself by, and with all persons and things, as seemeth good in his sight, Rev. 4:11. Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. We should yield up all that we have, and are, unto God to be disposed of by him as he pleaseth, so he will but glorify his own

Name, Joh. 12:27,28. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour; Father glorify thy Name.

3. Though this be a very sore and dreadful judgment, and many persons fearing God have suffered deeply by it, yet truly God is and still will be good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. When Jerusalem the chief City of Judah was ruined, and Judah's fall followed upon Jerusalem's ruin, yet God commandeth his Prophet to tell the righteous in the midst of these desolations, it should go well with them, Isa. 3:8,10. Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory. Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. When God visited Ariel with flaming fire, and other dreadful judgments, he promiseth to comfort and support his own people in the midst of those troubles, Isa. 29:6,19. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with Thunder and Earthquake, and great Noise, with Storm and Tempests, and the Flame of devouring Fire. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. God will make this dreadful judgment so far from hurting any of his servants, that it shall conduce to the good of all that love his Name throughout the whole Land, Rom. 8:28. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

5. Whatever this great City was before its desolation to its own Inhabitants, or to any of God's servants in any parts of the Nation, all that God will be to his own people now that it is laid waste. I shall instance in some particulars.

Was this City the glory of England, the Crown of the Nation, and are we ready to say with Phinehas his wife, when we behold the ruins of this City, The glory is departed from England, or with the Jews when Jerusalem was burnt with fire. The Crown is fallen from our head, Lam. 5:16, yet let us remember what God promised when he destroyed the glory of Ephraim, Isa. 28:4,5. The glorious beauty which is on the fat Valley shall be a fading flower,—In that day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a Crown of glory, and for a Diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people; and what is promised, Isa. 60:19.— The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, and Isa. 62:3. Thou shalt be a Crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a Royal Diadem in the hand of thy God.

Was this City a place of great strength and security, and do we look upon the strength of the Nation to be much weakened by this dreadful fire? Yet remember God is the strength of his people, Psal. 28:8. The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed, Isa. 25:4. Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. When the servants of God have no walled Cities to dwell in, God will be a wall of defense to them, Zech. 2:5. I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her. When they have no Bulwarks to secure them, God will be their strong City, and his Salvation shall be their Bulwarks, Isa. 26:1. In that day shall this Song be sung in the land of Judah, we have a strong City, Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks: This Song was composed for a Song of praise after the Jews were delivered from the Babylonish captivity, and at their return they found Jerusalem in a broken, ruinous condition; and some might be afraid to inhabit a City that had no

Walls nor Bulwarks, whereupon the Prophet tells them, their City should be strong, though it wanted outward Fortifications; for God would appoint Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks.

Was this City a Sanctuary, and a place of refuge to any of the Servants of God? Though this place of refuge be gone, the Lord continueth still to be a refuge to his people, Psal. 62:8. Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him, God is a refuge for us. Psal. 9:9. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Isa. 8:13,14. Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, And he shall be for a Sanctuary, Psal. 46:1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Isa. 32:2. A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as Rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land. This Man is the Man Christ Jesus, as he is styled, 1 Tim. 2:5. And at this time when the Prophet Isaiah tells the Jews that Christ should be their hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm, he tells them of the destruction of their Forts and Strong-holds, ver. 14.

Was this City a place of great Traffick, where was vended all kind of merchandize, and so was a means of enriching many, and is trading now like to fail, and poverty coming upon multitudes like an armed man? There is a merchandize which is better than the merchandize of Silver and Gold, of which we may read, Prov. 3:13,14. Happy is the man that findeth Wisdom, and the man that getteth Understanding, for the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of Silver, and the gain thereof than the gain of fine Gold. They that are by this fire disabled from trading, may Trade as freely for the merchandize of Wisdom as ever. When money fails God will be instead of money to us, Job 22:25. The Almighty shall be thy Gold. So

the words may be rendered, as is intimated in the margin of our Bibles, and according to this Translation the sense is, When God doth not give his people silver and gold, he will be in the stead of silver and gold unto them, and they shall be as well by virtue of what they enjoy in him, as any man that hath the greatest plenty of Silver and Gold in the whole world. When your Treasure that was wont to come in by trade faileth, he will give you better Treasure, Isa. 33:6. The fear of the Lord is his treasure.

Are many thousand Families undone by this burning? God can as easily provide for many thousand Families that have nothing to live upon, as for one man. What had all Israel to live upon when they were in the Wilderness besides the promise and providence of God? There grew no corn in the Wilderness, neither were there any Markets to buy provision, yet God fed them forty years together in that desolate Wilderness in a bountiful manner, although there was a very great multitude of them. There went about six hundred thousand out of Egypt, besides children, Exod. 12:37.

Are divers Hospitals and Alms-Houses wherein many poor people lived comfortably, consumed by this Fire, and thereby the poor in danger to perish? The God of these poor people continues still as mindful of their necessities, and as able to help them as ever he was. God by his providence taketh a special care of poor distressed persons, especially of such poor people as pray to him. He hath laid up good things in store for them, Psal. 68:10. O God, thou hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. When they cry to God, he will hear them, Psal. 69:33. The Lord heareth the poor. When they are in want, he will provide bread for them, Psal. 132:15. I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread. When they are in affliction, he will deliver them, Job 36:15. He delivereth the poor in their affliction. When any would deprive them of their right, the Lord

will maintain their right, Psal. 140:12. I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. When they are oppressed, if they do but sigh to him, he will help them, Psal. 12:5. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety, from him that puffeth at him. When they have nobody that looketh after them to relieve them, God will relieve their necessities, Psal. 146:9. The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and the widow. When they are in straits and dangers, if they commit themselves to the Lord, he will be their helper, Psal. 10:14. The poor committeth himself unto thee, thou art the helper of the fatherless.

5. This great and dreadful Judgment shall promote the spiritual and eternal welfare of all the Servants of God that have been sufferers by it. It shall promote their spiritual welfare by making them more holy. Heb. 12:10. He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. None of God's chastening's are for the hurt, but for the profit of his Servants, Psal. 119:71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. Though their afflictions may cause sorrow and grief, yet they tend to the bettering of their hearts, Eccl. 7:3. By the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better. And as this judgment shall promote the spiritual, so also the eternal welfare of the Servants of God, 2 Cor. 4:17. Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us, a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory. Jam. 1:12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Thus having laid down some considerations, for the quieting and satisfying their minds that have been great sufferers by this Fire, and proposed some things to be practiced in order to the obtaining of

contentment, and having answered the most material pleas, that without being removed, might hinder those that have been great sufferers from sitting down satisfied under this hand of God. I shall add no more about the first question, but proceed to the resolution of the second.

CHAP. IV. Question 2.
What use should they
make of their Affliction,
who have lost their Whole,
or Any Part of their
Estates by the late
Dreadful Fire?

SECT. 1.

Answ. 1. Look upon this rod, as the rod of God. It is both our duty and our wisdom to eye God in all our afflictions, and to look upon them as coming by his appointment, Mic. 6:9. The Lord's voice crieth unto the City, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name, hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. There is no trouble whatever comes of itself or by chance, Job 5:6. Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground. But all afflictions that come either upon Nations or particular

Persons are sent and ordered in all their circumstances by the wisdom and Providence of God, Amos 3:6. Shall there be evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it. Isa. 45:7. I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil, I the Lord do all these things. Eph. 1:11. Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. When any man is made poor, it is the Lord maketh him poor, 1 Sam. 2:7. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich, he bringeth low and lifteth up. When a Fire is kindled in any City, it is God sends it, and gives it a commission what houses it shall devour after it is kindled, Hos. 8:14. I will send a Fire upon his Cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof. Though men or other creatures may be the instruments of conveying our afflictions to us, yet we must look beyond them to the hand of God; for as Christ said to Pilate, Joh. 19:11. Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: the same is true of every Christian, no man or other creature hath any power to do him hurt, except it be given them from God. There is such an hedge about the persons and substance of every godly man, that the Devils themselves cannot touch anything that belongeth to him, without leave from God, Job 1:10. When the Sabaeans had taken away Jobs Oxen and Asses, and the Chaldeans his Camels, and Satan had caused Fire to consume his Sheep, and a great Tempest had blown down the house where his Children were eating and drinking, and had slain them, he looks beyond all these instruments to the hand of God, and cries, Job 1:21. The Lord hath taken away. We wrong and be-lie the Lord when we do not own him either in his word, or in his works, Jer. 5:12. They have be-ried the Lord, and said it is not he. —

SECT. 2.

2. Lay to heart this hand of God that hath been lifted up against you. To be stupid and senseless under the hand of God, is a great sin, yet many persons offend in this kind, Isa. 42:25. He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of Battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. Jer. 5:3. O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved, thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction. It is mentioned as an aggravation of Pharaohs sin, that he did not set his heart to the Judgments of God, but made a light matter of them, Exod. 7:23. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. When we do not lay to heart God's Judgments, either threatened or executed, this provoketh God to curse our very blessings, Mal. 2:2. If ye will not hear, if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my Name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. When we do not lay to heart the Judgments of God, we despise the chastening of the Lord, and we must be as careful to avoid that sin, as we are, not to faint under God's Correction, Heb. 12:5. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. Such as are careless and regardless under the rebukes of God, do thereby provoke God to destroy them, Psal. 28:5. Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, he shall destroy them and not build them up.

If any ask, how should we lay this affliction to heart?

I answer, 1. Consider in your hearts, that by this Judgment God testifieth against you, that there is or hath been something in your hearts or lives that is displeasing to him, Ruth 1:21. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought

me home again empty—The Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me: and therefore commune with your hearts, and say, what have I done to provoke the Lord to deal thus with me?

2. So lay to heart this affliction, as to humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. The Lord threatened Israel with dreadful Judgments when they continued stout and proud under former Judgments, Isa. 9:9-12. All the people shall know, even Ephraim and the Inhabitants of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, the bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the Sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into Cedars; therefore the Lord will set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind, and they shall devour Israel with open mouth, for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. God expects that we should humble ourselves when his hand is lifted up against us, 1 Pet. 5:6. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Lam. 3:19,20. Remembering mine affliction, and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

3. So lay to heart this affliction, as to mourn more for the sin that provoked God to send this affliction, than for the affliction itself, Lam. 5:16. The crown is fallen from our head, woe unto us that we have sinned. They bewail their sin more than the loss of their dignity. They do not say, woe unto us, the Crown is fallen; but woe unto us that we have sinned, Jer. 3:21. A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the Children of Israel, for they have perverted their way, and forgotten the Lord their God. Their Cities were burnt, as we may see, chap. 2:15. Yet they bewail the perverting of their way, more than the burning of their houses.

4. So lay to heart this affliction, as to be restless until you have gotten the sins pardoned that brought down this Judgment upon you, Psal. 25:18. Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. Psal. 79:7-9. They have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place. O remember not against us former iniquities, let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low; help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy Name, and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy Names sake. When they were brought low, and their dwellings were laid waste, they beg twice with great earnestness for the pardon of their sins. O remember not against us former iniquities—purge away our sins for thy Names sake.

5. Lay to heart this affliction, till you find your hearts willing, and resolved by God's Grace to part with all your sins. This is God's end and design in all afflictions to purge out our sins, Isa. 27:9. By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin. And this is our duty when we are corrected by God, to abandon and forsake all our sins, Job 34:31,32. Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend anymore, that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

6. So lay to heart this affliction, as to give glory to God, Mal. 2:2. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my Name—But of this more afterward.

SECT. 3.

3. Mind the teachings of God under your present afflictions, consider and see what it is which God would have you to learn from this dreadful Fire, which hath consumed so much of your, and other men's Estates. As God instructed the Jews out of the midst of the Fire, Deut. 4:12. The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the Fire. So if your ears were open, you might

hear God speaking to your souls, and instructing you by this Fire. God is wont to teach his people something or other by every affliction, if so be they listen diligently to the voice of his rod, Psal. 94:12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law. It is true, that some persons learn nothing by their afflictions, but the reason is, not because God communicates no instruction to them, but because they either regard not, or do not understand the voice of God, Job 33:14. God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. Prov. 1:24. I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. We wrong our own souls when we slight the instruction of the Lord, whether he instruct us by his word, or his rod, Prov. 15:32. He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own soul; and do provoke God to depart from us, Jer. 6:8. Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate —If any say, what is it that God would have us learn by our great losses that we have sustained in the late Fire? I answer, The way to understand the voice of the rod, is to make use of the word; by searching into the word, we may come to know the meaning of the rod, and to understand what it is which God would have us to learn by our afflictions, as may be gathered from Psal. 94:12. I shall hint a few things to you from the word, that God would teach you by this sore affliction.

1. God would have you learn that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lord, Jer. 2:15,19. His Cities are burnt without inhabitants— Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.

2. God would have you learn to fear and stand in awe of his great and glorious Majesty, and to be afraid of thinking, speaking, or doing anything

that may displease him, Zeph. 3:6,7. Their towers are desolate, I made their streets waste, that none passeth by, their Cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant, I said surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction —

3. God would have you learn righteousness by this judgment, Isa. 26:9. When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

4. God would have you learn obedience by what, you have suffered: It is said of Christ, Heb. 5:8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. This was the lesson that God learned David by his afflictions, Psal. 119:71. It is good for me, that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. Wherefore endeavor to obey God more readily and cheerfully, more exactly, and more sincerely than you have done heretofore.

5. God would have you learn contentation in every condition, both how to want as well as how to abound, Phil. 4:11,12. I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content; I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. When the Apostle wrote this Epistle, he was in bonds, Phil. 1:13, and had suffered the loss of all things, chap. 3:8, and under his sufferings God taught him this excellent lesson of being content in every state.

6. God would teach you by this affliction to pray oftener, and to pray better, to pray more spiritually, more fervently, more humbly, and more believingly, Jam. 5:13. Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. When God's judgments are abroad, God stirs up his people to pray early in the morning, and late at night, and to pour out their souls and spirits in prayer,

Isa. 26:8,9. Yea in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee? The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee: with my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early; for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Our Lord Jesus always prayed fervently, as we may see, Heb. 5:7. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, was heard in that he feared. But when he was entered upon his sufferings, he prayed more earnestly than ever, Luk. 22:44. Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.

7. Learn hence the vanity and uncertainty of riches, and all worldly enjoyments. This sudden and unexpected desolation which is come upon this great City by this dreadful Fire, wherein such a multitude of Houses, and such a great quantity of Goods have been consumed, and many thousand Families have been impoverished, doth plainly teach us the great uncertainty of worldly things; and the great uncertainty that is in riches, and all other worldly things, may teach us several lessons; as,

1. Seeing we have no assurance of worldly things, we should not set our eyes, or our hearts upon them, we should not desire them inordinately when we want them, nor delight in them inordinately when we have them, or mourn beyond measure when we lose them, Prov. 23:5. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not, for riches certainly make themselves wings, they flee away as an Eagle towards heaven. They should be so far from drawing our hearts, that they should not draw our eyes after them, 1 Cor. 7:29-31. The time is short, it remaineth, that both they that have Wives be as though they had none, and they that weep, as though they wept not, and

they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.

2. Seeing riches are uncertain things, we should not trust in them, but in the ever-living unchangeable God, 1 Tim. 6:17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

3. Seeing we have no certainty that we shall enjoy our Estates one day, we should not defer doing all the good we can with what God hath given us, Eccl. 11:2. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. Luk. 16:9. Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. We should not slip any opportunity of doing good, Gal. 6:10. As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. We should not defer doing good with our Estates, so much as one day, when God gives us ability and an opportunity to do good, Prov. 3:27,28. With-hold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it; say not unto thy neighbor, go and come again, and tomorrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.

4. Seeing there is such an uncertainty in the things of this world, this should teach us the vanity and folly of seeking to get the things of this world by unjust just and unrighteous courses, Prov. 21:6. The getting of treasure by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. They that seek to get riches by lying, or any other sinful means, do seek their own death and destruction. And what folly is it to cast away an immortal soul, and to lose an eternal Kingdom (for, Know ye not that the

unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:9.) for gaining of that which a man is not sure to enjoy one day? There is a greater uncertainty in riches that are gotten unrighteously, than in those that are gained by honest means; for God threatens such persons with this Judgment, that they shall enjoy what they get dishonestly but a very little while, Jer. 17:11. As the Partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool. Prov. 13:11. Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathereth by labor shall increase. And as such riches continue but a very little while, so the Owners have little or no comfort in them while they do enjoy them. The accusations of a guilty conscience, and the curse of God that goes along with their Estates, troubles them more than their Estates do them good. Zophar speaking of a man that is unjust in his dealings, saith, he shall have no joy in his riches, nor quietness in his Conscience, Job 20:17-22. He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter, that which he labored for, he shall restore, and shall not swallow it down; according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein, because he hath oppressed, and hath forsaken the poor, because he hath violently taken away an house that he built not, surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly—In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits, every hand of the wicked shall come upon him. Diverse other passages there are in that Chapter, very dreadful to such as get their Estates in a dishonest way, which I forbear to transcribe. And this is farther to be considered concerning those riches that are gotten unjustly, that although such riches are of very short and uncertain continuance, the sin and guilt which is contracted in the getting of them will remain upon the conscience a long time; and if there be not a timely, and

sincere repentance, a man's sin will accompany him to the Grave, Job 20:11. His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust, and from thence his sins shall go along with him to the Judgment-seat of Christ, Eccl. 12:14. God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. And from thence a man's sins shall go along with him to Hell, and there vex and torment him like fire to all eternity, Jam. 5:3. Your gold and your silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire; ye have heaped up treasure together for the last days.

SECT. 4.

4. Consider your ways that you may find out for what sin or sins God hath laid this affliction upon you. When God blasted the Jews in their Estates, he called them with great earnestness to consider their ways, Hag. 1:5-7. Now therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways, ye have sown much, and bring in little—He that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways. When Job had lost his Estate, and was under other afflictions also, he was very desirous to find out for what sin it was that God contended with him, Job 13:23. How many are mine iniquities and sins; make me to know my transgression and my sin. Job 10:2. Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. If any ask, How shall we come to find out for what sins God is contending with us;

I answer, 1. Go to God and pray to him as Job did, to show you why he contendeth with you, Job 10:2, Job 13:23, and after you have sought to God to discover the cause of his controversy, observe what sins he brings to your remembrance, and sets before you, and gives you secret intimations from

his Spirit, that for such and such a sin he is now correcting you. In times of affliction, God is wont by his Spirit to present to the view of our souls the sins for which he corrects us, Job 36:8-10. If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions, that they have exceeded, he openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

2. Consider what sin your consciences suggested to you when God first sent your affliction upon you, for oftentimes God represents to us by our consciences, what the sin is for which he contendeth with us, as we may see in Josephs Brethren, Gen. 42:21, They said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

3. Search into God's word, and see for what sins God hath been wont to impoverish men, and bring them low in their Estates; and also for what sins God hath either threatened or inflicted this dreadful judgment of Fire; and if you find that you have been guilty of the same sins, you may then know for what sins you have suffered the loss of your Estates by the late Fire. I will give some instances in both kinds. 1. For what sins God hath either threatened or inflicted this dreadful judgment of Fire, and they are such as these.

1. Unbelief and distrust of the promises and providence of God, Psal. 78:21,22. A fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel, because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.

2. Neglect of prayer and seeking after God, Amos 5:6. Seek ye the Lord, and ye shall live, lest he break out like Fire in the house of Joseph and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel.

3. Forsaking of God after we have had much experience of God's goodness in guiding us, and delivering us from many dangers, and bestowing many other mercies upon us, Jer. 2:15,17. His cities are burnt without inhabitant. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?

4. Neglecting to sanctify the Sabbath in a spiritual manner, or profaning it by doing servile or sinful works, Jer. 17:28. If ye will not hearken to me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem, on the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

5. Taking of bribes to pervert justice, Job 15:24. The congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the Tabernacles of Bribery.

6. Oppression, and unjust and unrighteous dealings, Job 20:19,26. Because he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor, because he hath violently taken away a house that he built not, all darkness shall be hid in his secret places, a fire not blown shall consume him, it shall go ill with him that is left in his Tabernacle.

7. Pride, Idleness, fullness of Bread, and neglect of the poor, Ezek. 16:49,50. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, Pride, fullness of Bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her Daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, and they were haughty, and committed abomination before me, therefore I took them away as I saw good. Now the way by which God took away Sodom for these sins was by fire, Gen. 19:24.

8. Resting in outward Reformation without seeking after a renewed heart, Jer. 4:4. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the fore-skins of your heart, ye men of Judah and Inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

9. Murmuring at any of God's Providences, though they be such as bring us into straits, Num. 11:1. When the people complained, it displeased the Lord, and the Lord heard it, and his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the Camp.

10. Mocking and misusing of God's Ministers, 2 Chron. 36:16-19. They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy, therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the Sword,—And they burnt the House of God, and brake down the Wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the Palaces thereof with fire.

11. Changing God's Ordinances, and breaking his Covenant, Isa. 24:5,6. Because they have transgressed the Laws, and changed the Ordinances, broken the everlasting Covenant; Therefore hath the Curse devoured the Earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate, therefore the Inhabitants of the Earth are burned, and few men left.

12. Sins of uncleanness, as Fornication, Adultery, &c. for these God consumed Sodom and Gomorrah with Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, as we may see, Jude 7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to Fornication, and going after

strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

13. Idolatry. Deut. 32:16,21-24. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods,—They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities,—A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest Hell, and shall consume the Earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the Mountains; They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction.

Several other sins for which God hath threatened this judgment of fire, you may see in the first and second chapters of Amos, and also in other Scriptures which I shall not mention.

Consider also for what sins God hath taken away or diminished others estates, and brought them low and afflicted them with poverty, and that may help you to find out your sins for which God hath impoverished you. It is true, that sometimes God takes away his Peoples estates to exercise and try their graces, as we see in the case of Job; but usually when he brings us low and bereaves us of our Estates, it is for our sins, Psal. 106:43. They provoked him with their counsels, and were brought low for their iniquities. Isa. 42:24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? Jer. 15:13. Thy Substance and thy Treasure will I give to the spoil, without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders. Now the sins for which God is wont to take away our Estates and bring us low, and to send poverty, are such as these;

1. Unthankfulness for what God hath given us, and instead of honoring God with our Substance, abusing it to the dishonor of God, Hos. 2:8,9. She did not know that I gave her Corn and Wine, and Oil, and multiplied her

Silver and Gold which they prepared for Baal; Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the season thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax given to cover her nakedness. Two sins are here mentioned as the ground why God would take away not only what was for delight and ornament, as Wine, Oil, Gold, Silver, &c. but what was necessary to their subsistence, as Corn, and Wool, and Flax to cover their nakedness; the one was, they did not know, that is, take notice of, and acknowledge that it was God gave them their food and raiment, and riches, and so consequently did not give God thanks for them; the other was, they served their lusts, they prepared that for their Idols which God gave them for his own service.

2. Pride, When men grow proud of their riches God oftentimes takes them away, Prov. 29:23. A man's pride shall bring him low.

3. Neglect of works of mercy; Prov. 11:24. There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

4. Making over-much hast to be rich, Prov. 28:22.— He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil Eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

5. Not heeding the Commandments of God, Deut. 28:15,33,43,44. If thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his Commandments, all these Curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee, —Thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always,—The stranger that is within thee, shall get up above thee very high, and thou shalt come down very low; He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him, he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

6. Not serving God cheerfully for the abundance of all those good things which the Lord hath given us, causeth him to take them away, and to bring

us into straits, Deut. 28:47,48. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine Enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things.

7. Rejoicing at the ruin and sufferings of others; He that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished, Prov. 17:5, and the punishment which God sometimes sends on such persons, is the spoiling of their Goods and loss of their Estates, Ezek. 26:2,12. Because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, She is broken that was the Gates of the People,—They shall make a spoil of thy Riches and make a spoil of thy Merchandise, and they shall break down thy Walls, and destroy thy pleasant Houses.

Following of vain persons; Prov. 28:19. He that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

9. Gluttony and Drunkenness, Prov. 23:21. The Drunkard and Glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

10. Refusing instruction; Prov. 13:18. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth Instruction.

11. Oppressing the Poor, and giving of bribes to the Rich; Prov. 22:16. He that oppresseth the Poor to increase his Riches, and he that giveth to the Rich, shall surely come to want.

Thus by observing out of the Word of God, for what sins God hath either threatened or inflicted this judgment of Fire; and for what sins God hath impoverished others; and then considering how far you have been guilty of any of those sins, you may find out for what sins you have suffered loss in your Estates by the late Fire.

4. Consider for what sins God did oftenest rebuke you either by his Word or Spirit, or Providences, before this affliction came upon you; and if those

sins were not reformed for which you have been often rebuked, then it is probable, that they are the sins for which God sent this affliction, Deut. 8:5. Thou shalt consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. Now Parents first admonish and reprove their Children, and if reproofs will not make their Children reform, then they take the rod and correct them. When you have found out the sin for which God is correcting you, you must confess it to God, and humble your souls for it, and apply yourselves to Christ for the pardon of it, and beg grace from God to help you to leave and forsake it; and this leadeth me to the next head.

SECT. 5.

5. Look upon this affliction as a loud call from God to repent of and turn from all your transgressions; and therefore let this judgment awaken you to set upon a speedy, zealous, and unfeigned exercise and practice of the duty of Repentance; for this is one main thing that God aims at when he sends his judgments upon us, the stirring of us up to a present, and zealous, and sincere repentance, Ezek. 18:30. I will judge you, O House of Israel, everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord God, repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Rev. 3:19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore, and repent. When the Lord contended with the Jews by the Sword and by Fire, his design in these judgments was to bring them to a speedy and sincere repentance, Joel 2:3,12. A Fire devoureth before them, and behind them a Flame burneth; the Land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate Wilderness; yea and nothing shall escape them,—Therefore also now saith the Lord, turn ye, even to me, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your heart

and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. When the Cities of Judah were burnt with fire, Isa. 1:7, the design of God was to wash away the filth of the Daughters of Zion, by the Spirit of Judgment, and the Spirit of burning, Isa. 4:4. If therefore you would answer God's design in this Fire, let this burning put you upon cleansing of yourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and of the spirit. God sets a brand upon such persons for notorious sinners, who are not led to repentance by such an awakening judgment as fire, Amos 4:11. I have overthrown some of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a Fire brand plucked out of the burning, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I might give you several reasons why this judgment should put you upon repentance and reforming your lives; ponder upon these two or three:

1. If you will not be reformed by this judgment, though this was a great and sore punishment, God will lay far greater and heavier afflictions upon you, Lev. 26:23,24. If ye will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sin.

2. If this judgment will not lead you to repentance, nor any other means that God shall use with you to turn you from your iniquities, you will perish eternally, and be cast both body and soul into Hell fire, and that is a far more dreadful fire, than that which consumed your houses and goods, Luk. 13:3. Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.

3. God lays his command upon such as are under affliction to depart from iniquity, Job 36:8-10. If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their work, and their transgression, that they have exceeded; he openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from Iniquity. Now 'tis a contemning of God,

to rebel against his Commandment; and it must needs be a great provocation for a man to go on in his sins, when God commandeth him to return from iniquity. Wherefore let this affliction prevail with you to set upon the work of Repentance and Reformation, and that you may do it the more effectually take these few directions.

1. See that you turn from, and cast away, not only some, or most of, but all your transgressions, Ezek. 18:30,31. Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin; Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed,—for why will ye die, O House of Israel?

2. Your affliction should cause you to cast away your sins forever. Some deal with their sins as Felix did with Paul, Act. 24:25. Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. They put away their sins for a little time, but afterwards when their afflictions are removed, and they have a convenient season for the commission of their sins, they call for them and embrace them again. When Pharaoh saw the Lightnings, and heard the mighty Thundering's, he was willing to let Israel go out of Egypt, and humbled himself for his sin; but when he saw that the Hail, and the Lightnings, and Thunders were ceased, he hardened his heart and sinned as much or more as ever, Exod. 9:27,28,34,35. But this is not such a repentance as God expects in a time of affliction, he would have us abandon our sins forever, Job 34:31,32. Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend anymore; that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Hos. 8:14. I will send a Fire upon his Cities, and it shall devour the Palaces thereof; and what fruit did God expect that this fire should produce? Such a forsaking of their sins

as to return to them no more, Hos. 14:8. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do anymore with Idols?

3. Let this affliction cause you to reform your hearts as well as your lives, Jer. 4:14,15. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from Mount Ephraim. Ezek. 18:31.— Make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O House of Israel?

4. Reform your Families as well as your own Souls: If you discern anything amiss in your Wives, or in your Children, or in your Servants, or in any that sojourn with you, endeavor as much as lieth in you to reform it; for this God expects of all those that return to him by true repentance, that they should put away all iniquity far from their Tabernacles, if they be such as have Families committed to their charge, Job 22:23. If thou return to the Almighty,—thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy Tabernacles, Job 11:13,14. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him, if iniquity be in thine hand put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy Tabernacles, Gen. 35:2. Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean. Joshua did not think it sufficient to serve God himself, but resolveth to engage all his family to serve the Lord, Josh. 24:15. As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.

5. Set upon the work of Reformation speedily, make no delay, not so much as one day, Psal. 119:60. I made hast, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments. Heb. 3:7. Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, —Sin is of that subtle insinuating nature, that though a man be under convictions of an absolute

necessity of reforming his life, and take up (as he thinks firm and strong) resolutions to repent of his sins, if he do not presently set upon the work of repentance, if he put it off but a day, he is in danger of having his heart hardened, and of continuing in an impenitent condition, Heb. 3:13. Exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

6. You had need look to yourselves that your hearts be sincere and real with God in the exercise of repentance; for some that seem to be very forward and zealous in humbling of their souls, and reforming their lives in times of affliction, do but flatter and dissemble with God, and do not turn to God with their whole hearts, but only in a feigned manner, Psal. 78:34-37. When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and inquired early after God, and they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer: Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his Covenant. Jer. 3:10. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.

Now you had need take good heed to yourselves, that you do not let this judgment pass away without being brought to a true and unfeigned repentance by it; for repentance is a very hard work, and few persons are wrought upon by their afflictions, to forsake their sins and reform their lives, though God follow them with one affliction after another till he hath even consumed and destroyed them, Rev. 16:10,11.— They gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains, and their sores, and repented not of their deeds, Rev. 9:20,21. The rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the

works of their hands, that they should not worship Devils, and Idols of Gold and Silver,—neither repented they of their Murders, and of their Sorceries, nor of their Fornication, nor of their Thefts. Prov. 27:22. Though thou shouldest bray a Fool in a Morter with a Pestel, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. And this is not only the case of profane men, but of most that profess themselves to be the people of God, many of them when they are corrected for their sins, do yet go on still in their trespasses: When God sent such heavy calamities upon the Jews, that they were more bitter than death, notwithstanding they were by Profession the people of God, and their calamities were so great; yet scarce any of them were led to repentance by them, Jer. 8:3,6. Death shall be chosen rather than life, by all the residue of them that remain in this evil family —But were they bettered by these great afflictions? Not a man of them are brought to repentance, as you may see, ver. 6. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done? Everyone turneth to his course, as the Horse rusheth into the battle. The like complaint the same Prophet brings against the Jews, Jer. 2:30. In vain have I smitten your children, they received no correction, —The Prophet Isaiah complains also of the Jews that lived in his days that they were not at all reformed by their afflictions, Isa. 1:5. Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye will revolt more and more; and yet their afflictions were exceeding great, as the following words show, The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores,—Your Country is desolate, your Cities are burnt with fire, your Land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. I may add this farther, that it doth exceedingly anger the Lord, when such as are under affliction do not

turn to the Lord that smiteth them, and provokes God many times to send upon them sudden and utter destruction, Isa. 9:12-14.— His anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still, for the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts, therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush in one day.

It may be some will say, Seeing it is such an hard matter even for such as are in affliction to be brought to repent of, and turn from their sins, what means shall we use that we may be brought to repentance now the afflicting hand of God is upon us?

I answer; 1. Sit down and consider your ways, that you may see what is amiss in them, and wherein you have gone astray from God; consider also seriously with yourselves, into what endless and unspeakable misery and torments your sins will plunge you if you do not repent of them: The Scripture hath many passages to this purpose, Rom. 6:21,23. What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death; for the wages of sin is death. Rom. 8:13. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, —Psal. 9:17. The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God. When David was in affliction, he was reformed by his afflictions, Psal. 119:67. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word. And by what means was he brought to a more diligent observation of God's Word, when he was afflicted? It was by reflecting upon, and considering his ways; as we may see, ver. 59. I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies. There is a great efficacy in consideration of our ways to produce Reformation, Prov. 4:26. Ponder the path of thy feet; and all thy ways shall be ordered aright; so that Text is rendered in the margent of our Bibles. It will not only make

good men to reform what is amiss in their ways, but if a man that hath lived a wicked and ungodly life, would sit down and seriously consider his ways, it might be a means of turning even of a wicked man from his sins, Ezek. 18:27,28. When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. This Scripture showeth plainly, that consideration (because he considereth and turneth—) will help a wicked man to turn from all his sins, by such a repentance as shall surely save his soul; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

2. Give yourselves much to hearing, reading, and meditating upon the Word of God. The Rod seldom doth good without the Word; but when the Word of God is accompanied with his Rod, when in our afflictions we give ourselves to search into, and meditate upon God's Word, this will make our afflictions to work kindly upon us. There is a divine power goeth along with the Word, and therefore it must needs be an effectual means to lead us to repentance, to converse much with the Word; see some places of Scripture to this purpose, Psal. 19:7. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Joh. 15:3. Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. Eph. 5:26,27. Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. Who are harder to be reclaimed then young men who have strong and unruly passions? And who are more hardly kept from sin than great men who can do what they please, and none can control them, yet both the one and the other may be brought to repentance and kept from sin by taking heed to God's Word. As for young men, we may see the power of the Word to reclaim them, Psal. 119:9. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his

way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word. David was a King and stood in awe of no man; yet was he awed by God's Word, Psal. 119:161. My heart standeth in awe of thy Word. And though he was a King, yet he was so awed by the Word, that he durst not sin against God, Psal. 119:11. Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

3. Confess to God and bemoan the refractoriness and incorrigibleness of your hearts, and pray to the Lord that he would turn you from your sins unto himself, Jer. 31:18,20. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. When Ephraim was in affliction and found a refractory spirit,— Thou hast chastised me, and I was as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and went to God and bemoaned the hardness of his heart, and prayed to be turned, God promiseth, I will surely have mercy upon him; that is, out of my mercy towards him, I will both pardon his rebellious and disobedient carriage under his affliction, and subdue his refractory and rebellious spirit. That God's having mercy on him, implies both the pardoning and subduing his sins, may be gathered from Mic. 7:18-20. When the Jews were carried captive into Babylon, and found, that notwithstanding all the great things that they suffered during the siege, and at the destruction of Jerusalem, they were not turned from their sins, they go to God, and pray to him to turn them; for they were persuaded that though their afflictions had not turned them, yet if the Lord would put forth his Grace and turn them, then they should be turned, Lam. 5:21. Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall

be turned. Prayer is of that prevalency with God, that no iniquity shall be able to stand long before a praying Christian, but Prayer will soon subdue the power and dominion of it, Psal. 119:2,3. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart, they also do no iniquity. Prayers and tears will prevail over God himself, Hos. 12:3,4.— By his strength he had power with God, yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him. Now if Prayer will prevail over God fear not but it will prevail over all manner of sin.

4. When you feel any workings and stirrings of the Spirit of God upon your hearts, take heed of quenching or resisting the Spirit when the Spirit of God worketh upon you either in a way of conviction, or by stirring up godly sorrow for sin, or exciting purposes and resolutions against sin, or working in any other way upon our souls, and yield yourselves to God, join in, and comply with the motions of the Spirit: all the workings of God's Spirit upon our hearts, are in order to the bringing of us to repentance, that he may prevent our eternal misery, Job 33:16,17. He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. See also, ver. 29,30. Lo, all these things worketh God often times with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. We had need attend to the workings of the Spirit, because there is no mortifying of any one sin, but by the help of the Spirit, Rom. 8:13.— If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. And though we can overcome no sin but by the help of the Spirit, yet with the Spirits help we may overcome any sin whatever, Gal. 5:16. This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. What would God have done for Israel, if they had hearkened to him, Psal. 81:13-15. O that my people had hearkened unto me—I should soon

have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries; the haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him —The same will the Spirit of God do for those that yield up themselves to be led and guided by him, he will soon subdue their sins, and turn his hand against their iniquities, and make all their spiritual enemies become subject unto them.

5. Look unto Jesus Christ to give you repentance, and to turn you from your iniquities. God hath exalted Christ to give us repentance, Acts. 5:31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince, and a Savior, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Because we cannot of ourselves turn from sin, God sent his Son to turn us from our iniquities, Acts 3:26. Unto you first, God having raised up his Son: Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. If after you have applied yourselves to Christ in order to his turning of you from your iniquities, your sins should still prevail over you, yet be not discouraged, but hope in Christ, that in his own good time, he will redeem you from all your iniquities, and you shall find that he will not fail your expectation, Psal. 130:7,8. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Psal. 65:3. Iniquities prevail against me, as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away.

6. Rest upon God by virtue of his promises, to sanctify your afflictions for the purging out of your sins, and leading of you to repentance. The Lord hath made many gracious promises of sanctifying those afflictions which he lays upon his people, and causing of them to purge and refine their souls. I will mention two or three, Isa. 27:9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin. Here are two

things remarkable in this Scripture. 1. The end and design of God in afflicting his people, which is, that he may take away their sins. This is all the fruit to take away his sin. 2. A promise that the affliction, which God sends upon his people, shall have this effect upon their souls to purge out their sins. By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged. Jer. 24:7. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. This promise relates to a time of affliction, when the Jews were carried captives into the Land of the Chaldeans, ver. 5, and herein the Lord promiseth among other blessings, that this captivity should produce in them an unfeigned repentance. They shall return unto me with their whole heart. Another promise to this effect we have, Zach. 13:9. I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried, they shall call on my Name, and I will hear them, I will say it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God. In the former verse the Prophet speaks of a time of great mortality. Two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein; and then he foretells what should befall the third part that should be left, I will bring the third part through the fire; and then adds a gracious promise that they should be refined by passing through the fire; that is, God thereby would purge and purify their hearts and conversations: urge God daily with these promises, plead them at the Throne of Grace, and rest upon God for the performance of them.

SECT. 6.

6. Comply with God's ends and designs in sending this affliction upon you; The Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, Lam. 3:33, but whenever he sends any affliction upon any man, he hath

gracious ends and designs in those afflictions; and therefore as the Jews made enquiry, when they were brought into great distress, Wherefore doth the Lord our God all these great things unto us? Jer. 5:19. And as the Apostle Paul when he was struck blind with the vision that appeared to him as he was going to Damascus, enquires of the Lord, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? Acts 9:6. So should we make enquiry when the Lord afflicts us, wherefore it is that he afflicts us, and what it is that he aims at, what he would have us to do, when his afflicting hand is upon us. We are enemies to our own good, when we do not study the mind of God in our afflictions and labor to comply with his ends, for he always chasteneth us for our profit, Heb. 12:10, and aims at the doing of us good, Deut. 8:16. If you ask, what are God's ends and designs in sending this affliction upon us? I answer, The resolving of this question concerning God's ends in afflicting us, what he aims at, and what he would have us learn when his rod is upon us, may be gathered from Sect. 3. I shall add a few things more besides what are mentioned there.

1. God's design in this affliction is to take away all pride, and to make and keep you humble, Isa. 2:11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. This may refer to the day of affliction spoken of, Isa. 1:7. Your country is desolate, your Cities are burnt with fire —In that day when God should bring this desolation, the lofty looks of man should be humbled, &c. When God afflicted the Israelites in the Wilderness with fiery Serpents, that and all other afflictions were sent for this end to humble them, Deut. 8:15,16.— That he might humble thee, and prove thee, and do thee good in the latter end. Elihu tells us that when God speaks once and twice to men, It is, that he may hide pride from man, Job 33:17. When the

Apostle Paul was afflicted, he telleth us twice, that the end of God was to prevent his being exalted above measure, 2 Cor. 12:7. If then you would comply with God's design in this affliction, you must be no more proud of your riches, beauty, parts, duties, or any other thing, but must put away all pride of spirit, all high conceits of yourselves, and all proud looks, and all pride of life, and you must be of a lowly heart, and go always clothed with humility.

2. God aims at the making of you more zealous Christians by this affliction; Lukewarmness is a very odious, detestable sin, Rev. 3:15,16. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot; so then because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth: this being so odious in God's sight for a man to be luke-warm in his Religion. When God finds any whom he loves to be in a luke-warm temper, he chastens them for this very end to make them more zealous, Rev. 3:19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore —Now this is one way, and a very sharp one of rebuking us, when God contends by Fire, Isa. 66:15. The Lord will come with fire—to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames, of fire. If therefore you were cold, or if not wholly cold, yet but luke-warm before God sent this Fire, it concerns you now to grow zealous. If you ask in what your affliction should make you zealous? I answer, 1. Be zealous in all acts of service, and all religious duties which you perform to God; shake off all drowsiness, and formality, and slightness of heart in prayer, and in hearing and reading God's Holy Word, and be fervent in spirit when you are about these or any other holy duties, Rom 12:11. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. What is said of the Apostle Paul, Acts 22:3, I was zealous towards God; and of Phinehas, Num. 25:13. He was zealous for his God.

Let the same be true of you, put on a holy zeal for God, and show your zeal for God in all that you do, either for, or to the Lord. 2. Be zealous against sin; strive against sin, not in a faint cold manner, but with all your might. Be zealous and repent, Rev. 3:19. Your zeal must be manifested in your repentance. When a man is zealous against his sins, and zealous in his repentance, his zeal will breed indignation against sin, a vehement desire to be rid of it, a fear and carefulness that he do not commit it again. See an example of zealous repentance, 2 Cor. 7:11. Behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge. 3. Be zealous of good works, Tit. 2:14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. We should not only do good works, but be zealous of, and in doing good works. We should be so zealous of good works, as not only to embrace opportunities of doing good when they come in our way, but we should covet earnestly, and follow diligently after opportunities of doing good works, 1 Tim. 5:10.— If she have diligently followed every good work. We should not only do good works, but be careful to excel and continue constant therein, whatever difficulties and discouragements we meet with in doing of them, Tit. 3:8. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. You see, if you would answer God's design in your affliction, that you must be zealous, and in what you must be zealous; only let me add here two or three cautions, 1. Look that your zeal be regulated with knowledge; There may be a zeal which is not guided by knowledge, Rom. 10:2. I bear them record, that they

have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Zeal without knowledge is dangerous. Paul in a blind zeal persecuted the people of God, thinking therein to do God good service, Phil. 3:6. Concerning zeal persecuting the Church. And Saul out of a blind zeal to the children of Israel and Judah, slew the Gibeonites; for which sin, though done in zeal, the whole Land was punished with three years Famine, 2 Sam. 21:1,2. 2. Look that your zeal for God be true, and real, and not pretended. Jehu pretended great zeal for God, 2 King. 10:16. Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord —But it was rather a zeal to establish the Kingdom to himself, than any true zeal for God. 3. Let your zeal be chiefly exercised in those things wherein the life and power of godliness consisteth, in the essential and fundamental matters of Religion, and not in circumstantial. Pharisaical zeal that was punctual in tithing Mint, and Cumin, and Annise, and neglected the weightier matters of the Law, as Faith, and the love of God, Judgment and Mercy, was disallowed and condemned by Christ. 4. Look that your zeal be not for a fit, while the sense of your affliction is fresh upon your spirits, but let it be constant, Gal. 4:18. It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.

3. God aims at the making of you partakers of his holiness, by this affliction, Heb. 12:10. He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. These persons to whom the Apostle writes this Epistle, had been chastened with the loss of their Goods, Heb. 10:34, and this chastening was for this end, that they might be partakers of God's Holiness. They were holy before, the Apostle calls them, chap. 3:1. Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling —They were such as had been sufferers for Christ, and had suffered joyfully, they had attained to assurance of their salvation, chap. 10:32,33,34. Yet these persons were

chastened, that they might be made more holy. Now seeing God's design in this affliction is to make you partakers of his holiness, let this affliction stir you up to follow after holiness; if you had only a form of godliness, a show and appearance of holiness before, now follow after the power, truth, and reality of godliness; if you had true holiness before, labor now to be more holy; be more holy in your hearts, in your thoughts, in your affections, in your speech, and discourse with all men, be more holy in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. 1:15. As he which called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. This exhortation, though it belong to all God's called ones, is more especially directed to such as are in affliction, for to such this Epistle is directed, as you may see, ver. 1,6. Let your sufferings excite you to do the works of your Callings in a more godly sort, and to perform your Closet and Family Duties in a more holy manner, to be more holy in your relative Duties, to be more holy in your converses with all sorts of men, and to express more of the power of holiness in all manner of conversation.

4. God aims at the stirring of you up to a more close and humble walking with himself, and to deal justly and mercifully with all men, Mic. 6:8. He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? This God required at such a time as he was pleading a controversy with his people, as you may see, ver. 2. The Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. And while he was pleading his controversy, he destroyed Jerusalem, the chiefest City of the Jews, chap. 3:12. Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps. And Samaria (which was one of the principal Cities belonging to the ten Tribes, Isa. 7:9. The head of Ephraim is Samaria) Mic. 1:6. I will make Samaria as a heap of the

field—I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof. Now when God had a great controversy with Israel and Judah, (for this Prophet was sent to both Kingdoms, chap. 1:1.) and was laying waste their chiefest Cities, that which he required from the inhabitants with whom he was pleading his controversy, was, that they should do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.

5. God aims at making of you more fruitful by this affliction, that you may bring forth both more and better fruit, Joh. 15:2. Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. When great wrath was coming upon the Jews, and the axe was even laid to the root of the tree, John the Baptist giveth them this exhortation, Matth. 3:8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. Now if you would know what it is wherein God would have you more fruitful in, you may be resolved from such Scriptures as these, Gal. 5:22,23. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Phil. 1:11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Col. 1:10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. If then you would comply with God's ends in your present affliction, labor to be filled with the fruits of righteousness; abound in all the fruits of the Spirit, which are as you heard before, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Labor to be fruitful in every good work, only remember in so doing, that you bring forth your fruit to God, and not to yourselves, Rom. 7:4.— That we should bring forth fruit unto God; for what fruit is brought forth for selfish ends, God accounts next to none, Hos. 10:1. Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.

SECT. 7.

7. The losses and other afflictions which you have sustained by this dreadful Fire, should stir you up to glorify God, Isa. 24:15. Wherefore, glorify ye the Lord in the Fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel. In the former part of the Chapter the Prophet speaks of a time of great desolation, as ver. 1. Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it up-side down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof: ver. 3. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled —ver. 11,12. All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone; in the City is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction —and then tells them what use they should make of these sore Judgments, Glorify ye the Lord in the fires. When God is executing any remarkable Judgments, it should awaken all men to glorify God, Rev. 15:4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thy judgments are made manifest. We read, Rev. 14:6,7. That when it was an hour wherein God was executing his Judgments, that an Angel cried, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come —If this judgment that is come upon you will not prevail with you to give glory to God, God will curse your blessings, Mal. 2:2. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

If you ask, how and wherein you should glorify God under this affliction which he hath laid upon you?

I answer, 1. Accept of the punishment of your iniquity, and acknowledge that the Lord is just and righteous in all that is come upon you. Then we

give God the glory of his Judgments, when we confess him to be just and righteous therein, Rev. 15:3,4.— Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints, Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name —Thus Daniel gave glory to God when Jerusalem was laid waste, and the Jews spoiled of their goods, and carried captive into Babylon, Dan. 9:14. The Lord hath watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works that he doth, for we obeyed not his voice. Yea, do not only confess God to be righteous, but also acknowledge him to be gracious in this dispensation; say, whereas our Houses and Estates are consumed by this Fire, it is of the Lord's mercies that we ourselves are not consumed, even because his compassions fail not. Thus Lot gave glory to God, when his house and goods were consumed in Sodom, he looked upon it as a great mercy that he himself was not consumed also, Gen. 19:19. Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shown unto me, in saving my life.

2. Though your sufferings have been very great, yet give God thanks, and praise his Holy Name for what he hath done for you; by so doing you shall glorify God, Psal. 50:23. Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me —Isa. 42:12. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands. This relates to a time of Judgment. I will destroy and devour at once, I will make waste mountains and hills, —ver. 14,15. Even when God is rising up to judgment, and devouring, and destroying, we must declare his praise, and so give him the glory of his Judgments. Let not this seem strange to you, that I exhort you that have suffered great losses by this Fire, to praise God, and give him thanks; for 1. Job did thus, when God had taken away all his Estate, and Children, he blesseth God, Job 1:21.— The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord; and Job did not sin, or act

imprudently in blessing God for his losses, for it is said in the next words, In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. 2. It is the will of God, that in every estate and condition, and under every dispensation of his providence, we should give thanks, 1 Thess. 5:18. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God, in Christ Jesus concerning you. 3. There is much mercy mingled with the affliction; it is mercy that your Estates were consumed, and not your Lives: it is mercy that your Houses only were burned, whereas you might have been cast both body and soul into everlasting burnings; and if you cannot give God thanks for the affliction itself, yet at least, give him thanks for the mercy that was mingled with the affliction.

3. Let this affliction put you upon searching and trying your ways, and renewing your repentance, and returning unto God, of which you heard before; for in so doing you shall give glory to God, Rev. 16:9. They repented not to give him glory.

4. Let this Judgment awaken in your souls a more lively fear and dread of God, let it cause you to stand in such awe of God as to be afraid to offend him; for then we give glory to God when we are afraid to sin against him, Rev. 14:7. Fear God, and give glory to him.

5. You shall give glory to God by this Judgment, if you be stirred up by it to live a more holy and righteous life, Isa. 60:21. Thy people shall be all righteous—that I may be glorified. If also it make you fruitful in good works, Joh. 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.

6. Let this Judgment awaken you to a more diligent practice of what is commanded, 1 Cor. 10:31. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. It was your duty ever since you were born, to make God's glory the highest and chiefest end of all your

actions; if you have not done so, you have great cause to humble your souls before God; for you have neglected the great end of your Creation, Isa. 43:7. Everyone that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory. If you did seek to advance the glory of God, before this Judgment came upon you, yet now be awakened hereby to seek God's glory more zealously, with more singleness of heart; and do all your works, both the works of your Calling, and your natural Actions, as your eating and drinking, and your Religious Actions, with more explicit intentions to glorify God.

SECT. 8.

8. Let the losses which you have sustained by this dreadful Fire, take you off from laying up your Treasure upon the earth, and put you upon laying up treasure in heaven. That treasure which you lay up on earth, may be taken from you several ways; you may lose it all in one day, or if you do not lose it, you must leave it all behind you when you die: But that treasure which is laid up in heaven, can by no means be taken from you, but you shall enjoy the benefit of it to all eternity. Remember therefore, and follow the counsel and command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Matth. 6:19-21. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. If you ask, What is that treasure which we should lay up in heaven? I answer, All the good thoughts which you think, and all the good words that you speak, are treasure laid up in heaven, Mal. 3:16. They that feared the Lord, speak often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him

for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. You see here that God treasureth up in his book of remembrance, all the good words which we speak when we meet together, and all the good thoughts which we think. All the tears we shed for our sins, and all the sighs and groans which we send up to God by reason of our sins, are treasure laid up in heaven: for God puts such tears into his bottle, and all sighs and groans that come from a penitent heart ascend up to heaven, Psal. 38:9. Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. All the prayers that we put up to God in the Name of Jesus Christ, are treasure laid up in heaven, Psal. 18:6. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God, he heard my voice out of his Temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. This is plain from the forementioned Scripture, All my desire is before thee. All the alms we give to the poor in a right spirit, are treasure laid up in heaven, Luk. 12:33.— Give alms, provide yourselves bags which wax not old; a treasure in the heavens that faileth not —Matth. 19:21. Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Acts 10:4. Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. All the prayers that we make, and all the alms that we give to the poor, are recorded in heaven, as precious treasure. All the good works that we do, are treasure laid up in heaven, Eph. 6:8. Whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same he shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. All the sins that wicked men commit, are treasure laid up in Hell to augment their torments, Rom. 2:5. After thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. If all the sins of wicked men, are treasure laid up against the day of wrath; then surely all the good actions of good men, are treasure laid up in heaven.

SECT. 9.

9. Let the losses which you have sustained by the late Fire, put you in mind of, and make you careful to avoid four other Fires, which are more dreadful than this great Fire, which consumed many thousand houses in a few days.

1. Take heed of the fire of Sin. Sin is oft compared unto fire, Isa. 9:18. Wickedness burneth as the fire, it shall devour the briars and thorns —Prov. 16:27. An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is as a burning fire. Hos. 7:6. They have made ready their heart like an oven, whilst they lie in wait, their baker sleepeth all the night, in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. Jam. 3:6. The tongue is as a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of Hell. Now this fire of sin is far more mischievous than the late Fire which burnt so great a part of the City; for though that destroyed many stately buildings, and much Goods, this destroys men's souls; and the soul of one man, though the poorest man upon the face of the earth, is more worth than the whole world, Mar. 8:36. The late Fire hath burnt up a great part of the City, but sin hath set on fire the whole course of nature; it hath fired, more or less, all persons in all parts and places of the world, For there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not, Eccl. 7:20. It hath been burning many thousand years together, even ever since the fall of Adam.

2. Take heed of the Fire of God's wrath, that burns like fire, Nah. 1:6. Who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire. Psal. 89:46. Shall thy wrath burn like fire? The Apostle saith of God, Heb. 12:29. Our God is a consuming fire. To whom is God a consuming fire? To all impenitent

persons that refuse to humble their souls, and to break off their sins, Isa. 27:4. Who would set the briars and thorns against me in Battle, I would go through them, I would burn them together. He is a consuming Fire to all that fall off from the ways of God, after they have been enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, Heb. 10:26,27. If we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

3. Let this fire put you in mind of that fire which shall consume and burn up the whole world. It was a dreadful sight to see London on fire, but it will be more dreadful to see the whole world on fire; yet such a time will come, and it is hastening apace upon us, wherein the heavens and the earth shall be set on fire, and all persons and things burnt in that fire, 2 Pet. 3:10-12. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up: seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation, and godliness, looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the Heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat? This fire that shall burn up the whole world, shall be to all the servants of God like Elijah's fiery Chariot, a means of conveying them into the Kingdom of Heaven; but it shall be a day of destruction and perdition to all ungodly men, 2 Thess. 1:7-9. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. 2 Pet.

3:7. The Heavens and the Earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Mal. 4:1. Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

4. Let this fire put you in mind and make you careful to avoid Hell fire: If this fire were dreadful, think with yourselves how dreadful it will be to be placed at Christ's left hand, and hear him pronounce that terrible sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, Matth. 25:41, and yet this will be the portion of all the workers of iniquity, Matth. 13:41,42. The Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Rev. 21:8. The fearful, and unbelieving, and the Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone. Hell fire is so dreadful, that you should be willing to do anything, and to suffer anything, so that you may not be cast into Hell fire when you die. If you have any sins as profitable to you as your right hand, or as dear to you as your right eye, you had better a thousand times part with those sins, and suffer pain and damage, and enter into life than retain your sins, and be cast into Hell fire when you die, Mar. 9:43-48. If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; for it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having

two feet to be cast into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into Hell fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

SECT. 10.

10. Trust in God for a livelihood; Though your Estates be gone and Trading fail, and Times should be hard, yet God will not fail you nor forsake you if you trust in him; but he will feed you, and clothe you, and provide all things that are necessary for you, Psal. 37:3. Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Heb. 13:5. Let your Conversations be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. These Hebrews (as I have hinted before) had suffered the spoiling of their goods, as we may see, chap. 10:34, and now they might be full of fears that they should not be able to live; but the Apostle bids them be content with such things as they had, for the Lord would not leave them nor forsake them. Consider,

1. God knows that you need food and raiment for your bodies as well as grace for your souls, Matth. 6:32. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things; and as he knoweth what and how great your needs are, so he will take care to supply all your needs, Phil. 4:19. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

2. God made provision for you long before you had a being, the Kingdom of Heaven was prepared for God's Saints and Servants before they were born; for it was made ready for them from the foundation of the world, Matth. 25:34. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world. Yea, before the world began, from all Eternity, God made preparation for your eternal happiness, Tit. 1:2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began. Now if God made provision for your eternal happiness before you had a being, then doubt not but he will provide for you that little time that you have to continue in this world.

3. God hath given you better, and greater things then food and raiment; he hath given you life, bodies and souls, Matth. 6:25. Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? God hath not withholden his only Son from you, and do you think, that he will with-hold food and raiment from you, who gave you his own Son? Rom. 8:32. 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?

4. A good man will give his servants convenient food, though he have never so many, Luk. 15:17. How many hired servants of my Fathers have bread enough and to spare? And do you think our good and gracious God will deny his servants their necessary food?

Doth not God clothe the grass which is but of few days continuance? And do you think that he will deny you raiment who are made for an eternal state? Matth. 6:28-30. Why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the Lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these: wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? God out of his mercy giveth food to all his creatures, Psal. 136:25. Who giveth food to all flesh, for his mercy endureth forever: He

feedeth the Birds and the Beasts, Job 38:41. He provideth for the Raven his food, when his young one's cry unto God —Psal. 147:9. He giveth to the Beast his food. And do ye think that he who is styled The Preserver of Men, Job 7:20, will not provide food for the sons and daughters of men? If you think that the Lord is, or will be more mindful of the Birds and Beasts than of Men, you wrong him exceedingly, Matth. 6:26. Behold the Fowls of the Air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: Are ye not much better than they? But of this you may see more, Quest. 1, Sect. 3,4.

Object. If any say, I could trust God for a livelihood, if I could but see which way I should be able to live; but when I have considered which way I should be able to maintain myself and my family, I cannot see or think of any way whereby I and mine should be maintained, and this makes me that I cannot tell how to trust in God for a subsistence.

Answ. 1. You have strange thoughts of God, if you will trust him no farther than you can see him; you will trust a dishonest man as far as you can see him: And what a reproach is this to the holy God, to trust him no farther than you will trust a dishonest man?

2. The property of true faith, is to persuade the soul as firmly that those things which God hath promised shall be, although we neither do or can see them; as we are persuaded of those things which we see evidently with our eye, Heb. 11:1. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Our Lord Jesus pronounceth those blessed which believe what they see not, Joh. 20:29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

3. What though you cannot see or think which way you should be maintained? God is able to do abundantly more than you are able to think, Eph. 3:20. To him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. God hath hidden riches, such as no man knoweth of to give his servants, when and where he seeth good, Isa. 45:3. I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know, that I the Lord which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. God oftentimes gives wicked men hidden treasure; David speaking of God's Providence towards the wicked, saith, Psal. 17:14.— Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure, —And cannot he find out hidden treasure for his servants, even such as they think not of?

4. What visible maintenance did Jesus Christ give his Disciples when he sent them on a journey, and bid them Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, Matth. 10:9,10, yet he provided so carefully for them, that they lacked nothing, Luk. 22:35. He said unto them, When I sent you, without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. What visible maintenance did God give the children of Israel in the Wilderness? As for bread they had none but what fell from heaven, and of that, they had but for the day, excepting on the sixth day wherein they were to gather a double portion, on other days if they kept any till the morning it bred worms and stank, and what fell in the morning was dried up when the Sun was hot, Exod. 16:4,19-22, so that God gave them nothing beforehand, but put them upon living by faith for their daily bread. And as for flesh, though God had given them a promise, that they should eat flesh a month together, Moses himself was put to a great stand to think, how such a

vast multitude should be fed with flesh in the Wilderness, Num. 11:21-23. Moses said, the people amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month: Shall the Flocks and the Herds be slain for them to suffice them? Or shall all the Fish of the Sea be gathered together for them to suffice them? And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand maxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my words shall come to pass unto thee or not. Now though God kept this people in such dependence on himself, that for forty years together he did not give them one days bread beforehand (excepting every sixth day) but they were to expect it a new from heaven every, day; yet all that forty years he did so carefully and constantly provide for that great multitude, that they lacked nothing, Deut. 2:7. The Lord thy God, hath blessed thee in all the works of thine hand; he knoweth thy walking through this great Wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing. Neb. 9:21. Yea forty years didst thou sustain them in the Wilderness, so that they lacked nothing, their clothe waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

5. The Birds have nothing beforehand, neither do they know one day where they shall have their food the next, yet God provideth for them every day, Matt. 6:26. And why should not you depend upon God for your daily bread, though you know not one day, how or which way you shall be provided for the next? If you say, The Birds have a greater latitude than we have, they may take their meat where they can get it, they being under no law, are under no transgression, we are bound up by the Law of God, not to meddle with that which belongs to other men. I answer, The Birds do not find out or gather anything but what God gives them; Psal. 104:28. That

thou givest them, they gather, thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Matth. 6:26. Your heevenly Father feedeth them.

6. Consider the examples of God's servants, who have trusted God at such times as they could not see how or which way those mercies should be given them, which they stood in need of. When Isaac said unto Abraham, My-Father, Behold the fire and wood, but where is the Lamb for a burnt offering? Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt offering, Gen. 22:7,8. Abraham could not tell how or which way God would provide a Lamb for a burnt offering, yet he did rest upon God that he would do it. If troubled thoughts arise in your hearts, and you begin to say within yourselves, where shall I have bread for myself, and for my family: answer yourselves as Abraham did Isaac, God will provide bread for me and mine. When Mordecai could not tell, how or which way deliverance should come to the Jews, there being but one way visible, and that was by Esther, but she was loath to appear and hazard herself by interceding for them; yet he for all this rests upon God, that if this means failed, deliverance should come some other way, Esth. 4:14. If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.

Object. 2. I am a simple, shiftless person; and besides, I have no friends to take care of me, or look after me, and now my Estate is gone, and my Calling fails, I shall not be able to live; I could trust God for a livelihood, if I could shift for myself in the world as others can do, and had any friends to look after me, but I am both shiftless and friendless.

Answ. 1. You are not more shiftless now, than you were in your infancy, yet then God provided for you; when you were a little Infant and could not shift for yourself, God drew you out of your Mother's womb, and fed you,

and clothed you, and defended, and supported you, Psal. 71:6. By thee have I been holden up from the womb, thou art he that took me out of my Mother's bowels; my praise shall be continually of thee.

2. If you had never so much craft and subtlety, yet you could not get a subsistence, without the help of God's Providence; for all the devices of the crafty come to naught, when God succeedeth them not, Job 5:12. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. Your want of subtlety is no impediment to God's Providence; he by his wisdom is able to provide for those that have little or no wisdom to order their affairs, as well as for those that are endued with greatest discretion.

3. There is a special Providence of God which watcheth and taketh care of such as are simple and shiftless, Psal. 116:6. The Lord preserveth the simple; I was brought low and he helped me. Who are more shiftless than strangers, widows and fatherless children? And we find that God taketh a special care of such as these, Psal. 146:9. The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and widow. Were not the Disciples of Christ shiftless, when they were sent forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves, Matth. 10:16, and yet had neither money in their purses, nor staves, nor scrip? ver. 9,10, but for all this they wanted nothing, as you heard before from Luk. 22:35.

4. Though you are friendless as well as shiftless, let not this discourage you; as long as you have a God in Heaven that taketh the care of you, you are well enough though you have no friends on earth to look after you, 1 Pet. 5:7. Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. When David was in distress, and had no friend that took any care of him, he stayed himself with this, that he had a God that was his refuge, who would not

only give him Heaven when he died, but also be his portion, and take the care of him in the land of the living, Psal. 142:4,5. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul; I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living. The fewer friends you have in the world, and the less help and relief you are like to have from men, the more you shall have from God; for he is wont in an eminent manner to take care of such as are friendless and helpless, Psal. 27:10. When my Father and my Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Jer. 30:17. I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an outcast, saying, this is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. Psal. 10:14.— The poor committeth himself unto thee, thou art the helper of the fatherless.

Object. 3. But I cannot work; my age, may one say; my sickness and other infirmities, may another say, do disable me from working; and how then shall I be able to live in these hard times, when I cannot work to get my living?

Answ. 1. It is the will of God, that as long as we have ability we should work for our living, for by that way God is wont to supply our needs, namely, by industry and diligence in our employments, 1 Thess. 4:11,12. That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that ye may walk honestly towards them that are without, that ye may have lack of nothing. The promise of being fed runs on these terms, Trust in the Lord, and do good,—and verily thou shalt be fed; 'tis not said, trust in the Lord, and then though you live idly, you shall be fed; but, do good and thou shalt be fed. Idleness will bring

a man to want, Prov. 19:15. Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

2. If you would work, but cannot, because you are disabled by age, or sickness, or some other infirmity, this should not hinder you from trusting in God to maintain you. For,

1. When you cannot work, you can pray, and if you pray, God will stir up some or other to relieve you, he will by his Providence send in a supply of your wants, so that you need not fear want as long as you can pray, Psal. 34:10. They that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing.

2. When you cannot work, God can and will work for you; though God ceased from the works of Creation on the seventh day, yet he still continueth to work for his people in the way of his Providence, Joh. 5:17. My Father worketh hitherto and I work.

3. The Lilies cannot spin, or do any other work, yet the Lord sends upon them rain in due season, whereby they are nourished, and clotheth them in a very glorious manner, Matth. 6:28-30, and why should you fear that God will not nourish and clothe you, though you should be able to do no work? What could you do, when you lay in your Mother's womb, and for some years after you were born into the world? If the Lord provided for you when you could do no work for him, or for your generation, because of your infancy, why should you distrust him for Provision, when you are disabled from working by sickness or old age?

Object. 4. But I begin to be—in want already, I that have lived plentifully heretofore, have not now wherewithal to supply my personal and family necessities, and it pierceth my heart to see my children crying about me, and I have not wherewithal to relieve them.

Ans. 1. If it be so that you are sometimes pinched with hunger, yet remember 1. That better men than you are, have been exercised with this trial; the Apostle Paul speaking of himself, and the other Apostles, saith 1 Cor. 4:11. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked,—and have no certain dwelling place. Yea, Jesus Christ himself was tried with this affliction of hunger, and when he was hungry, he sought for relief from the trees of the field, and was disappointed of his expectation, Mar. 11:12,13. When they were come from Bethany he was hungry, and seeing a Fig-tree a far of, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves. At another time being weary and thirsty in his travel, he asked a draught of water of a woman of Samaria, and was denied it, Joh. 4:6, when he was upon the Cross, full of pain and anguish, which made him very thirsty, when he cried out to those that stood round about him, I thirst; No body gave him anything to drink but Vinegar, which increased rather than mitigated his torment, Joh. 19:28,29. Jeremiah, one of the Lord's Prophets, was ready to die for hunger; Jer. 38:9. They have cast Jeremiah into the Dungeon, and he is like to die for hunger. 2. This affliction of hunger as well as other afflictions, is a fatherly chastisement, and comes from fatherly love, and is sent with a design to do us good, Deut. 8:3,5,16. He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger,—Thou shalt consider is thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee,—that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end. 3. The grace of God will enable a man to suffer hunger, or any other affliction contentedly, Phil. 4:12,13. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere, and in all things I am instructed,

both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

2. If by this Providence you are brought to want, and are pinched with hunger, let this affliction put you upon renewing your repentance, and cause you to cry mightily to the Lord, and he will save you from your distressed condition, Psal. 107:4-6. They wandered in the Wilderness,—hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. Though you are now under great scarcity, yet if your scarcity put you upon renewing your repentance, the Lord will turn your scarcity into plenty, Elihu speaking of such as are in affliction, and having shewn how God commandeth them to return from iniquity, telleth us what God will do for such as at the command of God do return from their sins, Job. 36:11,16. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures: Even so would he have removed thee out of a strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy Table should be full of fatness. When the Prodigal. Son began to be in want, his want brought his sins to remembrance, and put him upon returning home to his Father, and when he came to his Father, and confessed his sins to his Father, though he would have been glad of such husks as Swine eat, and could not get them, he was no sooner returned to his Father, but he kills the fatted Calf, and calls for the best Robe, and a Ring,—and makes very rich and bountiful provision for him.

3. When your children come about you and cry for bread, and you have it not to give them, remember that their cries do not only pierce your hearts, but enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. When the water in Hagar's bottle was spent, and the child cried, and she knew not where to have

anymore, but thought, that the child must needs perish, and therefore cast the child under a shrub, because she could not tell how to see the death of the child; God heard the cry of the child and sent her relief, Gen. 21:15-19. The water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs; and she went, and sat her down over against him, a good way off, as it were a Bow shot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child: and she sat over against him, and lift up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the Lad: and the Angel of God called to Hagar out of Heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the Lad where he is; and God opened her eyes and she saw a Well of water. When the young ravens wander up and down seeking meat and can find none, and cry unto God, he heareth them, Job 38:41. Who provideth for the Ravens his food, when his young one's cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat. Psal. 147:9. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young Ravens which cry. Doth God hear the voice of the young Ravens when they cry, and provide them food? And do you think that he will not hear the cries of your young children, and provide them food?

4. Though you begin to be in want, and both yourselves and families are now and then pinched with hunger, yet trust still in God, that he will provide for you and yours such food as he seeth to be convenient for you. Our faith must not flag or fail when we meet with sharp trials; you know what Job saith, Job 13:15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. If your hunger and scarcity should be such, as that you should think God intended to slay you with hunger, yet you must trust in him. I will give a few encouragements to such as are under fear, or in danger of being famished with hunger, to trust in God to relieve them.

1. Your bodies are members of Christ's Body, 1 Cor. 6:15. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? And temples of the Holy Ghost, ver. 19. Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? And do you think that God will be unmindful of his Sons members, and of the Temple of the Holy Ghost? The afflictions of the Saints are said to be the afflictions of Christ, Col. 1:23. That which afflicts them, is an affliction to him, Isa. 63:9. In all their afflictions, he was afflicted. Their hunger and thirst, may in some sense be said to be his hunger and thirst, Matth. 25:35. I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.

2. Consider what promises God hath made to preserve his people from being famished, and to give them plenty of all such things as are good for them, Prov. 10:3. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to be famished. Joel 2:26. Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the Name of the Lord your God. Psal. 33:18,19. Behold, the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy: to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Psal. 136:15. I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread. When there was such a great scarcity among the Jews, that they could not see which way they should be supplied with provision, Joel 1:16. Is not the meat cut off before your eyes? Yet even then God promiseth his servants such plenty as should satisfy them, chap. 2:26. Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the Name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wonderfully with you; and my people shall never be ashamed. Another promise you have, Isa. 41:17,18. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open Rivers in high places,

and Fountains in the midst of the Valleys; I will make the Wilderness a Pool of water, and the dry Land Springs of water. Here God promiseth, that when his Servants are destitute of necessary provision, and are in such straits as they are ready to perish, he will send them in unexpected supplies, he will alter the very course of Nature, rather than they shall perish, He will make the Wilderness a Pool of Water, and the dry Land Springs of Water. Though this promise be not to be restrained to temporal things, but includeth also many spiritual blessings, yet it may very safely and properly be applied by such as are in great straits, and ready to perish for want of provision for their outward man. Let me add this farther, That God is mindful of every Promise of his Covenant which relates to our temporal as well as our spiritual welfare, Psal. 111:5. He hath given meat unto them that fear him, he will ever be mindful of his Covenant.

3. Consider what great a care God hath for the satisfying of such as are hungry: 1. It hath been his manner of old to provide good things for the hungry, Luk. 1:53. He hath filled the hungry with good things. When the Israelites were hungry in the Wilderness, he gave them bread from heaven, to satisfy their hunger, and fetched water out of a Rock, to quench their thirst, Neb. 9:15. Thou gavest them Bread from Heaven, for their hunger; and broughtest forth Water for them, out of the Rock, for their thirst. He caused the Ravens to bring bread and flesh to feed Elijah in a time of famine, 1 King. 17:6. The Ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening. The Ravens of their own nature would rather devour and eat a man's flesh, than bring him bread and flesh to preserve his life, so Prov. 30:17, so that we see that God hath altered the course of Nature, and wrought miracles to satisfy his people's hunger. And as he hath done great things of old for the satisfying the

hungry, and relieving the poor and needy; so he hath promised to be mindful of them in all ages, and to do wonderful and unusual things rather than they shall perish for want of necessary food, as you may see in the fore-quoted Promises, Isa. 41:17,18. Psal. 111:5, and he will keep his truth forever in these as well as in his other Promises, Psal. 146:6,7. Which keepeth truth forever, which executeth judgment for the oppressed, which giveth food to the hungry, —2. God's care of hungry persons appears by the strict charge which he hath given to those that have ability to feed the hungry; they must be so careful hereof, that they must not neglect giving food to such as are hungry, though they have been their Enemies, Rom. 12:20. If thine Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. He hath not only commanded us to feed the hungry, but also hath promised great rewards to such as feed the hungry, Isa. 58:20. If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day. Matth. 25:34,15. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world; for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: see farther, Psal. 41:1-3, yea so careful is God of hungry persons, that he threatens to condemn those at the day of judgment, who have neglected to feed the hungry, Matth. 25:41,42. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; for I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. May not this care that God hath of the hungry, encourage you to trust in God in your greatest straits, when you fear that you shall perish with hunger?

4. Consider that God is wont to be seen in the Mount: our extremity is God's opportunity. When the Widows Provision was all spent to a handful

of Meal, and a little Oil in a Cruse, and she knew not where to have anymore, but verily thought that she and her son must die; then cometh Elijah, and multiplieth her Provision, so that she and all her family were nourished during the time of the famine, 1 King. 17:12-16. When all the water that was in Hagar's bottle was spent, and she knew not where to have anymore, but thought that she and her child must die, and had cast the child under a shrub, saying, Let me not see the death of the child, —then God opened her eyes and shown her a well of water by her, Gen. 21:15,16,19. When the Altar was built whereon Isaac was to be sacrificed, and the wood was laid in order, and Isaac was bound and laid upon the Altar, and Abraham's hand was stretched out, and he had taken his knife, then the Angel of God calls to him out of Heaven to spare Isaac, and shows him a Ram that was provided to be sacrificed in Isaac's stead, Gen. 22:9-13. And this act of God's Providence in rescuing Isaac when he was at the point of death, was recorded to strengthen the faith of all God's servants in all ages, that they may trust in God in their greatest extremities, as we may see, ver. 14.

5. Consider how easy a thing it is with God to provide for you, seeing he is the Lord of the whole world, and hath all the times of the Sea, and all the fowls of the Air, and all the creatures of the Earth at his disposal; Psal. 24:1. The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Psal. 50:10,11. Every Beast of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills; I know all the Fowls of the Mountains, and the wild Beasts of the Field are mine; yea, he can, if he please, sustain you by his Word without giving of you bread, Deut. 8:3. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know, that man

doth not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. God can send an Angel from Heaven to bring you Provision, as he did to Elijah, when he fled into the Wilderness to save his life, 1 King. 19:3-6. God can turn stones into bread, Matth. 3:9. God is able of these Stones to raise up Children unto Abraham. If God can raise up Children from Stones, he can also turn stones into Bread, to nourish the Children of Abraham.

6. Consider how willing God is to relieve you, he is not only able, but willing to feed the hungry. This will appear from what was said concerning the care that God takes of such as are hungry. Consider 3. However, I shall add something farther concerning God's willingness to supply your wants, because it is no easy matter to trust in God when we come into great straits.

1. Earthly Parents will not deny their Children Bread, when they are hungry and cry for it; Matth. 7:9,10. What man is there of you, whom if his Son ask Bread, will he give him a Stone? Or if he ask a Fish, will he give him a Serpent? And God our heavenly Father is more willing to give good things to us when we ask for them, than Parents are to give good things to their Children, ver. 11. If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children; how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?

2. God hath regard to the dry ground, though it lie in a desolate place, in a Wilderness where no man cometh, to satisfy it with Rain from Heaven when it is thirsty, Job 38:25-27. Who hath divided a water-course for the over-flowing of waters? Or away for the lightning of Thunder, to cause it to rain on the Earth, where no man is; on the Wilderness, where there is no man? To satisfy the desolate and waste ground, —Can it enter into your hearts to think, that God should forget you in your necessity, when as he remembereth the dry and thirsty ground, even

that which is desolate and lieth waste? The Sparrows are Birds of a small value, yet God doth not forget any of them, but gives them their meat in due season, Luk. 12:6, Are not five Sparrows sold for two farthings? And not one of them is forgotten before God,—fear not therefore, you are of mere value than many Sparrows. If God do not forget a Sparrow, you may certainly conclude, that he will not forget you. 3. God wisheth his people were in such a condition; that he might, without doing them hurt, feed them with the very best of his Creatures; for, The Lord hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, Psal. 35:27. He is very unwilling to afflict them either with hunger, or any other affliction, Lam. 3:33. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. If we would be obedient to his voice, he would continue our plenty; if after he hath taken it away, our scarcity lead us to repentance, he will restore our plenty again, Psal. 81:13-16. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me; and Israel had walked in my ways!—their time should have endured for ever, he should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with boney out of the rock, should I have satisfied them. 4. The Lord Jesus takes notice who they are that have nothing to eat, and are in danger of fainting for want of food, and is very full of compassion toward those that are in such a condition. The Bowels of his Compassion did so yearn towards the multitude that had been three days without food, and were in danger to faint, that he wrought a miracle to feed them, Mar. 8:1-3, &c.

It may be some will say, Since God brought me into distress, I have manifested much unbelief, and distrust, notwithstanding I have formerly had great experience of God's goodness; and therefore I am afraid now he will suffer me to starve, and look no more after me.

Ans. If you humble yourselves for your unbelief, God will both pardon your sin, and give you a plentiful supply of your wants. The Jews who had seen God providing for them in a wonderful manner, did in their straits discover a great deal of distrust, Psal. 78:19,20. They spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the Wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams over flowed; can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people? Yet God did fully supply all their wants, ver. 25.— He sent them meat to the full —And also passed by their transgressions, ver. 38. He being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not. God is wont to chasten his children for their unbelief, but not to break his promises made to them. Zacharias was struck dumb for his unbelief, yet his sin did not hinder the fulfilling of the promise, that was accomplished in its season, Luk. 1:20. Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed; because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. Rom. 3:3,4. Shall their unbelief make the Faith of God without effect? God forbid.

SECT. 11.

11. If by this affliction you are, or should hereafter be brought into such great straits as that you know not what to do, but are like a man at his wits end, that knoweth not which way to wind or turn himself to get out of his troubles, be not dismayed at it, but look up unto God, and commit yourselves and all your affairs unto him, cry to the Lord to help you, and though he do not presently deliver you, yet trust in him that he will deliver you in his own good time; and wait patiently upon him for his help, how great soever your straits are, and though it be very long before he send you deliverance. Thus the servants of God in former times were wont to do,

when their condition was so distressed, they knew not what to do; they looked to the Lord to help them, 2 Chron. 20:12. O our God,—we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. Psal. 22:4,5. Our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them; they cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. Psal. 40:1,2. I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry; he brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. I will add some things by way of encourage ment, to encourage you to trust in God, and to wait patiently upon him, when you are in such great straits that you know not what to do.

1. When you know not what to do, God knows what to do for you. We read, Joh. 6:5. When Jesus lift up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he said unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat. Philip was at a loss, he knew not whence they should have bread enough to suffice such a multitude, as you may see, ver. 7. But though Philip knew not how or which way such a multitude should be provided for, Christ did, ver. 6. This he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do. When a godly man's temptations are such as he knoweth not which way he should be delivered, God knows how to deliver him, 2 Pet. 2:9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations —If such thoughts should arise in your hearts (as through the suggestion of Satan possibly they may) that your straits are so great, that the way of your deliverance is not only hid from your eyes, but hid from God also; and that it is above the wisdom of God to know how to deliver you, abominate all such wicked and ungodly thoughts, and remember, that God's Wisdom is infinite, far above what we can search into, Isa. 40:27,28. Why sayest thou,

O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God: Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding, Psal. 147:5. Great is our Lord, and of great power, his understanding is infinite. Those things which seem invincible difficulties to us, have no difficulty at all in the account of God, Zech. 8:6. If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people, in these days, should it also be marvelous in mine eyes, saith the Lord of Hosts? Isa. 55:8,9. My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways, higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2. When you are at that pass, that you know not what to do, as God knows what to do for you, so he is able to help and deliver you, his Power is equal to his Wisdom, Gen. 18:14. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Luk. 1:37. With God nothing shall be impossible. Even such things as men judge impossible, and what they do not only judge so, but those things which are real impossibilities to men, are possible with God, Luk. 18:27. The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God. When the difficulty of your case discourageth you from believing, consider what a great and hard work it was to make the heavens and the earth, and then you will conclude that nothing can be too hard for God, Jer. 32:17. Ah, Lord God, behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power, and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. Suppose there was no way extant, whereby you can be delivered out of your troubles, God can make away for you to escape, he can create deliverance, 1 Cor. 10:13. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but

will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Isa. 4:5. The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by days, and the shining of a flaming fire by nights for upon all the glory shall be a defense.

3. The Lord is not only able to help you out of great straits, but he hath promised, that when you are in such distress that you know not what to do, if you call upon him, and trust in him, he will deliver you, Psal. 25:15. Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. When David's feet were entangled in a net, that he knew not which way to wind and turn himself, he eyes, and rests upon God's promise, He shall pluck my feet out of the net, Psal. 50:15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. The day of trouble taketh in the greatest, as well as the least troubles, and the Hebrew word that is used in this place for trouble, is the same that is used, Dan. 12:2: where the Prophet speaketh of such a time of trouble as never was since the Creation: so that the promise implies thus much, when it is a day of trouble with you, though your pressures and troubles be such, as never any person or people met with greater since the creation of the world, if you call upon God he will deliver you, Job. 5:19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. The Hebrew word for trouble here, is the same with what was mentioned before, and is sometimes translated, a strait, 2 Sam. 34:14. I am in a great strait. So that the promise implies thus much, that when we are in straits, in great straits, in many straits, God will deliver us, and bring us out of them all, Psal. 71:20. Thou which hast shown me great; and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

4. Though you be in such straits, that you know not what to do, yet trust in God, for your help doth not stand in your own wisdom, or in your own strength, but in the Lord, Psal. 124:8. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Your deliverance from trouble, doth not come partly from God, and partly from yourselves, but from God only, Psal. 62:6. He only is my rock, and my salvation, he is my defense; I shall not be moved. When all help faileth, he will be a very present help in trouble, Psal. 46:1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Now seeing your help standeth only in the name of the Lord, though your wisdom and your ability to help yourselves faileth you, this should not hinder you from trusting in God to help you.

5. Consider what God hath done for others in their straits, when they cried unto God, he helped them, though their troubles were such as that their souls melted under them, and they have been at their wits end, Psal. 107:26-28. They mount up to the heaven; they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble,—they are at their wits end: Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distress. Psal. 34:6. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. David was delivered out of a great strait, when he penned this Psalm, as you, may see by the title, compared with 1 Sam. 21:10-13. David gives us divers instances of God's delivering him out of very great straits, such as to an eye of fence seemed inextricable and invincible, Psal. 18:29. By thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall. Psal. 40:2. He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay. And he telleth us, that it was the will of God, that those deliverances which God had given him, should encourage others to trust in the Lord, Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord, ver. 3.

6. The Holy Ghost recommendeth it to us, as that which is very good and profitable for us, and very acceptable and pleasing to God, that we should trust and hope in God, in our greatest straits, Lam. 3:26. It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. This was spoken to those who were in great distress, and saw no way how they should get out of their troubles, ver. 7,9. He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out, he hath made my chain heavy, he hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked. Hereupon they were ready to despair of deliverance, and to say, ver. 18. My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord. Yet to them the Holy Ghost saith, It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. And as it is good for us, so also it is pleasing to God that we should hope in him under our greatest troubles, Psal. 147:11. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

If any say, I have brought myself into my straits, and my troubles, by my sins, and this keepeth me from trusting in God, because my troubles are the fruit of my sins. Were it purely the hand of God to try my faith and patience, I could in such a case hope in God.

Answ. Though our troubles do come upon us for our sins, yet if we humble our souls for our sins and cry to God in our distresses, he will raise up deliverance for us, Psal. 107:10-14. Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most high; therefore he brought down their heart with labor, they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distress; he brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. And again, ver. 17,19.

Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted; then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he saveth them out of their distresses. When David was under such a great sense of sin as made his heart to fail, he did yet hope in God for deliverance out of his troubles, Psal. 40:12,17. Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me. I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my help and my deliverer, make no tarrying, O my God. When Jonah was cast into the Sea, and swallowed up by a Whale, it was for his sin, in flying from the presence of the Lord; yet when in his affliction he cried to God, God heard and delivered him, Jon. 2:2,10. I cried by reason of mine affliction, unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. And the Lord spake unto the Fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

SECT. 12.

12. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. Satan useth to be very busy to tempt us, when we are in affliction. The two seasons wherein the Devil did in a more eminent manner set upon Christ with his temptations, were, when he was in the Wilderness, Mar. 1:13. He was in the Wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and when he was entering upon his Passion, Luk. 22:53. This is your hour, and the power of darkness. The Devils at that time bestirred themselves to the utmost of their power, in tempting and afflicting the Lord Jesus. Now God hath stripped you of all or the greatest part of your enjoyments, and brought you as it were into a Wilderness; now that you must expect to suffer more hardship and difficulties then formerly, you may look to meet with more than usual

temptations. The Devil is ready to take occasion from others afflictions to tempt us, 2 Thess. 3:3-5. How much more will he take advantage from our own afflictions to assault us with his temptations? If Satan be busy to tempt, had you not need to watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation? I might here caution you against several temptations, I will instance in four or five.

1. Take heed of entertaining hard thoughts of God, as though God dealt hardly with you; or of his ways, as if there were no profit in serving of God, because you have suffered so deeply, notwithstanding you have endeavored to serve the Lord: Satan hath baffled very eminent persons with this temptation. Job in his haste uttered such an expression as this, Job 30:21. Thou art become cruel to me—Jeremiah in his distress lets fall such words as these, Jer. 15:18.— Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable which refuseth to be healed: wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar and as waters that fail? David being exercised with many afflictions, said in his hast (though upon second thoughts he called in his words again) that all the pains that he had taken in serving God was labor in vain, Psal. 73:13,14. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my bands in innocence; for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. To fortify you against this temptation of calling in question the goodness of God, or thinking there is no advantage cometh by serving God, let me advise you to do these things.

1. Judge of God according to that representation which he maketh of himself in his Word. Now the Scriptures represent God to be a good God, Psal. 86:5. Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon thee. When the Lord proclaimed his Name to Moses, he proclaimed his name after this manner, Exod. 34:5,6. The Lord,

the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness —He is so abundant in goodness, that his goodness fills the whole earth, Psal. 33:5.— The Earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. He is so good a God, that there are some expressions of his goodness towards every person, and every creature upon the face of the earth, Psal. 145:9. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. His goodness is so great, that no words can express it; we may admire it, but we cannot declare the greatness of it, Zech. 9:17. How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty? Even in his most terrible acts there is abundance of goodness, Psal. 145:6,7. Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts,— they shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.

2. Consider what good thoughts of God the servants of the Lord have had in their greatest afflictions: though in time of temptation, some of God's servants have uttered some rash expressions derogatory to the good name of God, yet afterwards they have humbled themselves greatly for such speeches, as we may see, Job 42:3,6. David calls himself fool, and beast, for speaking dishonorably of God in his afflictions, Psal. 73:13,22. Take the servants of God when they have been freed from, or gotten the victory over temptation, and you shall find them admiring and speaking highly in the commendation of God's goodness in their greatest afflictions, Psal. 119:68. Thou art good, and dost good —and this David spoke when he was spoiled of his goods, ver. 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me; and when his sorrows were so great that his soul melted under them, ver. 28. My soul melteth for heaviness. Neither his losses nor his sorrows made him question God's goodness, but he saith under both, thou art good, and dost good. In another Psalm, after he had expressed the greatness of his sorrows, Psal. 31:9,10. I am in trouble, mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and

my belly; for my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing —He breaks out into admiration of God's goodness, ver. 19. O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! And Psal. 73:1,10. Truly God is good to Israel. God is good to them when they are forced to wander up and down, and are full of affliction, ver. 10. His people return hither, and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. When Doeg the Edomite had accomplished his mischievous design in causing the Priests of the Lord to be slain for entertaining of David, which could not but be a great grief to David, yet still he extols God's goodness, Psal. 52:1. Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. When the Jews that were carried captive into Babylon, had lost all their substance, and met with such sorrows, that they thought none ever met with the like; they, notwithstanding all their afflictions, think honorably of God's goodness, Lam. 3:25. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, unto the soul that seeketh him.

3. When you are ready to have hard thoughts of God because of your afflictions, turn your eyes from looking at God's Providences, and look upon his Promises; they represent God to be full of love, when his Providences represent him to be terrible. There is a thousand times more sweetness in the Promises, than there is sharpness in your afflictions. David viewing his afflictions, cried out, Psal. 60:3. Thou hast shown thy people hard things, thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. But when he turns his eye to the Promise, he forgets his sorrow, and is filled with joy, ver. 6. God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice.

4. When hard thoughts of God arise in your minds because of your afflictions, behold God as he hath manifested himself in and through Jesus Christ, and there you shall see him to be a God of unspeakable love, God so

loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son —Joh. 3:16. When you look upon God in Christ, you shall find him without fury towards such as believe in his Son, when he is executing his greatest judgments, Isa. 26:21. Behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity— Fury is not in me: And to whom is it that he saith, Fury is not in me? It is to such as take hold of his Son, who is his strength, ver. 5. When you look upon God in Christ, you may behold him a reconciled Father, a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, 2 Cor. 5:19, a God that hath blessed you with all spiritual blessings, Eph. 1:3, a God that will deny you nothing that is good, but will give you all things freely, Rom. 8:32. Did he pass by the fallen Angels, and look upon you, and yet will you not have good thoughts of him? Can you harbor any hard thoughts of God, whilst you look upon him in Christ Jesus? Shall some light and short afflictions, make you overlook all the spiritual and eternal blessings which God hath treasured up in Jesus Christ for you? If you say this helps me but little, because I cannot make it out, that God hath given Jesus Christ to me; if I could see that God had given Christ to me, I think I should never entertain a hard thought of God anymore? I answer, God hath made a free offer of his Son Jesus Christ, with all his benefits unto your soul, as well as to any other, ever since you have heard the Gospel; and doth still continue to offer him to you, and calls upon you by his Ministers, and by his Holy Spirit, to come and take him freely, Mar. 16:15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature: Rev. 22:17. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth, say, Come; and let him that is a thirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely: By the water of life, is meant, Christ and life through him, Christ and all his saving benefits; and the Spirit of God who searcheth the deep things

of God, and knoweth the mind of God, and of Christ, assureth us, that whosoever will may come and take this water of life freely.

5. When you find hard thoughts of God arising in your minds by reason of your affliction, call to mind what God hath been doing for you from all eternity, and what he will do for you in heaven to all eternity. God hath been setting his wisdom on work from all eternity to make you happy in the enjoyment of himself; and he hath prepared such things for you in heaven, as eye never saw the like, neither hath ear heard, neither can it enter into the heart of man to conceive the worth of them. When David in time of temptation was ready to think hardly of God, and of his ways, Psal. 73:13,14. After he had overcome the temptation, he saith, ver. 28. It is good for me to draw near to God; and what caused him to take up this conclusion? Among other things this was one, he had his eye upon that blessedness he should enjoy with God in heaven to all eternity, ver. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me unto glory.

6. If you would keep up good thoughts of God in your afflictions, observe what goodness God manifests to you in your affliction, and what good he designs to you by your afflictions. If you did observe the dealings of God with your inward, and outward man, you might see much of the love, and mercy, and goodness of God in your greatest afflictions. The people of Israel met with variety of afflictions when they were in the Wilderness, yet there was much of the love and goodness of God in all his dealings with them, Isa. 63:7,9. And as for the ends and designs of God in our afflictions, if you consider what they are, you shall find, that in every affliction God aimeth at your good, Heb. 12:10. He chasteneth us for our profit. Rom. 8:28. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.

And as you should keep up good thoughts of God, so also keep up good thoughts of his Service; and believe firmly in your greatest sufferings, that it is not a vain thing to wait upon God; and this you will easily do, if you keep up good thoughts of God: so that there is little need of adding anything more concerning this temptation: I shall therefore but briefly hint two or three things, and then proceed to the next temptation.

CHAP. V. Q.2. Continued: Touching on Combatives to Temptations from Despair and Great Loss, such as Forsaking God and Self-Murder.

1 . It is very unreasonable to think that there is no profit comes by walking in the ways of God, when as the Scripture assure us, that Godliness is profitable unto all things having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. 4:8. God never did stir up any man to seek his face in vain, Isa. 45:19. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. But whoever they are that seek and serve the Lord, he will give them grace, and glory, and all good things, Psal. 34:10. They that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing, Psal. 84:11. The Lord Godiva Sun, and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glary, and no good thing will to withhold from them that walk uprightly. He doth not only reward, but

giveth great rewards to everyone that keepeth his Commandments, Psal. 19:11. In keeping of them there is great reward.

2. When God denies his servants, or takes from them temporal blessings, he give them spiritual blessings: When he afflicts their Bodies, there is good to their Souls, Lam. 3:25. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. The poorest of God's servants that have least of the things of this world, are blessed with all spiritual blessings, Eph. 1:3, and spiritual blessings are far better than temporal blessings.

3. The very afflictions and troubles of God's servants are profitable to them, as hath been before cleared from several Scriptures, as Heb. 12:10. He chasteneth us for our profit, Psal. 119:71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. It must needs therefore be unreasonable to say, there is no profit in serving God, because his servants meet with many afflictions.

4. The great day of putting a difference between them that serve God, and them that serve him not, is the day of Judgment; then it shall evidently appear to the whole world, even to them that can see no advantage now in godliness, how much it profiteth a man to serve the Lord, Mal. 3:14,17,18. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?—They (that is, they that serve me) shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him: then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

2. Take heed of being drawn by this affliction to depart from God: Satan hath prevailed with some upon the account of their afflictions to turn aside from God, and to give over waiting upon him, 2 King. 6:33. This evil is of

the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer? As some took distaste at Christ's words and departed from him, Joh. 6:60,66. Many of his Disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can bear it? From that time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him. So many take such offense at the providences of God, that they depart from God, and will walk no more in his ways. If you should be followed with this temptation, to prevent your yielding to it, let me suggest to you these following considerations.

1. Consider whom you forsake, when you forsake the Lord: God is your life, and will you not cleave to your life, Deut. 30:20. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God—and that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life, and the length of the days. Acts 17:28. In him we live, and move, and have our being. And will you forsake that God, without whom you cannot live or continue in your being one moment. A man will choose rather to part with his Estate, his Friends, his Liberty; yea, all that he hath, rather than part with his life, Joh. 2:4. Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. If life be thus dear, should you not rather forsake all that you have, than forsake God who is your life? God is our glory, Psal. 3:3. Thou, O Lord, art a shield for we, my glory —Now many will choose rather to die, than to part with their glory, 1 Cor. 9:15.— It were better for me to die, than that any man should make any glorying void. God is your friend, and hath been your Fathers friend: Now no wise man will readily forsake a true and an ancient friend, Prov. 27:10. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not. God is, or ought to be, your chiefest joy, Psal. 43:4. I will go unto the Altar of God, unit God my exceeding joy. Most men are desirous of, and follow after joy; and will you be so foolish as to forsake your chiefest joy? God is the chiefest good, there is nothing in heaven or in earth

comparable to God, Psal. 73:25. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. There are many that pretend, at least, to seek after that which is good, Psal. 4:6. There be many that say, who will show us any good? And will you be so unwise as to forsake the chiefest good? Whoever that was in heaven forsook heaven, excepting the Devils? The best thing in heaven is God, Whom have I in heaven but thee? And will you forsake the best thing in heaven? Did not God make you, and hath not he maintained you ever since you were in the world? And will you forsake the God that made you, and hath redeemed you out of all your troubles, and hath maintained you to this day, Deut. 32:6. Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee? Whom have you to go to, if you forsake God? Can any give you eternal life besides God? Joh. 6:67,68. Jesus said unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Can any forgive your sins besides God? Mar. 2:7. Who can forgive sins, but God only? And what a sad condition will you be in, if your sins be not forgiven? Who can save you in time of trouble, and who can save you from the torments of Hell besides God? Psal. 3:8. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord. You must shortly die, and unto whom will you commend your souls when you die, if you forsake the Lord? Psal. 31:5. Into thy hand I commit my spirit, thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. In forsaking God you forsake your own mercies, and involve yourselves in unspeakable misery.

2. Consider how contrary this is to the example and practice of the Saints and Servants of God in all ages, to forsake God because of your afflictions; if you observe their practice and carriage, you shall find that they have

cleaved to God, and continued constant in their walking with God, in the midst of their greatest troubles, Psal. 44:17-19. All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death. Jobs afflictions were very great, yet they did not cause him to depart from God, or cease from serving him, Job 23:2,11,12. Even today is my complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning—My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined; neither have I gone back from the Commandment of his lips, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Job 13:15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him—David went through many afflictions, yet none of them caused him to depart from God, but he continued to serve and walk with God, notwithstanding all his sufferings, Psal. 119:83,109,143. I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy Statutes—My soul is continually in mine hand; yet do I not forget thy law—Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me; yet thy Commandments are my delights. Psal. 31:9,10,14. I am in trouble, mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly: for my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing —But I trusted in thee, O Lord —

3. It is a foolish and vain thing for any man to forsake God by reason of his afflictions; because by forsaking God, a man brings upon himself more and greater evils than his present afflictions are, how many or great soever they be. For, 1. They that forsake God bring upon themselves the guilt of a horrible sin, such a sin as may astonish the heavens when they hear of it, Jer. 2:12,13. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two

evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Now the guilt of sin is a greater evil than any affliction. 2. They that forsake God lose his favor, Heb. 10:38. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. What loss is comparable to the loss of God's favor? 3. They that forsake God, do not only lose his favor, but incense and stir up his wrath against their souls, Ezra 8:22. The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. And God's wrath is far more dreadful than any affliction. 4. They that forsake God, lose eternal life and glory, Jer. 17:13. O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters. Their names shall not be written in heaven, all their portion that they shall have shall be here on the earth. What are worldly losses, compared to the loss of the Kingdom of Heaven? 5. They that forsake God, shall be cast into Hell when they die, Psal. 125:5. As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. Now where doth God bestow the workers of iniquity? He casts them into Hell, Matth. 13:41. The Son of man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. What are all the afflictions and troubles of this life, compared with the torments of Hell? 6. They that forsake God, shall be forsaken of God, 1 Chron. 28:9. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. 2 Chron. 15:2. Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah, and Benjamin, The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake

you. Now what greater misery can come upon a man, than to be forsaken of God?

4. Your afflictions should be so far from causing you to forsake God, that they should make you to return to the Lord, and to cleave faster to the Lord, and to walk more closely with God. For 1. Your afflictions are sent for this very end and purpose, to cause you to return to God, Jer. 18:11. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you; return ye now everyone from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good. The Prophet Joel having mentioned several great calamities which God was sending upon the Jews, Joel 2:1, to the 12th ver., tells them, ver. 12, that God's end in those Judgments was to turn them to himself, Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart—Now seeing your afflictions are sent to turn you unto God, and to bring you nearer to God, is it not horrible perverseness because of your afflictions to depart from God? 2. You had need to turn to God, and not to forsake him in the day of your distress, because you will not know what to do without God in a time of trouble, Isa. 10:3. What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory? The Prophet speaketh to such as did not turn to God when he was smiting of them, chap. 9:13. David was of another spirit, when he saw trouble coming, he gets near to God, and labors to get God near to him, Psal. 22:11. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help. Who shall support and comfort you in your troubles, and who shall deliver you out of your troubles, if you forsake God in your afflictions? If you have any support in your troubles it must come from God, Isa. 25:4. Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress. Psal. 124:1-4. If it had not been the Lord, who was on

our side, now may Israel say; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul. If you have any comfort in your troubles, it must come from God, Mic. 7:8. When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. Psal. 137:8. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; and if God do not give some comfort by his word, your hearts will break, and you will perish under your afflictions, Psal. 119:92. Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. If God do not help you out of your afflictions, no man whatsoever can help you, Psal. 60:11. Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man. None can do more for us than Kings; yet if God be not pleased to help us, they cannot deliver us from our troubles, 2 King. 6:26,27. As the King of Israel was passing by on the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my Lord, O King; and he said, if the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? 3. They that forsake God in their afflictions are worse than Idolaters, for they in their distresses do not run from, but run to their Idols to help them. The Sea-men that carried Jonah were Idolaters, for they had each man his distinct god; yet when there arose a great tempest, there was not a man amongst them but went to his god for help, Jon. 1:4,5. There was a mighty tempest in the Sea, so that the Ship was like to be broken; then the Mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god.

3. It may be Satan will take occasion from your afflictions to tempt you to change your Religion; He hath not only tempted, but prevailed with many in their distress to change their Religion: see an instance or two of this, 2 Chron. 28:22,23. In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against

the Lord; this is that King Ahaz, for he sacrificed unto the God's of Damascus which smote him: and he said, because the gods of the Kings of Assyria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. The feeling of want, and hope of plenty, made the Jews forsake the Lord, and burn Incense to the Queen of Heaven, Jer. 44:17,18. We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn Incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out Drink Offerings unto her, as we have done;—for then had we plenty of Victuals, and were well, and saw no evil; but since we left off to burn Incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out Drink Offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the Sword, and by the Famine. If Satan by his own suggestions, or any of his Instruments, should tempt you, because of your poor, low and afflicted condition, to forsake the Protestant Religion, (which is a Religion founded upon the Scriptures, and holdeth forth nothing but what is consonant to, and may be clearly proved from the Word of God) and should solicit you to embrace any other Religion, the Doctrine or Worship whereof cannot be proved by, but are contrary to the Word of God, promising you thereby a liberal maintenance; you ought not upon any terms to yield to this temptation.

I will lay before you some Arguments to continue steadfast in that Doctrine and way of Worship, which is according to the Word of God, and not forsake the same for any gain or advantage what so ever.

1. The Prophets under the Old Testament, and Jesus Christ and his Apostles under the New Testament, do all with one consent direct us to build our faith, and to take our directions for worshiping God from the Scriptures. The Prophets that lived in the times of the Old Testament, they send us to the Scriptures, and counsel us to embrace no Doctrines but what

are according to the Scriptures, Isa. 8:20. To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them. Psal. 119:105. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Malachi, who was one of the last Prophets under the Old Testament, at the conclusion of his Prophecy, stirs us up to cleave to the Word of God, Mal. 4:4. Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the Statutes and Judgments. Jesus Christ also would have us regulate our faith by the Scriptures, Joh. 7:38. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture that said —He puts us upon the study of the Scriptures, Joh. 5:39. Search the Scriptures —he lays the cause of Errors in Judgment, upon ignorance of the Scriptures, Mar. 12:24. Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures —His great care after his Resurrection was to help his Disciples to understand, and to establish them in the belief of the Scriptures, Luk. 24:27,44,45. The Apostles of Christ believed in God, and worshiped God, according as they were directed by the Scriptures, Joh. 2:22. His Disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the Word which Jesus had said. Acts 24:14.— So worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. And as they believed themselves, so they taught no other Doctrine then what was according to the Scriptures, Act. 26:22. I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things, than those which Moses and the Prophets did say should come, —see also 1 Cor. 15:3,4. Act. 28:23, yea, all the members of the true Church, of that Church which is the House of God, an holy Temple, an habitation of God, do cleave to, and are built upon that Doctrine which is delivered by the Prophets and the Apostles in the Scriptures, Eph. 2:19-22.

2. If there should arise a Prophet, which could work wonders; if that Prophet should persuade us to turn to an Idolatrous Religion, we must not hearken to him, Deut. 13:1-3. If there arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and giveth thee a sign, or a wonder; and the sign, or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee; saying, Let us go after other gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them: Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that Prophet;—for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul: yea farther, if one of the Apostles should rise from the dead; or if an Angel should come from Heaven, and preach any other Doctrine than what is contained in the Scriptures, we ought not to receive it, Gal. 1:8,9. Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again; If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed. Now if we must entertain no Doctrine contrary to the Scriptures, though delivered by a Prophet that can work wonders, and foretell things to come; or by an Apostle, or by an Angel from Heaven; then how great is their folly, who at the instigation of Satan, or any of his Instruments, do turn aside from the Truth, and embrace a corrupt Religion, to get, or to prevent the losing of the good things of this world?

3. If you abide in the true Doctrine of Christ as it is delivered in the Scriptures, you shall enjoy the favor of God, and have Communion with him both here and hereafter; but if you abide not in the Doctrine of Christ, you will lose the favor of God, and shall have no part or portion in his Kingdom, 2 Joh. ver. 9. Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ,

he hath both the Father and the Son. 1 Joh. 2:23,24. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father;—Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning; if that which ye have heard from the beginning, shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. Are the Father and the Son so low in your esteem, and is the world so high, that you will forgo the Father and the Son, and deprive yourselves forever of any part or portion of the blessed God, by departing from the Truth to embrace this present world?

4. It is a sin that will certainly bring damnation, to depart from the Truth, and to turn aside to corrupt doctrine, 1 Tim. 5:12. Having damnation, because they have cast of their first faith. 2 Thess. 2:11,12. God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Will you damn your souls to get or keep a little pittance of this world? It is not much that you can hope for by changing your Religion. But suppose you could gain a Kingdom, yea, the whole world; yet this will not countervail the loss of your soul, Mar. 8:36. What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

5. Consider how firmly our Lord Jesus Christ adhered to the Scriptures. When he was offered all the Kingdoms of the world, for one act of Idolatrous worship, he refused it with disdain, giving this reason, it was against the written Word of God, Matth. 4:8-10. The Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high Mountain, and showeth him all the Kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And as the Lord Jesus would not go against the

Scriptures, to gain the whole world; so neither would he do anything against the Scriptures, to avoid the greatest sufferings that ever man met with. When Christ's Enemies had apprehended him, in order to the putting of him to death, he could have called for twelve Legions of Angels to have rescued him out of his Enemies hands, but he would not, because it was against the Scriptures, Matth. 26:53,54. Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and he should presently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be. Now we ought to have as high a respect unto the Scriptures, as Christ had; for, He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked, 1 Joh. 2:6.

6. It is a very rare thing to hear of Idolaters that change their Religion, they show great firmness to their idol gods, though they are no gods but the work of men's hands, Jer. 2:10,11. Pass over the Isles of Chittim, and see and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a Nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit. Is it not a shame for such as profess the true God, to set lighter by the true God, than Idolaters do by their Idols?

7. It never went well with any persons that forsake the true Religion, and turned to a false one out of worldly respects. Ahaz thought to be much advantaged by sacrificing to the gods of Damascus; but was he helped at all thereby? No, It was his ruin and the ruin of all Israel, 2 Chron. 28:23. He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, that smote him; and he said, Because the gods of the Kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me; but they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. The Jews that burnt Incense to the Queen of Heaven, hoping thereby to obtain

both peace and plenty, were consumed by the Sword and Famine, Jer. 44:17,18,21,22,25,27. What did Francis Spira get by denying and departing from the reformed Religion, but such horror of Conscience, as may make all that shall read his History, tremble at any thoughts of denying or departing from the Truth.

8. That man's Profession of Religion is worth nothing, who will change his Religion for worldly advantages: for he is not a servant to the great God that made all things; but he makes the world his god, and shall after his death have his part among Idolaters in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, Phil. 3:18,19, Rev. 21:8.

4. It may be Satan will press hard upon some persons that have lived plentifully heretofore, and in good respect among their neighbors, and now are brought into a poor low condition by this fire, to make away themselves: It is usual with the Devil, who is styled a Murderer, to tempt distressed persons either to strangle, or drown, or stab, or some other way to destroy themselves: He assaulted Job with this temptation when he was in his troubles; and to render the temptation the more successful, he maketh use of his wife to carry on his design, Job 2:9. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity, curse God, and die. But Job abhors the motion, and rebukes his wife for this counsel, ver. 10. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh, &c. If any of you are, or should be hereafter assaulted with this temptation, to prevent your yielding to it, I would advise you to do these things.

1. Be convinced that it is a damnable sin for any man, upon any pretense whatsoever, to murder himself: If you doubt of this, whether it be a sin for a man to take away his own life; I shall endeavor to convince you that it is not only a sin, but a very heinous and damnable sin, for a man to destroy

himself. 1. It is a transgression of that Law, Exod. 20:13. Thou shalt not kill; which is one of the greatest Commandments of the Second Table. That Law, Thou shalt not kill, doth as much oblige us not to kill ourselves, as it doth not to kill other men. 2. The Word of God telleth us plainly, that no murderer shall have eternal life, but shall be cast into that lake that burns with fire and brimstone, 1 Joh. 3:15. Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him: Rev. 21:8. The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Now such as kill themselves are murderers, as well as they that kill other men. 3. It is a usurping upon God's Prerogative for a man to kill himself; for our time of life and death is only at God's disposal, Psal. 31:15. My times are in thine hand; Deut. 32:39. I kill, and I make alive:—Now as 'tis unlawful for us to avenge ourselves, because it belongs to God to take vengeance, Rom. 12:19. Dearly Beloved, avenge not yourselves;—for it is written, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord: So, because our times are in God's hands, and it is his Prerogative to kill and to make alive, it is utterly unlawful for us to kill ourselves. 4. We are not our own, 1 Cor. 6:19,20.—Ye are not your own, for you are bought with a price: and therefore we must not take upon us to dispose of ourselves, as we see good; but our lives, and all that we have are to be at God's disposal. The Lord Jesus died for this end, that he might be Lord of our lives and persons; and therefore he that takes upon him to live as he list, or to die how and when he thinketh good himself, sinneth greatly against Jesus Christ; for he goeth about to make void the death of Christ, Rom. 14:7-9. None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the

Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's: for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 5. He that kills himself, breaths out his soul in the very act of sin; and that not of a small, but of a crying heinous sin. Now we look upon their case to be very sad, who die when they are drunk, or who are cut off in the act of Adultery; or who die cursing and blaspheming God, and so it is: But is not their case as sad, who die in the act of murder? 6. He that kills himself, tramples underfoot one of the choicest of God's mercies; for what mercy is of greater value (I mean, what outward mercy) than life? Life is beyond riches, or honor, &c. and therefore it must needs be a great sin to cast away life.

2. When Satan presseth upon you with this temptation to make away yourselves, resist him, and thereby you will overcome him, Jam. 4:7. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you; if you yield, he will trample upon you; but if you resist him, he will flee from you. If you say, How should we resist the Devil when he tempts us to destroy ourselves? I answer, 1. Resist him by Prayer; pray to God to take this temptation from you, or to give you grace to overcome it; and though the temptation continue after you have prayed to have it removed, be not discouraged, but pray still. The Apostle directing us how to deal with Satan, after he hath set down several pieces of the spiritual armor, that are useful in our combat with this Adversary, exhorts us to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance, Eph. 6:18. If we continue to pray against the temptations of Satan, either God will remove them, or give us sufficient grace to hold out in the conflict, 2 Cor. 12:7,8,9. There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure: For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it

might depart from me; and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.

2. Resist the Devil with the Word. When he tempted Christ to cast himself down from a Pinnacle, which was in effect, to destroy himself; Christ resisted this and all his other temptations with the written Word, Matth. 4:4,7,10. Three times doth Christ repel Satan with the written Word; to teach us, to make use of the Sword of the Spirit, in resisting all our temptations. Doth Satan tempt thee to destroy thyself, remember it is written, Thou shalt not kill. It is said of Luther, that he was so violently assaulted with this temptation to destroy himself, that for some hours together, he was necessitated to press that Scripture upon his heart, Thou shalt not kill.

3. Resist the Devil by Faith. There is a great efficacy in faith to resist and subdue the temptations of Satan, Eph. 6:16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 1 Pet. 5:8,9. Be sober, be vigilant; because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith.

3. When Satan follows you with this temptation to destroy yourself, fly for refuge from this roaring Lion to Jesus Christ; cast yourselves into his arms, commit the keeping of your souls and lives to the Lord Jesus, and rest upon him to preserve you from being vanquished by this temptation. Take some encouragements to fly to Christ, and to rest upon him for relief, when you are pursued with this, or any other temptation.

1. The Lord Jesus is able to succor thee in all thy temptations, Heb. 2:18. In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. He conquered all the powers of darkness at his death, Col. 2:15. Having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. He hath all the Devils in Hell under a lock, and he keeps the keys

of this lock in his own hands, Rev. 1:18. I have the Keys of Hell and of death. How easily can he command down any temptation, that hath the Keys of Hell, and that hath triumphed over all the powers of darkness, and spoiled them of their strength? In the days of his humiliation, he had all the Devils at his command; he dispossessed them with speaking but a word, Luk. 4:36.— With authority and power, he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. If in the days of his humiliation, when he was in the form of a Servant, he had such power over the Devils; what power hath he in his Exaltation, now that he sitteth at the right hand of God in the highest Heavens? 2. Jesus Christ is very pitiful to such as are under temptation. What God saith to the Israelites, Exod. 23:9. Ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the Land of Egypt. The like may be said of Christ, he knoweth the heart of such as are in temptation, seeing he himself was tempted, in all points as we are, only he never sinned under any of his temptations. That Christ's being tempted doth incline him to be pitiful and merciful to us in our temptations, you may see, Heb. 4:15. We have not a High Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He was tempted to this very sin, to destroy himself by casting himself down from a pinnacle of the Temple; and therefore knows how to pity those that are dogged with this temptation. He is so tender over tempted souls, that he takes them in his arms, and lodgeth them in his bosom, to prevent their being devoured by the roaring Lion, Isa. 40:11. He shall feed his Flock like at Shepherd; he shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Though we be weak like Lambs, and Satan be strong and cruel like a Lion; yet as long as we lie in the bosom of Christ, we are safe enough from this roaring Lion. 3. The

Lord Jesus is very vigilant over all Satan's motions; whenever there ariseth any desire in his heart to do us mischief, Christ seeth what he designs, and prevents his temptations from ruining of us, Luk. 22:31,32. The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. Christ takes care of Peter, before Peter knew his danger, and so consequently before he sought to Christ. Now if Christ be so careful of persons in temptation, as to prevent them with mercy, to succor them before they cry; then surely he will succor and relieve those that cry to him night and day.

4. When you find yourselves assaulted with this temptation, and it comes with that violence and fury, that you are afraid you shall one day fall by it; have recourse to those Promises which relate to a tempted condition, and urge them at the Throne of Grace, and hang upon God for the accomplishment of them. I will put you in remembrance of some Promises that may be of great use to you when you are in a tempted condition, Rom. 16:20. The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. It may be you have had a long conflict with Satan, and you are afraid at the last he will get you under his feet; but fear not, the God of Truth hath engaged himself by promise, that he will bruise Satan under your feet, and he will do it shortly, 1 Cor. 10:13. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make away to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Satan is very desirous to tempt us above what we are able to bear, but God will not suffer him; and that we may rest satisfied that he will not suffer Satan to tempt us above what we are able to bear, he hath engaged his faithfulness for the fulfilling of this promise; and he that hath made this promise, knoweth what we can, and

what we cannot bear, Isa. 59:19. When the Enemy shall come in like a stood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; or (as 'tis in the margent) shall put him to slight. Doth Satan come in upon your souls with his temptations like a flood, in such a violent impetuous manner, that you are in danger to be born down by them, yet fear not, the Spirit of the Lord will come into your assistance and put him to slight. The first Promise that God gave to man after his fall, may be of great use to us in our temptations; namely, That the seed of the woman shall break the Serpents head.

5. Keep up your hope in the mercy of God by virtue of the merits of Christ, and the Covenant of Grace. Satan can do little by this temptation of Self-murder, until he hath brought the Soul into a despairing condition. As long as we are able to cleave to the blood of Christ, and the Word of God; Satan shall not be able to prevail against us, but we shall overcome all his temptations, Rev. 12:11. They overcame him (that is, Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their Testimony.

6. Shun idleness, and always employ yourselves either in some religious exercise, or in the works of your Calling; and if Satan come upon you with his temptations, either when you are performing any religious duties, or when you are about the works of your Calling, you need not be afraid of him; for the good Angels have a charge from God to look after you, and defend you when you are in God's way, Psal. 91:11. He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: And by virtue of that assistance which God will give us, whilst we keep in his ways, we shall overcome the Powers of Darkness, as we may see, ver. 13. Thou shalt tread upon the Lion and Adder; the young Lion and the Dragon shalt thou trample

underfoot. But by idleness and neglecting the works of our Calling, we give Satan great advantage against us.

7. Observe what pleas and reasonings Satan makes use of to draw you to this horrid sin of Self-murder; and upon examination you shall find them to be but mere delusions, and traps, and snares, that he makes use of to destroy your souls; and that they are of no force and validity to warrant your Commission of this unnatural sin, will appear evidently by instancing in, and returning an answer to some of the most material pleas which he maketh use of to draw persons under distress, to put an end to their own lives.

Plea 1. My misery and my troubles are exceeding great, they are so heavy I know not how to bear them, and I see no way how I should put an end to my miseries, but by putting an end to my days; and I had better put an end to my life, than live in such great and continual misery as I live in.

Answ. 1. It is utterly unlawful for a man to procure his own death, to put an end to his misery, though his sorrows and his troubles be exceeding great. Jobs calamities were exceeding great, both in respect of what he suffered in his inward and outward man. He felt such a load upon his spirit, that he thought if all the sand on the Sea-shore had been put into one balance, and his grief into another, his grief would have been heavier than the sand of the Sea; Job 6:2,3, he saith, ver. 4. The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. His sorrows and troubles were so great that he was weary of his life, and longed to die, ver. 8, 9. If he might have had his choice, he would have chosen strangling, or any other kind of death, rather than to have lived such a miserable life, Job 7:15,16, yet notwithstanding the case was thus with Job he durst not attempt anything to

take away his life one day before the time appointed by God was come, but resolves to wait patiently all his days for his change, Job 14:14. All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

2. By making away thyself, thou wilt not put an end to thy miseries, but wilt plunge thyself irrecoverably into far greater miseries than those that thou liest under, how great and many soever thy troubles be; for, Murderers shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21:8. Now all the troubles of this life are nothing compared with the torments of Hell; if it were possible for one man to have all the pains and tortures inflicted upon him, that have been endured by all the men upon the face of the earth since the Creation of the World, and he should suffer them a thousand years, this would be far short of what the damned suffer in hell. What the Apostle saith of the glory that the Saints shall have in heaven, Rom. 8:18. I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us: the same is true of the torments of hell; all the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the torments that the damned in hell shall suffer to all eternity.

3. It is the Devil tempts thee to put an end to thy miseries, by putting an end to thy days: God counsels thee otherwise, he directs thee to a better way of getting out of thy troubles, than by destroying thyself; and that is by calling upon God, and casting thy burdens upon him, and flying for refuge to his Son Jesus Christ, Psal. 50:15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee —Psal. 55:22. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Matth. 11:28. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Satan desires to have thee come unto him, that he may torment thee, and to that end he moves thee to destroy thyself.

Christ calls thee to come to him, that he may give thee rest. Now whether is it better to obey the call of Christ which will bring rest, or to follow the counsel of the Devil, who seeketh nothing else but thy eternal destruction?

Plea 2. I lived in good credit heretofore, but now my Estate is gone, I must look to be despised and disrespected, and slighted; and I cannot tell how to bear the loss of that esteem and respect which I have had formerly; I had as good die as see myself slighted —

Answ. 1. Though you be brought low, yet if you have lowly hearts, God will respect you as much as ever he did, Psal. 138:6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly. He will not only respect your persons, but your prayers also, Psal. 102:17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. If you live in the fear of God, all good men will honor you as much as ever they did, Psal. 15:4. He honoreth them that fear the Lord.

2. If you should meet with shame, and scorn, and reproach, this is the hand of the Lord; he is to be eyed in this as well as in other afflictions, Isa. 43:28. I have profaned the Princes of the Sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches. Psal. 44:9,13,14. Thou hast cast off, and put us to shame—Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and division to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen; a shaking of the head among the people: and seeing it is the Lord's doing, you must bear it patiently; you must not in anger cast away your lives, because God hath taken away your repute and honor.

3. Suppose you should lose that credit and respect which you have had in the world, if you continue in well-doing, God will give you immortal honor and eternal glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, Rom. 2:6,7. Who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them, who by patient continuance in

well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; But by destroying yourselves, you deprive yourselves of eternal glory; for all murderers shall be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven, Rev. 22:15. Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers. —

Plea 3. I am afraid I shall be in want, or be driven to beg my bread, or must be forced to live upon others; and I had better die than live in want, or live to be a burden to myself and others, or beg my bread.

Answ. 1. God hath given his Servants many encouragements to hope that they shall not want, or if they be brought into a necessitous condition, that they shall have their wants supplied.

2. We should endeavor what we can to maintain ourselves without being burdensome to others, 2 Cor. 11:9. In all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so will I keep myself. Acts 20:34,35. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me: I have shown you all things, how that so laboring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give, than to receive.

3. If God should bring you so low as to live upon alms, yet this should not make you weary of your lives: there are many of God's children that shall reign with Christ in heaven to all eternity, that received alms whilst they were upon the earth, as is evident from Matth. 25:35,36,40. Yea Christ himself when he was upon earth received alms, Luk. 8:1-3. Suppose you should be put to beg for your living, yet know 1. That it is better to beg than to sin, better to beg than destroy yourselves; for the one is but an affliction, the other is a grievous sin. 2. Lazarus who was an heir of heaven, whose soul was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom, was so poor, that he begged his bread, and would have been glad to have had the crumbs that

fell from the rich man's Table, Luk. 16:20-22. There was a certain beggar that was named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's Table; moreover the dogs came and licked his Sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom. 3. Our Lord Jesus in his thirst asks a draught of water of a woman of Samaria, Joh. 4:7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 4. If you should be brought to beg your bread, the Lord will not forsake you in this desolate condition, but will give you his gracious presence, Psal. 37:25. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. It is not ordinary for God to bring righteous persons, or their seed, to beg their bread; but when he doth, they are not forsaken of God in that condition. 5. The great God condescends so low, as to ask and entreat several things of you; he entreats you to give him your heart, Prov. 23:26. My son, give me thine heart. He beseecheth and prayeth you to be reconciled to him, 2 Cor. 5:20. We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. He beseecheth you to leave off your sins, Jer. 44:4. Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate. He beseecheth you to present your bodies to him, Rom. 12:1. Now if the great God condescend to ask several things of you, why should you be so proud and high-minded, as to choose rather to starve, or to murder yourselves, than to ask relief of your fellow creatures?

4. Job was a burden to himself, as he himself telleth us, Job 7:20. I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men, why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? He was also by reason of his sores, and other afflictions, a burden to his friends; so that

neither his wife, nor his servants, nor his friends, cared to come at him, Job 19:14-19. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me; they that dwell in mine own house, and my maidens count me a stranger; I am an alien in their sight: I called my servant, and he gave me no answer, I entreated him with my mouth; my breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body: all my inward friends abhorred me, and they whom I loved are turned against me. Yet though Job was become a burden to himself, and to all his friends, he durst not put an end to his life, but resolves, Job 14:14 All the days of mine appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

5. If you destroy yourselves, and thereby provoke God to cast your souls into hell, you will be in greater want there than ever man was upon the face of the earth; for there is nothing good in hell: there is nothing to please the eye, or the ear, or any of the senses; there you shall be tormented with hunger and thirst forever, and shall not have so much as a drop of water to cool your tongue: The rich man that fared deliciously every day, though he begged hard for but one drop of water to cool his tongue, he could not obtain it, Luk. 16:19,23-26. In your wants here, you may have relief by going to God, you may have comfort from the word; but there is no relief to be had from God, neither is there any comfort to be had from the word of God in hell. Your wants here continue but a little while; if you go on to serve God, you shall shortly be in heaven, where you shall want no good thing; but if you destroy yourselves, God will cast you into hell, where you shall suffer all sorts of wants in the utmost extremity to all eternity: and therefore it is great folly for any man to destroy himself for fear of being brought to want.

Plea 4. My sins lie as a heavy burden upon me, and they are greater than can be forgiven; and I know not how to be eased of this heavy burden, but by making away myself.

Ans. 1. Say not, thy sins are greater than can be forgiven; for all sorts of sins are pardonable by virtue of the Blood of Christ, 1 John 1:7. The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Mar. 3:28. Verily, I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven; unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. And though it be true, that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, the reason is not, because the Blood of Christ is not of sufficient value to wash away that sin, but because such persons as commit the sin against the Holy Ghost do not repent and believe in Jesus Christ, but do despise and trample underfoot the Blood of the Son of God.

2. Self-murder will not lessen, but increase the number of your sins; it will not take off the burden which is upon your consciences, but will make your burden a thousand times heavier: for if a man die in his sins, all his sins go down to hell with him, and there will lie as so many mountains of lead, pressing and loading his conscience to all eternity: and the sense of sin which men shall have in hell, will torment them a thousand times more than it doth in this life; for then they shall know more of the evil of sin, and more of the Majesty of that God against whom they have sinned, than they do now: Then they shall see more sins than they do now, and feel more of God's wrath for their sins; here they have some few drops, there they shall have full vials of wrath: then they shall have certain knowledge that there is no possibility of obtaining the pardon of any one sin forever. Here though they may be under great fears, yet there may be some hope of mercy; at

least, as long as they live, they are not under an impossibility of being pardoned.

3. Though thou art under despair, and ready to say, there is no hope that God should ever pardon such a great sinner as I have been; yet set upon the work of repentance, and returning to God, and God will pardon all your sins, Jer. 3:22. Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. These persons to whom this promise is made had been exceeding great sinners, as you may see, ver. 5. Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest, and were in a despairing condition, chap. 2, ver. 25.— Thou saidst there is no hope. Yet to these persons that had done evil things as they could, and said there was no hope of mercy for them, God promiseth if they would return, he would not cause his anger to fall upon them, chap. 3, ver. 12, but would pardon and forgive their sins, ver. 22. God also by the Prophet Isaiah, promiseth pardon to the chiefest of sinners, if they will but forsake their sins, Isa. 1:16-18. Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well—Come now and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Object. It is true, if I could repent; then though my sins were never so great, I know the Lord would pardon them; but alas, I cannot turn from my sins to God, repentance is hid from mine eyes.

Answ. Though you cannot repent of yourself, yet you should not despair, for God hath exalted his Son Jesus Christ to give you repentance, Acts 5:31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. It may be you will reply, Christ is exalted to give repentance unto Israel, but what is that to me? I

answer, 1. This Israel had imbrued their hands in the Blood of Christ, Acts 2:36. Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ; and in the words immediately foregoing that Scripture, where the Apostle tells them, God had exalted Christ to give them repentance, he tells them, Acts 5:30. The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hung upon a tree; him hath God exalted to give repentance unto Israel, &c. Now was Christ exalted to give repentance to them that crucified him, and do ye think that he will not give repentance unto you, if you go to him for a penitent heart? Have you committed greater sins than the crucifying of Christ? 2. If you question whether Christ will give you repentance, you may be satisfied that he will from his own words, if you go to him for repentance; for he hath said, Joh. 6:37. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

Plea 5. I have committed (may some say) a very foul sin, and I am afraid it should come to light; and if it should, I shall be ashamed to look any man in the face; and I had better make away myself, than live to be a public shame.

Answ. 1. This will not conceal your sins, to make away yourself; for there is a day of Judgment coming, wherein God will bring to light and publish in the hearing of the whole world: all your sins even your foulest and most shameful sins which you have committed with greatest secrecy, Eccl. 12:14. God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Luk. 12:2,3. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known; whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house tops. 1 Cor. 4:5. Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will

bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: And therefore if you should escape the shame of your sins here, you will at the resurrection and the day of Judgment, when God shall disclose your sins to the whole world, be put to everlasting contempt, Dan. 12:2. Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

2. The way to get your shameful sins covered, is to confess them to God, and to humble your souls for them, and to flee to the Blood of Christ; for by so doing God will pardon them, and cast them behind his back; and when God hath pardoned them, they shall not do you any hurt, 1 Joh. 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. When God forgives sin, he is said to cover it, Psal. 32:1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. David committed a shameful sin, when he murdered Uriah, and committed adultery with Bathsheba; yet upon his confession of these sins, God pardoned him, Psal. 32:5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

Plea 6. I am tempted in my straits to steal, and to kill my Children, because I cannot maintain them; I am tempted also to other sins: Now I am afraid if I live I shall fall by my temptations into some foul sin, and thereby be a scandal to Religion, and to the Gospel, and it is better for me to die than to scandalize Religion: and therefore I am of the mind, when I can get a convenient opportunity, to make away myself, that I may not become a scandal to the Gospel.

Answ. 1. You must not commit one sin to avoid another, Rom. 3:8. Not as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, let us do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just. It is a good thing to prevent sin, and to prevent scandalizing of Religion; yet we must not murder ourselves, which is a great evil, to prevent other sins, or scandalizing Religion; because it is in the judgment of the Apostle, a damnable tenet and practice to do evil that good may come.

2. What greater sin or scandal to Religion than for a man that professeth Religion, to murder himself? And therefore it is a strange delusion for a man to design the making away of himself, to avoid other sins, or to avoid scandalizing of the Gospel.

3. If you be tempted to steal, or destroy your Children, or any other sins, and are afraid that you shall one day fall by these temptations, there are better means of avoiding these sins, than by murdering yourselves: and they are such as these, 1. Pray to God to keep you from those sins to which you are tempted by Satan, or unto which you are inclined by your own hearts, Psal. 19:12,13. Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me. Psal. 119:133. Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. 2. Hide God's Word in your hearts, for there is great efficacy in the Word of God when it is treasured up in the heart, to keep a man from falling into sin, Psal. 119:11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. 3. Rest upon God's Promises, wherein he hath promised you, that he will not suffer sin to get the dominion over you; but when he seeth your sins rising up against you, and ready to prevail, he will take compassion upon you, and subdue your iniquities, Rom. 6:14. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Mic. 7:19. He will turn again, he will

have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the Sea. Go out against your sins in the strength of these promises, and though you be often soiled, yet renew your combat, hanging and cleaving to the promises of God, and doubt not but you shall in the conclusion obtain the victory.

Plea 7. I am a man cast off by God, and I am sure to go to Hell when I die; yea methinks I feel the beginnings of Hell already in my Conscience, by those terrors of God that are in my soul, and a seared Conscience; and the longer I live, the more I shall sin, and the more I shall increase my torments hereafter; and therefore 'tis better for me to put an end to my wretched life, than to live to increase my sins, and my torments; for I do nothing else but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.

Ans. 1. God would not have any man to say, God hath cast me off, and utterly separated me from his people, Isa. 56:3. Let not the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself unto the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people. We are very subject to mistakes, and to think that God hath cast us off, when as we have found grace in his sight, Psal. 31:22. I said in my haste, I am cut off before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications, when I cried unto thee. Zion thought and said, God had forgotten and forsaken her, when as she lay near God's heart, and was in his thoughts night and day, Isa. 49:14-16.

2. Suppose God did cast you off, yet you must not cast him off, but acknowledge before God, that it is just with God to leave you, and cry to him, and follow hard after him, and hang upon him, and hope in his word, even at such a time as he casteth off your souls. When Heman complained, Psal. 88:14. Lord, why castest thou off my soul? He did not cease calling

upon God, ver. 9. I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Jonah when he thought God had cast him off, yet resolves still to wait upon him, Jon. 2:4. I said I, am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again towards thy Temple. When David thought himself cast off by God, he encourageth his soul to hope in the Lord, Psal. 43:2,5. Why dost thou cast me off?—why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God:

3. Say not, I am sure to go to Hell when I die, for it is yet a day of salvation, and the door of hope stands open; there is yet time and place for repentance, 2 Cor. 6:2. Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. Though a man be a perfect slave to sin and Satan, yet there is a possibility that he may be brought to repentance, 2 Tim. 2:25,26. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance—that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will: and if God give thee repentance, though thou hast been as wicked a man as lives upon the face of the earth, yet thou shalt surely be saved, Ezek. 33:15,16, Prov. 28:13, Isa. 55:7.

4. Suppose thou apprehendest thyself to have as it were the beginnings of Hell in thy soul, yet thy case is not desperate. Others that have had pains and horrors in their souls, like the pains of Hell, have found relief from God. Jonah after he had fled from the presence of the Lord, and was cast into the Sea, and swallowed up by a Fish, felt himself in such a distressed condition, that he compares his condition to the belly of hell; yet he crying to God in this condition, was delivered out of it, Jon. 2:2. I cried by reason of mine affliction to the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. When David was in such a state, that he

compares his pains to the pains of Hell, by crying to the Lord he was delivered, Psal. 116:3-6. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow: then called I upon the Name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul—I was brought low and he helped me.

5. It is true, that all the while a man liveth in an impenitent condition, he treasureth up wrath against the day of wrath; and as he increaseth his sins, so also he increaseth his torments, Rom. 2:5. Thou after thy hardness, and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath. Yet this should not cause any man to destroy himself, it should only make a man more earnest in seeking unto God to give him repentance. As long as there is life there is hope, God may give a man repentance: God gave one of the thieves that was crucified with Christ, repentance but a few hours before he died: He calls some into his vineyard at the last hour of the day. But after death there is no place for repentance, Eccl. 9:10.

Plea 8. I will repent of my sins, and confess them to God, and pray God to pardon them, before I make away myself; and if I do so, I hope God will pardon my sins and receive my soul into his heavenly Kingdom as soon as I am dead.

Answ. As long as you have any bloody designs and purposes in your hearts, your prayers will avail nothing with God, Isa. 1:15. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of Blood. Lo here, though you make many prayers, as long as you have any bloody projects, either against yourselves or others, God will hear none of them, Psal. 66:18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Now so long as you harbor a purpose and resolution to make away yourselves, you do regard iniquity

in your hearts. It is said, Prov. 28:13. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy. You mistake the meaning of the Promise, if you think that you shall find mercy upon your confessing of this sin, when as you still retain a purpose to commit it.

I might mention other pleas, but I should then enlarge too far upon this head; I shall therefore only add a few propositions concerning this temptation of self-murder, that may be useful to those that are exercised with it, and so dismiss this point.

1. Whensoever any man hath any suggestions or motions put in his mind to murder himself, it is not God, but Satan puts those motions into his mind, how specious pretenses soever do attend those motions. What is said of: the motion that was in the heart of Judas to betray Christ, Joh. 13:2. The Devil put into the heart of Judas to betray him; the same may be said of the motions that come into our hearts to destroy ourselves; it is the Devil puts them into us. If a man be persuaded to make away himself, I may say here as the Apostle in another case, Gal. 5:8. This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you: That it is not God by his Spirit, but Satan puts these motions into your hearts, is evident: for 1. God tempts no man to any sin, Jam. 1:13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

2. The Spirit of God moveth no man to do anything contrary to the word: Now the word saith expressly, Thou shalt not kill. The word forbids us doing ourselves any harm, as well as doing harm unto others, Acts 16:27,28. The keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself— But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm. If any say, I

have Scriptures brought to my mind to encourage and put me forward to make away myself; therefore, surely it is God, and not Satan puts me upon this work. I answer: Though thou hast some portions of Scripture cast into thy mind to put thee forward to destroy thyself, it is not God, but Satan transforming himself into an Angel of Light, and wresting and abusing the Scriptures, that puts thee upon this sinful work. When Satan tempted Christ to cast himself down from a Pinnacle, he brings a Scripture to him; he quotes a precious promise out of the Book of Psalms to carry on his temptation the more plausibly, Matth. 4:5,6, If Satan made use of Scripture to carry on his temptations wherewith he assaulted Christ, then there is no doubt but he will try the same way with us also. Now this would be one good means of resisting this temptation, to be fully persuaded, that all the motions that are put into our hearts to destroy ourselves, come from the Devil.

2. The design of Satan in this temptation is to devour and destroy our souls; he is our deadly and implacable enemy, and is always designing our hurt; when he pretends our good, he intends our ruin: and therefore what counsel Solomon giveth us concerning a deceitful adversary, Prov. 26:24,25. He that hateth, dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart, is very seasonable here: when Satan speaks us fair, we should not believe him, for he hates us, and hath abominable designs against us in his heart. That Satan seeks to devour and destroy our souls by this and all his other temptations, may be cleared from several Scriptures, as 1 Pet. 5:8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Joh. 10:10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. Joh.

8:44. He was a murderer from the beginning. Now did they that are tempted to make away themselves, fully believe that these motions came from Satan, and that Satan's design in moving them to kill themselves, is to devour and destroy their precious souls, that he may draw them into the same place of torment where he himself is, it would be a good help to resist the temptation.

3. There is hope for a man as long as God continueth him in the land of the living, that he may obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ, if he repent of his sins, and believe in Christ, how desolate, and distressed, and desperate soever his condition seem to be. I add this proposition, because Satan can hardly draw a man to destroy himself, till he hath brought him to despair; and therefore if the person that is under this temptation could be convinced, that there was hope of mercy and salvation for such an one as he is, it might be an effectual means of preventing the temptation from taking place. I shall therefore endeavor to prove, that no man whatever is to conclude his case desperate, so long as God permits him to live upon the face of the earth; but there is a possibility, yea, there is hope that he may obtain salvation, if he will use the means appointed by God for the saving of his soul: and that I prove by these arguments.

1. It is the will of God that the Gospel should be preached to every creature under heaven, Mar. 16:15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. Col. 1:23— The hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven. —As long as a man is out of Hell, as long as he lives in the world, so long he may have the Gospel preached to him, and may have salvation tendered to him by Christ; and as long as the Gospel is preached to a man, so long 'tis a day of salvation; that is, a day wherein he may obtain salvation if he seek after

it, 2 Cor. 6:2. I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation. What time doth the Apostle mean, when he saith, Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation? I answer, He means the time when we enjoy the ministry of reconciliation; the time when we have the Gospel preached to us; as you may see in the former Chapter, ver. 18. 20. He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation—Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God: and then adds, chap. 6:2. Behold, now is the accepted time, Behold, now is the day of salvation. The note of attention is mentioned twice, behold, behold, to cause us to take the more diligent heed to this truth, that we should account it a day of salvation as long as we have the Gospel preached to us.

2. We are commanded to account the longsuffering of God to be salvation, 2 Pet. 3:15. Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; and therefore they that conclude all hope of salvation is gone, and that God suffers them to live only to aggravate their condemnation, wrong God and their own souls, by harboring such conclusions in their minds: he therefore suffers us to live that we may have time and space to repent, ver. 9. The Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Rev. 2:21. I gave her space to repent—

3. The Scripture holds it forth plainly, that as long as a man lives in the world, he is not to cast away his hope, Eccl. 9:4. To him that is joined to all the living there is hope. It is true, if once a man be dead, and hath not wrought out his salvation before he dies, the door of hope is forever shut against that man; but while he is in the Land of the living, there is hope that he may obtain mercy.

4. Whilst a man continues upon the face of the earth, Christ calls him to look to him for salvation, and promiseth him salvation, if he doth look to him, Isa. 45:22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Look unto me and be ye saved; that is, I will save you, if you look unto me: And whom doth Christ call to look to him for salvation? All the ends of the earth; that is, all men that live upon the face of the Earth, from one end of the Earth to another; so that as long as a man is not cast into Hell, but is permitted to live upon the face of the Earth, he should not conclude his case desperate.

5. We find God hath rebuked those that have cast away their hope, and hath encouraged them to seek and hope for salvation, that have thought there was no hope for such as they were. When some amongst the Jews thought God had done with them, and given them over, and would look no more after them, God reproves them for it, Isa. 40:27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest O Israel; my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? And at another time, when they thought there was no hope, but they must perish in their sins; and looked upon it as an improbable, if not as an impossible thing, that such as they were, should obtain life; God swears to them that he did not delight in their death, but rather did desire that they should repent, that they might live, Ezek. 33:10,11. Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions, and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them; How should we then live? Say unto them, As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? We find also God encouraging the Jews when they were in a despairing condition in Babylon, Lam. 3:18,19. I said, my strength and my hope is perished from

the Lord; remembering mine affliction, and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. But though they said their hope was perished, God saith it was good for them to hope still, ver. 26. It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. God may have great mercy in store for them that think there is no mercy for them. When the house of Israel said, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts: God promiseth to do great things for them, to put his Spirit in them, and give them life, &c. Ezek. 37:11-14. And though Satan may make use of some Scriptures to drive us to despair, yet he perverts the sense and meaning of those Scriptures, for no passage of Scripture was written to drive us to despair; but the design of the Scripture is to encourage us to hope in God, Rom. 15:4. Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

4. *Prop.* No man ought to conclude that he is a graceless person, or cast out of the favor of God, because he is assaulted with this temptation to make away himself; or because he hath often prayed to God to have his temptation removed, and it continueth still in as great violence as ever. The best of men may be tempted to the foulest of sins. What sin is more hideous than for a man to fall down and worship the Devil? Yet the Lord Jesus was tempted to this sin, Matth. 4:9. All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Dost thou think God doth not love thee, because he suffers the Devils to tempt thee to make away thyself? Christ was the beloved Son of God, yet the Devil tempted him to cast down himself from a pinnacle of the Temple, which was in effect to have destroyed himself, Matth. 4:5,6, yea, God suffered the Devil to do more than barely to tempt Christ; he suffered him to carry him from the Wilderness into Jerusalem,

and to set him upon the pinnacle of the Temple, Matth. 4:5, and from thence to carry him to an exceeding high Mountain, ver. 8. This is more than God permits the Devil to do to you, yet Christ was the beloved Son of God. Did not the Devil tempt Job (who was the most upright man that lived in his days) by the instigation of his wife to destroy himself? Job 2:9. His wife said unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die. And though you pray to have the temptation removed, and still it continueth: so did Paul, who was a chosen Vessel, when he was buffeted with a temptation from Satan, he prayed often to have it removed, and still it continued, 2 Cor. 12:7-9. There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me;—For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. But let thus much suffice for the preventing of this temptation of Self-murder.

5. It is probable that Satan will tempt such as are brought low by this fire, to use some unrighteous courses to enrich themselves; especially if they be brought into great straits, he will be urging of them to help themselves by some sinful means rather than to continue under their straits. Agur prays, that God would remove poverty from him, and gives this reason, Prov. 30:9. — Lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain: which implies, that Satan doth usually tempt such as are brought to poverty, to help themselves by unlawful and sinful means. I might suggest several things to prevent your yielding to this temptation. As,

1. You will lose more and better things than you will get by unrighteousness in your dealings, though you should get a vast estate by this means. For 1. Hereby you will lose the favor of God, Deut. 25:16. All that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God: And what

is all this world compared to the favor of God? 2. All that you get by sinful courses, is the price of blood, it is gotten with the loss of your souls, Ezek. 18:4.— The soul that sinneth it shall die. Now the soul is of that value, that the gaining of the whole world will not countervail the loss of one soul, Mar. 8:36. 3. What you get unrighteously, is purchased with the loss of Heaven, 1 Cor. 6:9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? 4. What is gotten unrighteously, is gotten with the loss of peace of Conscience, Isa. 59:8.— They have made them crooked paths, whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Prov. 20:17. Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

2. You do not only deprive yourselves of all good, but you bring upon yourselves woeful misery by seeking to enrich yourselves by unjust courses: for 1. Hereby you bring down the wrath, and curse, and vengeance of God upon yourselves, Jer. 22:13. Woe unto him that buildeth his House by unrighteousness, and his Chambers by wrong. 1 Thess. 4:6. That no man go beyond, and defraud his Brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such. Job 20:23. When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating: This is spoken of such as get their Estates unrighteously, as you may see ver. 19. 2. Such as seek to get wealth unrighteously, seek their own damnation, Prov. 21:6. The getting of Treasure by a lying Tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. Is eternal death such a desirable thing as that we should seek after it? Doth it not come fast enough of itself? Consider what dreadful judgments are denounced against such as get their Estates by unjust and unrighteous courses, Job. 20:15-29.

3. If you wait upon God, and put your trust in him, and keep yourselves honest, God will be with you, and provide for you a supply of all your

needs, Phil. 4:8,9,19. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just;—think on these things,—And the God of peace shall be with you;—My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. Psal. 37:3,34. Trust in the Lord, and do good,—and verily thou shalt be fed. Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the Land. Isa. 33:15,16. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes;—He shall dwell on high, his place of defense shall be the munition of Rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure. And know this also, that a little gotten honestly, and in the fear of God, is better than a great Estate gotten unrighteously, Prov. 16:8. Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right. Prov. 15:16. Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.

6. Another temptation, which is like to attend those that have been sufferers by this fire, is discontent and murmuring at their losses; but I shall need to add nothing more concerning this, but refer you to what is said in the first question, to prevent murmuring and discontent, because of the losses you have sustained by this fire.

SECT. 13.

13. Let the loss of your Estates put you upon seeking after, and making sure of those mercies and blessings, which shall never be taken from you to all eternity; I will mind you of some blessings, which if once you can get your souls possessed of them, they shall be yours forever.

1. Get an interest in God; if you once get the Lord for your God and portion, he will be your God and your portion forever, Psal. 48:14. This God is our God forever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death. Psal.

73:26. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

2. Get the grace of God implanted in your hearts; when God hath bestowed saving grace upon a man, that shall remain with him forever, Psal. 19:9. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever, —Joh. 4:14. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

3. Make sure of the favor of God, and labor to get into Covenant with him, and you shall be possessed of these mercies forever, Isa. 54:10. The Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.

4. Seek unto God to give you the Comforter, and when once you have gotten him, he shall abide with you forever, Joh. 14:16. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth;—he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Now the way to make sure of these, and all other spiritual blessings, is to make sure of Christ; close with Christ, cleave to Christ, and abide with him forever, and then all spiritual blessings shall be yours forever; for all spiritual blessings are treasured up in Christ, Eph. 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; and if we abide with Christ, he will abide ours forever, Joh. 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you.

SECT. 14.

14. Seek unto God to restore what he hath taken from you, and to make up all your losses. There are two ways of having your losses made up: 1. When God shall give you as much riches as he hath taken from you. 2. When he shall give you that which is as good or better, than what you lost by this fire. You may lawfully seek to God to restore your Estates which he hath taken from you, so you seek them in God's way: Take your directions from God's Word for the getting of riches; and because many that seek after riches, do not seek them in God's way, and so either fail of them, or have them not with the blessing of God: I shall 1. Propose some encouragements to stir you up to seek riches from God in God's way. 2. I shall lay before you some directions out of God's Word for the getting of riches. Now to move you to seek your riches of God, Consider,

1. Riches are God's gift, he gives them to whom he seeth good, 1 Chron. 29:12. Both riches and honor come of thee,—and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Deut. 8:18. Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.

2. God is able to make up all your losses, though they be never so great, and to give you as much and more than ever you had. After Job had lost all his estate, it is said, Job 42:10,12. The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before,—The Lord blessed the latter end of Job, more than his beginning. 2 Chron. 25:9. What shall we do for the hundred Talents? And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this. Though a man be brought very low, even to beggary; God can easily make him a rich man, 1 Sam. 2:8. He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among Princes, and to make them inherit the Throne of Glory.

3. It is usual with God, after he hath brought a man low, and humbled him, to raise him up again, as we see in the case of Job, to whom God gave twice as much as before; see to this purpose, Psal. 66:12. We went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. 1 Sam. 2:7. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

4. Those riches that are obtained in God's way do us most good, and convey most comfort to the owners, Prov. 10:22. The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

If you ask, What course should we take that we may obtain riches from God? I answer,

1. Let your first and principal care be to get heaven, and the grace of God, that may make you meet to enjoy his Kingdom; and when you do thus, God will not only give you heaven when you die, but will add also as much of this world as he seeth to be good for you, Matth. 6:33. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. When men are over-eager in seeking after the world, they oftentimes miss both of heaven and the world also, Prov. 28:18. He that hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

2. Embrace by faith, and set your love upon Jesus Christ; he promiseth to fill their treasures that love him, Prov. 8:20,21. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love me, to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.

3. Repent of your sins and turn to the Lord, and then though you be brought low, he will build you up again, and will give you plenty of such things as he seeth to be good for you, Job 22:23-25. If thou return to the

Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away Iniquity far from thy Tabernacles; then shalt thou lay-up Gold as dust, and the Gold of Ophir as the stones of the Brooks; yea the Almighty shall be thy defense, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

4. Walk in the fear of God, and be careful to keep his Commandments, Prov. 22:4. By humility, and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honor, and life. 2 Chron. 17:4,5. Jehoshaphat sought to the Lord God of his Fathers, and walked in his Commandments, and not after the doings of Israel; Therefore the Lord established the Kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents, and he had riches and honor in abundance.

5. Follow your employments with diligence: There is a blessing of God goeth along with diligence and industry in our Callings, Prov. 10:4. He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Prov. 22:29. Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before Kings, he shall not stand before mean men.

6. Seek after knowledge, and manage all your affairs with wisdom and discretion, Prov. 24:3,4. Through wisdom is a house built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge shall the Chamber be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

7. Be faithful and upright in all your dealings, Prov. 28:10,20. The upright shall have good things in possession: A faithful man shall abound in blessings. Psal. 112:3,4. Wealth and riches shall be in his house;—Unto the upright ariseth light in darkness.

8. Shun those vices that bring men to poverty and hinder their thriving in the world, such as prodigality, and love of pleasure, Prov. 21:17. He that loveth Pleasure, shall be a poor man; he that loveth Wine and Oil, shall not be rich. Idleness, and drowsiness, a negligent and sluggish management of

our affairs, Prov. 6:9-11. How long wilt thou sleep O sluggard! When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man. Prov. 18:9. He that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster. Gluttony and Drunkenness, Prov. 23:21. The Dunkard and the Glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

9. Be liberal to the poor; there may be a liberal soul, where there is but a small estate; and the more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to be a rich man, Prov. 11:24,25. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty: The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be also watered himself. He that showeth mercy to the poor, honoreth the Lord with his substance, Prov. 14:31. And when a man honoreth the Lord with his substance, God will multiply it greatly, Prov. 3:9,10. Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy Presses shall burst out with new Wine.

10. Be content with what God giveth you, and then though you have never so little, you are a rich man, 1 Tim. 6:6. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

SECT. 15.

15. If it should not seem good unto the Lord to make up your losses, by giving you as much riches as he hath taken from you: there is a better way of having your losses made up; and that is, when God shall make his Providence instrumental to convey those mercies and blessings to your souls, which are of more worth than all the riches of the world; and this may be done several ways: As,

1. If God by this Providence shall teach you wisdom, that wisdom which is from above, and bring you into more acquaintance with himself, and into more acquaintance with the state and condition of your own souls; if you gain any degree of heavenly wisdom by your losses, then your losses though they have been very great are abundantly made up; for wisdom is far better than all the riches of the world, Prov. 16:16. How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? And to get understanding, rather to be chosen than silver? Prov. 8:11. Wisdom is better than Rubies; and all the things that may be desired, are not to be compared to it. Prov. 3:14.

2. If God by your losses shall make you partakers of the fruits and graces of his Spirit, if he beget or increase in your souls humility, or heavenly mindedness, or self-denial, or patience, or any other grace, then he doth abundantly make up all your losses; for the fruits and graces of the Spirit of God, are infinitely better than all the riches of the world, Prov. 8:19. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver: you may see this cleared by instancing in particular graces; as Faith, 1 Pet. 1:7.— Your faith being much more precious than gold that perisheth. Humility, that also excels all riches, Prov. 16:19. Better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud; the like may be said of all other graces.

3. If God under this affliction shall clear up your right to his Promises; if he give you an heart to understand, believe, obey, and delight in his Word; if he gives in Promises to your souls out of his Word, to stay, and comfort, and support you, then he doth make up all your losses in a gracious manner. When God gave in a suitable promise to David in his distress, he joyed in it as much as in all riches, Psal. 119:162. I rejoiced at thy Word as one that findeth great spoil. He esteemed that acquaintance that he got with God's

Word in his afflictions, more than thousands of gold and silver, Psal. 119:71,72. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes. The Law of thy mouth is better unto me, than thousands of Gold and Silver. Psal. 19:9,10. The Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired are they then Gold; yea, than much fine Gold.

4. If God stir you up to seek after, and make sure of himself for your portion; now you have lost the portion you had in this world, if you get God for your portion, your losses will be abundantly made up in God. When David was robbed and spoiled of his goods, he saith, God dealt well with him; and why, he gave him himself for his portion: Psal. 119:61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me; yet he adds, ver. 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant; and what made him say, God dealt well with him, when he was spoiled of all that he had? You may see the ground was, he had God for his portion, ver. 57. Thou art my portion, O Lord.

5. If God shall give you Communion with himself, if he shall be pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you his blessed and gracious presence in his affliction, he gives you that which is better than all this world, Psal. 73:25. There is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. Psal. 4:6,7. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their Corn and Wine increased. The lowest condition in this world, with the enjoyment of God, is better than the highest and best estate without God, Psal. 84:10. A day in thy Courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. The Wilderness is an uncomfortable place; Canaan was a Land flowing with milk and honey, yet Moses chooseth to abide in the Wilderness with God's presence, rather than

to go into Canaan without the presence of God, Exod. 33:15. If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

SECT. 16.

16. Let the loss of your substance and habitation stir you up to make sure of a better house, and better substance in heaven. There is a house and substance in heaven, as well as here upon earth, Joh. 14:2. In my Father's House are many Mansions. Heb. 10:34. Ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance. Now when we have lost, or are in danger to lose our houses and substance on earth, it should put us upon making sure of heaven, Heb. 13:14. Here have we no continuing City, but we seek one to come. Heb. 11:9,10. By faith he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country—He looked for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The Apostle Paul being without a certain dwelling place, 1 Cor. 4:11, made sure of heaven, 2 Cor. 5:1. We know, that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is very uncomfortable for the body to want a habitation. There was great wailing in Zion, when the Inhabitants thereof were cast out of their dwellings, Jer. 9:19. A voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled? We are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out. But it will be far more uncomfortable for our souls, to want a dwelling place with God in heaven: there will be great weeping and wailing by all those that shall be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven. If a man's dwelling here on earth be burnt, or other ways destroyed, he may get as good in another place; but he that faileth of a dwelling in heaven, must dwell with devouring fire, and with everlasting burnings, Matth. 25:41. Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and

his angels. Such as shall not be admitted to dwell with Christ, have another habitation provided for them, and that is among the Devils in flaming fire. If a man be deprived of a convenient habitation here, it continueth but a little while, a few days will put an end to his misery; but he that faileth of a dwelling with God when he dieth, is miserable to all eternity.

If you say, What shall we do that we may be sure of an house in heaven, and go to dwell with God when we die? I answer,

1. We must open our souls to Jesus Christ, and receive him into our hearts, and let him dwell with us, and then we shall surely dwell with him. The Lord Jesus stands at the door of our hearts, and knocks, and calls to us to open our hearts to him, Cant. 5:2. It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled—Rev. 3:20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Now, after we have opened the door to Christ, and received him into our hearts, we must let him dwell with us: we should let him dwell in our thoughts, we should let him dwell in our affections, we should let him dwell in our conversations; which we do, when we order our conversations by his word, and make Christ the end of our conversations. Now, if we receive Christ, and let him dwell in our hearts, we shall surely dwell with him forever, 1 Joh. 5:11,12. This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life.

2. We must not suffer any sin to dwell either in our hearts or conversations. Evil motions, and vain and sinful thoughts, will be often coming into our minds; but we must not let them dwell there, but we must endeavor to cast them out as oft as they come into our minds. This God expects from all those that expect salvation, Jer. 4:14. O Jerusalem, wash

thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? God will not let evil dwell with him, Psal. 5:4. Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee; and therefore if we would dwell with God, we must purge ourselves from our sins. They that do not depart from iniquity, Christ will say to them, even to every one of them, Depart from me, Luk. 13:27. Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.

3. We must devote ourselves to the service of Christ; and if we serve the Lord Jesus whilst we are in this world, we shall dwell with him in heaven to all eternity, Joh. 12:26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. Col. 3:24. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.

4. We must walk uprightly, whatever we do for God or for men, we must do it with an upright heart, we must put away all guile, and dissimulation, and hypocrisy, and speak the truth from our hearts, and be upright and sincere in all manner of conversation; for such as walk uprightly while they live, shall dwell with God in heaven to all eternity, Psal. 140:13. The upright shall dwell in thy presence. Psal. 15:1,2. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. Isa. 57:2. He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds; each one walking in his uprightness. Psal. 84:11. The Lord God is a Sun and Shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Matth. 25:23. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

5. We must persevere in believing and serving Christ, and walking uprightly with him all our days, Matth. 24:13. He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Rev. 2:10. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. No sufferings whatever must deter us from serving of the Lord Jesus, though it be the suffering of death itself, 2 Tim. 2:12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us. Mar. 8:35. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospels, the same shall save it.

SECT. 17.

17. Let this affliction put you upon preparing yourselves for all other afflictions that God shall try you withal, whilst you are in this world. When God had been contending with Israel by Fire, he calls upon them to prepare for further Judgments, Amos 4:11,12. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord: therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. Afflictions oftentimes come thick one after another, Job 16:14. He breaketh me with breach upon breach. Psal. 34:19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous —As God dealt with Eli, when he began, he went on, till he had brought upon him all his pleasure, 1 Sam. 3:12. In that day I will perform against Eli, all things which I have spoken concerning his house; when I begin I will also make an end. So it is oftentimes in his dealings with others, when he begins to afflict, he follows on with one affliction after another, until he hath thoroughly humbled them, and made them lie at his foot: therefore one affliction should warn us to prepare for another; and as Christ adviseth us in our sufferings from men, Matth. 5:39,40. I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall

smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also: We should be so far from quarreling and contending with those that afflict us, that one injury should make us willing and ready to suffer another. The same advice is very seasonable, when we are under any affliction from the hand of God; we should be so far from resisting God's will, that when he taketh one mercy, we should resign up all the rest: When he sends one affliction, we should be willing and ready to suffer another. We are exhorted, Heb. 13:3. Remember them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. As long as we are in the body, we are liable to all kinds of adversity, and therefore we should stand prepared for whatever afflictions it shall seem good unto the Lord to lay upon us. If you desire to know how you should be prepared for all sorts of afflictions, See Quest. 3. Sect 12.

SECT. 18.

18. Encourage and comfort yourselves in the Lord, when any perplexity seizeth upon you, or any sad and troubled thoughts arise in your minds upon the account of your own losses, or upon the account of the misery and distress that is like to come upon the Nation by reason of this dreadful Judgment. When Ziklag, David's City of Refuge, was set on fire by the Amalekites, and both David and his men had lost their Wives and Children, and their substance, which made them weep till they could weep no more; and besides all this, David was in danger of losing his life, (for the people spake of stoning him) in this great distress, David encourageth himself in the Lord, 1 Sam. 30:6. David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him—but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. You cannot readily be in greater distress, than David was at this time: and if he

in his distress encouraged himself in God, when he had lost his Habitation, Wives, Substance, &c. and was also like to lose his life, may not you find that in God which may encourage you in all your distresses which are not so great as David's? I will propose briefly some grounds of comfort and encouragement (besides what hath been said upon the first Quest. Sect. 17, &c.) to such of the Servants of God as are cast down either at their own losses, or at the distress and misery which is like to follow in the Nation, upon the account of this sore Judgment.

1. God is all-sufficient to shield and defend you from all those evils which you fear will come upon you, and to make up whatever good you fear you shall be deprived of, now you have lost your Estates, Gen. 15:1. After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Why should that man fear any evil that hath God for his shield? And why should that man be disquieted for the want or loss of any worldly good things, who hath the great and all-sufficient God for his exceeding great reward? It may be you will say, It is true, if I knew that God were my shield, and my exceeding great reward, I think I should be so comforted, that nothing would trouble me; but I do not know that God is my shield, and my reward: this is spoken to Abraham, and not to me. I answer, The same promises and blessings which were given to Abraham, do belong to everyone that believeth in Jesus Christ, Gal. 3:7,9. Know ye, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham—So then, they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.

2. Though your Estates be gone, and your outward comforts be taken away, God himself will stand by you: Though your Estates may fail, and your Calling may fail, and your Friends may fail and forsake you, God will

never fail you, nor forsake you, Heb. 13:5. He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. He hath said: Who is that? God, who is a God of truth, a God that cannot lie, a God that changeth not; the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation: he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: and why should that man be cast down that hath the God of all consolation continually with him? Yea, though not only Estate, and Calling, and Friends fail, but your hearts fail you also; yet God will not fail you, but will be yours forever, Psal. 73:26. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. But I am afraid, my trials will be so great, that my faith will fail me; and what can I expect then but that God should fail me also? Answer 1. The Lord Jesus will take care of your Faith, that it shall not totally or finally fail, Luk. 22:31,32. Simon, Simon, Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. 2. Though there may be some partial failings in your faith, yet God will not fail to fulfil his promise wherein he standeth engaged not to leave nor forsake you, 2 Tim. 2:13. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself: therefore, when fears and discouragements begin to seize upon you, remember that God calleth to you, Isa. 41:10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isa. 43:1,2. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee—thou art mine: when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Though the fire be long since quenched, yet it may be you will feel the sad fruits and effects of this Fire as long as you live; but if you should, be not cast down, but look upon

God, that he, according to his promise, will be with you to strengthen and support you when you pass through the fires.

3. You are as dear to God as ever; he loves you now you are poor, as much as he did when you were rich, Psal. 40:17. I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me: Though your Estates be gone, yet God's love remains firm to your souls, and shall continue steadfast towards you, although you should meet with greater mutations in your estate and condition, than you have done to this day, Isa. 54:10. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee. Whatever dangers or troubles compass you about, you are, and always shall be compassed about with the loving kindness of the Lord, Psal. 5:12. Thou Lord wilt bless the righteous, with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield. Now this is a ground of everlasting comfort, and may cause us in all conditions to shout for joy, to understand that we are in the love and favor of God, as is evident from the 11th ver. Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice, let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them; let them also that love thy Name, be joyful in thee. Three times the Psalmist calls out to the Servants of God to rejoice, Let them rejoice—let them be joyful in thee, let them ever shout for joy: and why? What is it which may be a ground of everlasting joy to them in all estates and conditions? Many times they are poor, and under great afflictions, what reason then have they to shout for joy forever? He renders the reason why a godly man may, and ought to be always joyful, ver. 12. For thou Lord wilt bless the righteous, with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield. That God's love is a ground of everlasting comfort in all estates and conditions, is evident from 2 Thess. 2:16. Our Lord Jesus Christ

himself, and God even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation. —

4. Though your Houses and Estates be consumed, and your Trading fail, and your Friends should turn away from you, and stand aloof from your sore; God will not turn away from doing of you good as long as you live, Jer. 32:40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. When you are in trouble, and have no friend in the world to go to; if you go to the Lord, he will be your refuge, and succor, and comfort you in all your straits, Psal. 9:9. The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Isa. 66:13. As one whom his mother comforteth; so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. When the Jews were in the Wilderness, God followed them with a constant supply of all their wants. The pillar of fire and the cloud never departed from them, Exod. 13:21,22. The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. And though they sinned against God, yet he forsook them not, as Nehemiah confesseth, Neh. 9:19. Yet thou in thy manifold mercies, forsookest them not in the Wilderness; the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go. And as God guarded and guided them by night and by day, so where ever they were, he rained down Manna upon them, and gave them water to drink; he never failed them of a seasonable supply of their wants forty years together, Neh. 9:20,21. Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest

not thy Manna from their mouth; and gavest them water for their thirst; yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the Wilderness, so that they lacked nothing, their clothes waxed not old —The Manna did not cease till the day that they entered into Canaan, and did eat of the corn of the land, Josh. 5:12. The Manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land —The water also that came out of the rock followed them up and down in all places where ever they went to give them drink, 1 Cor. 10:4. Now as it was with the Israelites whilst they were in the Wilderness, so will God deal with all his servants whilst they are in the Wilderness of this world; he will guard them and guide them by night and by day, he will send in a suitable and seasonable supply of all their wants, Isa. 27:3. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Isa. 49:10. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor Sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. When your wants are many, and you know not how or which way they shall be supplied, remember what is said, Phil. 4:19. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. And be assured of this, that God who hath been good to you, will follow you with goodness and mercy as long as you live, Psal. 23:6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. It may be you will say, I have enough to comfort me, if I were but sure that goodness and mercy should follow me all the days of my life: but though David was sure of this, it doth not follow, that I may rest assured that it shall be so with me. I answer, They that come to, and close with Jesus Christ, shall be blessed with the same mercies that God bestowed upon David, Isa. 45:3. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls

shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

5. Great calamities are oftentimes followed with great mercies; and this is true both as to Nations and particular persons, when those Nations and persons are humbled and brought nearer to God by their afflictions. Job's afflictions were exceeding great, both in respect of what he met with in his soul, body, name, estate, and relations; yet God turned the captivity of Job, and made his Estate more glorious and prosperous than ever, Job 42:12. The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. I will instance in some mercies which God is wont to bestow upon his people, either in, or soon after they come out of great troubles.

1. God is wont at such times to give his people greater and stronger consolations than at other times, Psal. 71:20,21. Thou which hast shown me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth: Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. Psal. 66:3,5,6. How terrible art thou in thy works—Come and see the works of God, he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men; he turned the Sea into dry land, they went through the flood on foot, there did we rejoice in him. When God is doing terrible things, he is making way for his people's joy. After David had spoken twice of God's being terrible in his doings, he adds, there did we rejoice in him. In the night of affliction, God puts such comforts into his people's hearts as makes them sing for joy, Job 35:10. None saith, Where is God my maker? Who giveth songs in the night. When they are deprived of outward comforts, and are in a solitary straitened condition, he giveth them internal and spiritual comforts, Hos. 2:14,15. I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her; and I will give her, her Vineyards from

thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope, and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day, when she came up out of the land of Egypt. When our troubles abound, he causeth our consolations to abound also, 2 Cor. 1:5. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounded by Christ.

2. Great troubles are oftentimes followed with great pourings out of the spirit, and great measures of grace. The Prophet Joel having foretold times of great distress, chap. 1 & chap. 2, to the 12th verse, tells us, what God would do for his people after those great calamities, Joel 2:28. It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: —The Prophet Zephaniah also, having foretold great judgments, promiseth that they should be followed with great measures of grace, Zeph. 3:8,9,13. My determination is to gather the Nations, that I may assemble the Kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the Earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. Observe now what mercies follow these judgments, Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord to serve him with one consent—The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: see also Isa. 32:10,15. Many days and years shall be troubled—until the spirit be poured upon us from on high: —After the Jews had been under sore troubles by their long captivity in Babylon, what an increase of grace, and other choice mercies doth God promise them, Ezek. 36:25-29.

3. In times of great trouble, God is wont to afford his people more clear manifestations of his love, and to give them more communion and fellowship with himself, than at other times, Zech. 13:9. I will bring the third part through the fire—they shall call on my Name, and I will hear

them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God. In the day time, the Lord went before the Israelites in a pillar of a cloud; but in the night, by a pillar of fire. Divers of God's servants that are much clouded in the day of prosperity, have clear and bright discoveries of God's love to their souls in the night of adversity. When the three Children were in the fiery furnace, the Son of God was so evidently with them, that their adversaries themselves could not but take notice of it. When the Spouse was as a Lily among Thorns, compassed about with sharp afflictions, the Lord Jesus conversed with her in a very familiar manner; He put his left hand under her, and embraced her with his right hand, Cant. 2:2,6.

And as it is thus with particular persons, so also with Nations; after God hath afflicted them with great judgments, he is wont to bestow upon them great mercies, when his judgments lead them to repentance. After Judea, which was like the Garden of Eden, was by God's judgments made like a Wilderness, Joel 2:3. The Inhabitants of the Land being brought to repentance by these judgments, the Lord promiseth to do great things for them, ver. 21. Fear not, O Land, be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things. The Prophet Isaiah having set forth the miserable and distressed condition of the Jews, both in respect of the corruption of all ranks and degrees of men, and of the sore judgments of God that were upon them, Isa. 1:4-10. Ah sinful Nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward; Why should ye be stricken anymore, ye will revolt more and more, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it—Your Country is desolate, your Cities are burnt with fire, your Land strangers devour it in

your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers; and the Daughter of Zion is left as a Cottage in a Vineyard, as a lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers:—Hear the Word of the Lord, ye Rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the Law of our God, ye People of Gomorrah. After the rehearsal of their sinful and miserable condition, he promiseth that if they would be brought to repentance by these judgments, ver. 16, 17. God would do great things for them, notwithstanding they were brought very low, ver. 25-27. I will turn mine hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy Tin; and I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Counselors as at the beginning, afterward thou shalt be called the City of Righteousness: Zion shall be redeemed with Judgment, and her Converts with Righteousness: And in several other places of this Prophecy, the Lord promiseth, that when he did return with mercy to his afflicted people, he would make their estate far more glorious than ever it was, Isa. 30:26. The light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun; and the light of the Sun shall be seven fold, as the light of seven days: In the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound. Isa. 60:15. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many Generations. Isa, 61:7. For your shame you shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their Land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto thee. When the Lord is not only shaking a particular City or Nation, but all places, and all Nations, we should not be startled at it, God is but making way for the exalting and setting up of his Sons Kingdom, Hag. 2:6,7. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens,

and the earth, and the Sea; and the dry Land: and I will shake all Nations, and the desire of Nations shall come. —

SECT. 19.

19. If you purpose to set upon building your Houses which have been consumed by this fire, so manage this work as that it may prosper under your hands.

If you ask, How should we so manage this work of building, as to have it prosper under our hands? I answer,

1. Seek unto God by Prayer to be with you, and succeed you in this great work, Psal. 90:17. Establish thou the works of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. Uzziah built and prospered, 2 Chron. 26:9, and how came he to prosper? Ver. 5. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. By this means Asa prospered in building Cities, and other places of strength, 2 Chron. 14:7. Let us build these Cities, and make about them Walls and Towers, Gates and Bars, while the Land is yet before us; because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side; so they built and prospered. Now in regard many persons are wont to neglect seeking God in such undertakings as these, it will not be amiss, if I add two or three considerations, to show those that are purposed to set upon building, how much it is their concernment to give themselves unto Prayer, whilst they are carrying on this work.

1. It is the will of God, that in all our undertakings we should seek unto him by Prayer, Phil. 4:6. In everything by Prayer, and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. Prov. 3:6. In all thy

ways acknowledge him; and the more difficult and weighty any undertaking is, the more need there is of Prayer.

2. Such a work as building cannot be carried on but by the help of God; and how should they expect God's help that do not seek it? Psal. 127:1. Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the City, the watchman waketh but in vain. When the Lord had promised that their waste and desolate Cities should be rebuilt, he tells them, he did expect to be sought to, that he might do this for them, Ezek. 36:33,37.— The wastes shall be built—Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the House of Israel, to do it for them.

3. The Servants of God have been wont to carry on this work of building, as well as their other works by Prayer, Psal. 51:18. Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. When Nehemiah set upon building Jerusalem, he went through very great difficulties in carrying on that work; yet by Prayer he overcome them all, and prosperously effected what he went about, Neh. 4:9. Nevertheless we made our Prayer unto God —Neh. 6:9,15. O God, strengthen my hands—So the wall was finished.

4. God hath oftentimes visibly appeared against those persons, and their undertakings, that have gone upon great works without seeking help and direction from God, by blasting and confounding them in their undertakings, Mal. 1:4. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished; but we will return and build desolate places; thus saith the Lord of Hosts, they shall build, but I will throw down. When the Inhabitants of Samaria said in the pride and stoutness of their hearts, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn Stones; the Sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into Cedars; and did not seek the Lord, Did they prosper? No, But

God threatened to cut them off branch and rush, head and tail in one day, Isa. 9:9,10,13,14.

2. If you would carry on this work of building successfully, go about it in faith; believing that God will be with you therein, and rest upon him for his help and assistance, Neh. 2:20. The God of Heaven he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build. To believe and rely on the Lord is the way to prosper, 2 Chron. 20:20. Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper. By the power of faith, strong Walls and Cities have been demolished, Heb. 11:30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down —ver. 33. Who through faith subdued Kingdoms. —Now if faith be instrumental to demolish Walls and Cities, Why may it not also be of great force to build them up? If any ask, What encouragements can you give us for our faith, that we may trust and rely on God for his presence and assistance with us in this work of building? I answer,

1. Building of desolate Cities is a good work, and well-pleasing to God; and that which conduceth unto the glory of God, when it is managed with a right spirit, and in a right manner. The building of Jerusalem after it had been wasted by fire and the Sword, is called a good work, Neh. 2:18. They said, let us rise up and build; so they strengthened their hands for this good work: the building of Jerusalem is called also the pleasure of the Lord, it being that which pleased him to see those waste places built again, Isa. 44:28. That saith of Cyrus, he shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy foundations shall be laid. It did conduce also to God's glory, Psal. 102:16. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. Jer. 33:7,9. I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them

as at the first: And it shall be to me a Name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the Nations of the Earth. That building is a good work, and acceptable to God, when rightly managed, may be evidenced several ways, besides the fore-quoted Scriptures: As 1. It is oft spoken of as a blessing, for God to give a man a house to dwell in, Exod. 1:21. And it came to pass, because the Midwives feared God, that he made them houses. 1 Sam. 2:35. I will build him a sure house —Isa. 65:21. They shall build houses, and inhabit them. 2. Cohabitation conduceth much both to our civil and spiritual good, Psal. 133:1. Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity. The scattering abroad of persons, and separating them each from other, is threatened as a judgment, Isa. 24:1. Behold, the Lord maketh the Earth empty, and maketh it waste,—and scattereth abroad the Inhabitants thereof. If cohabitation conduceth much to our good, and scattering abroad be an evil, and a judgment; then building of Cities in order to cohabitation is a good work. 3. By building of houses we prepare Mansions and Receptacles for the bodies of God's servants, which are the Members of Christ, and the Temples of the Holy Ghost; and that cannot but be a good work to provide Mansions for the bodies of God's servants. The Lord Jesus takes it kindly when we lodge any of his members but for a night or two, Matth. 25:34,35. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was a stranger, and ye took me in. To provide settled habitations for the servants of God, is more than to take them in for a night or two. 4. Building of Houses, and desolate Cities, is a means of delivering those that want habitations from great distress; as being wet with the dew of heaven, and consumed with cold by night, and the heat by day, &c. and to provide a refuge for the distressed, is a good work, Neh. 2:17. Ye see the distress that

we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the Gates thereof are burnt with fire; Come and let us build up the Wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Now if building be a good work, then you may confidently expect God's presence with you when you set upon it, if you manage it with a right spirit, Amos 5:14. Seek good, and not evil,—and so the Lord, the God of Hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken: and if God will be with you in your work, this may greatly encourage you in the management of it, Hag. 2:4. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua,—and be strong all ye people of the Land, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts.

2. God is able to carry on those that rest upon him in this work, how great and how many difficulties, and oppositions, and discouragements soever they meet withal. This is evident from the building of Jerusalem after it was burnt and laid waste by the Chaldeans: Consider to this purpose, 1. What a great work the building of Jerusalem was, which had been wasted by Fire and Sword from a foreign power, and had lain in its desolation seventy years, Neh. 4:19. The work is great and large. 2. Consider how weak and unfit the Jews were for this great work, after their strength and treasure was exhausted by seventy years captivity. Some of them were so discouraged, that they thought they should not be able to accomplish so great a work, Neh. 4:10. Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall. 3. The times in which they set upon building of Jerusalem, were very troublous times, Dan. 9:25. The street shall be built again, and the wall in troublous times. 4. The Enemies of the Jews opposed this work of building Jerusalem with all their might: They scoffed at them, and derided their work, Neh. 4:2,3. What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they

make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heap of the rubbish which are burnt? Even that which they build, if a Fox go up, he will even break down their stone wall. They cast false slanders upon them, as though they built out of a design to rebel, Neh. 2:19. What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the King? Neh. 6:6. Thou and the Jews think to rebel; for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayst be their King: and when these means would not prevail, they attempted by force to make the work cease, Neh. 4:7,8,11. They were very wroth, and conspired all of them together, to come and to sight against Jerusalem: And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst amongst them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. And when none of these means would cause them to leave off building; they hired Counselors to mediate with the Kings of Persia, and wrote Letters to hinder the building of Jerusalem, Ezra 4:4,5,23,24. And notwithstanding all the attempts of their Adversaries, both by fraud and violence; though there were some intermissions, yet the work was completed: And how? By the help and assistance of God, as their Enemies themselves could not but acknowledge, Neh. 6:15,16. So the wall was finished—And it came to pass, that when all our Enemies heard thereof—they were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God. Now that God which helped the Jews to build Jerusalem under all their difficulties and oppositions that they met withal, is able also to help you, under what ever difficulties do or may beset you in your work.

3. Consider what promises God hath made to his servants to encourage them in this work of building, when he calls them to it. He hath promised to be with them in building, Ezek. 36:9,10. Behold I am for you, and I will turn unto you—And the Cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be

built. Though their Cities and dwellings have been laid waste a long time, he promiseth to help them to build them up again, Isa. 61:4. They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair their waste Cities, the desolations of many generations. He promiseth that after their dwellings have been laid waste, they shall be built in the same places, and in as good a manner as before, Jer. 30:18. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the Captivity of Jacob's Tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places, and the City shall be built on her old heap, and the Palace shall remain after the manner thereof. He hath promised that after they have laid the foundation, they shall go on to finish their work, Zech. 4:9. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this House, his hands shall also finish it. 1 Chron. 28:20. David said unto Solomon his son, Be strong, and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee, he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the House of the Lord. Though these two last Promises relate to the building of the Temple, yet they are applicable by God's servants in such works as they are called out to by the Lord. He hath promised, that when they have built them houses, they shall dwell in them, and enjoy them a long season, Isa. 65:21-23. They shall build houses and inhabit them,—they shall not build and another inhabit;—for as the days of a tree, are the days of my people; and mine Elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands; they shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. The Lord hath promised, that after they have built them houses, they shall dwell in them with safety and confidence, Ezek. 28:26. They shall dwell safely therein, and shall build Houses, and plant Vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I

have executed judgments on all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God. He hath promised to make their habitations prosperous, Job 8:5,6. If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. After Jerusalem was burnt with fire, and laid waste by the Chaldeans, the Lord doth not only promise, that it shall be built again; but, that he would put the Jews into a settled and better estate than they were in before, Ezek. 36:10,11. The Cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be built—and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you, than at your beginnings.

3. If you would carry on the work of rebuilding your houses successfully, humble yourselves for your sins, which caused God to lay them desolate, and get them washed away in the Blood of Christ, and then you may expect success, and a blessing upon what you take in hand, Ezek. 36:33-36. Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the Cities, and the wastes shall be built. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden, and the waste, and desolate, and ruined Cities are become fenced. The Lord promised also in the 32nd ver., that he would give them a heart to loath themselves for their sins; and after he had humbled and pardoned them, he promiseth the re-building of their desolate Cities. And as you must humble yourselves for your sins, so you must put away your sins, and return unto God with your whole hearts, if you would carry on this work successfully, Jer. 24:6,7. I will set mine eyes upon them for good—and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and

not pluck them up—for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. Job 22:23. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up.

4. Use no unrighteousness, but deal truly and faithfully with all men, with whom you have to do in building your houses. Whomsoever you employ in this work, pay them their full wages; for if you use any fraud or unrighteousness, you will bring the curse of God upon your persons and habitations, Jer. 22:13. Woe unto him that buildeth his house in unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbors service without wages, and giveth him not for his work, Hab. 2:11,12. The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it, Woe to him that buildeth a Town by blood, and establisheth a City by iniquity. And as you must pay all whom you employ their full wages, so also at the set time for which you make your agreement, Deut. 24:14,15. Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether it be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are within thy land within thy gates: at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the Sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee. Encroach not upon another's right, but keep within your own bounds and limits, Deut. 19:14. Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's land-mark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance —Deut. 27:17. Cursed be he that removeth his neighbors land-mark; and all the people shall say, Amen. Prov. 22:28. Remove not thy ancient land-mark which thy fathers have set. Eccl. 10:8,9. Whoso breaketh an hedge, a Serpent shall bite him; whoso removeth stones, shall be hurt therewith. And take this counsel, not only in reference to your equals, that are able to contend with you, but also be careful that you encroach not upon the right of the Widows, and the Fatherless, that are not able to plead their

own cause; for God will plead their cause with you, Prov. 23:10,11. Remove not the old land-mark, and enter not into the fields of the fatherless; for their redeemer is mighty, he shall plead their cause with thee. By managing your work in truth and righteousness, you shall prosper in what you take in hand, Psal. 45:4.— Ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.

5. Before you enter upon building, sit down and consider your cost and charge; consider also your own ability, whether you have sufficient to defray the charge of Building, lest you be necessitated to leave your work imperfect, or to run yourselves into debt, and bring great and unnecessary incumbrances upon yourselves, Luk. 14:28-30. Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost; whether he have sufficient to finish it: lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it, begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Especially be careful that you do not exceed your ability to build your houses in a more stately and magnificent manner than becometh your rank and quality. The calamities of the present times, and the many objects of charity, call for frugality and moderation in this kind. Overmuch curiosity and expensiveness in Building is taxed as a sin, Jer. 22:14. We may (and many do) transgress by too much cost, and curiosity in adorning our Bodies, 1 Tim. 2:9, 1 Pet. 3:3. If it be not lawful to bestow too much cost in adorning our Bodies, then surely we must use moderation in adorning our Houses; for our Bodies are of more worth and value than our Houses.

6. Follow your work with a willing mind, and with diligence, if you would have it go on successfully. A willing mind will carry on difficult work with great ease, Neh. 4:6. So built we the wall, and all the wall was

joined together unto the half thereof, for the people had a mind to work: Diligence and industry will effect great things, but slothfulness and negligence will spoil and bring to naught good undertakings, Eccl. 10:18. By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through. Yet here is need of caution that you do not immerse your hearts and spirits too much in your worldly business, so as to forget or unfit yourselves for the coming of Christ either by death or judgment. Many men are so immoderate in their use and management of worldly things, that they fall into a spirit of slumber and security; so that the day of death and of judgment will come upon them as a snare, when they neither think of, or are prepared to meet the Lord, Luk. 17:28-30. As it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. It is not building or planting, any more than eating or drinking, but the inordinate affections of men, and their worldly spirits; their security and sensuality in the management of their worldly business, that is here condemned by our Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Aim at God's glory in this work, and not your own, and so manage the whole business, that nothing of reproach or dishonor may redound to the name of God, but that God in all things may be glorified. That general rule, 1 Cor. 10:31. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God, should take place in this, as well as any other of your works. You should not look only, or chiefly, at your own conveniences in Building, but at the glory of God: so the Jews did in building Jerusalem, Ezra 4:3.— We ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel. If you be tempted from a vain-glorious principle to be overcostly and curious in

building your Houses: consider, 1. God would not have us do any action whatever, for the procuring of vainglory, Phil. 2:3. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory: Yea, God would have us so far from doing any action for vain-glory, that he would not have us so much as desirous of it, Gal. 5:26. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory. 2. With what mean Habitations were our forefathers contented? Jacob who was a great man, a Prince in the estimation of the Angel that wrestled with him, Gen. 32:28, contented himself to dwell in a tent, which was both a mean and a moveable habitation, Gen. 25:27. Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents; so did his Father Abraham, Heb. 11:9. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange Country dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise: Yet Abraham was a great man, he was the heir of the world, Rom. 4:13, and the father of all the faithful, ver. 11,16. 3. If that which is expended by many persons in superfluous and needless adorning of their houses were given to the poor, how much good might they do? Would it not be much to their comfort at the day of judgment, wherein they must give an account for all their talents, how they have used them, and what improvement they have made of them?

8. It is of much concernment to you whilst you are about this work of Building, or when you are about any other work of moment, to give good heed to the Word of God; for thereby you will be helped much to carry on your undertakings successively. When you faint and are discouraged, God's Word will put strength into you; when you are under doubts, that will resolve you: when you turn aside to the right hand, or to the left, God's Word will restore your souls, and lead you in paths of righteousness; it is of great use in these and divers other respects, to help you to carry on your civil employments successfully, Deut. 29:9. Keep the words of this

covenant and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. That is a remarkable passage which you have, Ezra 6:14. The elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the Prophet, and Zechariah the Son of Iddo, and they built and finished it, according to the Commandment of the God of Israel. The preaching of the word by these two servants of God, was a means of carrying on this work of building Jerusalem successfully. When God sent forth Joshua about a great work, he gave him a special charge to take heed to his word, and to read and meditate therein night and day, which would be a sure way to be successful, Josh. 1:8. This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. When Solomon was building the Temple, it is said, 1 King. 6:11,14. The word of the Lord came to Solomon—so Solomon built the house and finished it. So he built the house and finished it, that is, he was strengthened and encouraged by the word of the Lord that came to him, to go on with, and finish the building.

9. While you are busily employed in building your own houses, do not forget or neglect the building up of God's House, Hag. 1:4. Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Solomon setting his heart to the building of God's House, prosperously effected whatever came into his heart for the building of his own house, 2 Chron. 7:11. Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord, and the Kings house, and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the Lord, and in his own house he prosperously effected. When I stir you up to build God's house, whilst you are building your own, I do not only, or chiefly mean places for public Worship (though that also be a very good and

laudable undertaking; the Centurian who erected a Synagogue, was highly respected and extolled by the Jews for this pious work, Luk. 7:4,5. When they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this, for he loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue) but that which I chiefly intend is, that you build up yourselves an habitation of God through the Spirit. Every true believer is styled God's house, Heb. 3:6. But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. All true Believers are God's Temple, 2 Cor. 6:16. Ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them. They are God's habitation, Eph. 2:22. In whom you are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. Now after the foundation of this spiritual building is laid by the souls being drawn to Christ, there must be constant and conscientious endeavor to be built up in grace and holiness, 2 Pet. 3:18. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. 1:5. Besides this giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge, &c. If you ask what shall we do that we may be built up a spiritual house unto the Lord? I answer,

1. You must lay a good and a right foundation. The foundation of this spiritual building is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 3:11. Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ: see also, Isa. 28:16, Eph. 2:20. The fundamental graces which are wrought in the soul that is built upon Christ, are faith and repentance, Heb. 6:1. Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God. When God had given you repentance for your sins, and faith in the Lord Jesus, then the foundation of this spiritual building is laid in your souls.

2. You must be daily carrying and casting away the rubbish that hinders the progress of this spiritual building. After faith and repentance are wrought in truth, there remain several relics of the old man, which we must be daily purging away: we must make it our work to destroy our sins, if we would be built up in grace, 2 Cor. 7:1. Having therefore these promises (that is, ye are the Temples of the living God, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, of which he had spoken in the former chapter, ver. 16.) dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. We cannot go on to perfect holiness, unless we do in good earnest set upon cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

3. You must be daily looking to Christ, and going to him, to carry on, and finish that work of grace which he hath begun in your souls, Heb. 12:2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our Faith —1 Pet. 2. To whom coming as unto a living stone—ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house. Do not only go to Christ, but rest upon him for the perfecting and finishing of what he hath begun in your souls; and to that end ponder upon such Scriptures as these, Psal. 138:8, The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me —Phil. 1:6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus taketh a great deal of pleasure, not only in beginning, but in finishing the work of grace in our souls, Joh. 4:34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

4. After you have received Jesus Christ, you must not only believe in him, but walk in him; and by so doing you shall come both to be rooted, and to be built up in him, Col. 2:6,7. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so

walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him: By walking in, and with Christ, you shall keep his presence with your souls; for he hath said, If we abide in him, he will abide in us. Joh. 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you: and 2 Chron. 15:2. The Lord is with you while ye be with him. Now by keeping Christ's presence with your souls, they will be built up in grace, Cant. 1:12. While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. When the owner dwells in the house, it is kept in good repair; if he leave it, and it stand empty, all things go to decay: As Martha said unto Christ, Joh. 11:21. Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. The like may a deserted soul that findeth itself fallen to decay upon God's withdrawing of himself, say unto God, Lord, if thou hadst been here, these ruins and desolations had not come upon my soul.

5. Prayer performed in a spiritual manner, is a great means of building up our souls in the grace of God, Jude 20. But ye beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Though praying in a slightly, dead-hearted, customary, formal manner, availeth little; yet praying in the Holy Ghost, (that is, by the help and assistance of the Holy Ghost, and stirring up, and exercising the graces of the Holy Ghost in prayer, as faith, fervency, reverence, humility, &c.) is an effectual means to build up the soul in the grace of God.

6. Converse much with the word of God, read it frequently, treasure it up in your hearts, make it your meditation night and day; that is the way to be built up a spiritual house unto the Lord, 1 Pet. 2:2,5. As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. Meditation on the word built up David wonderfully in knowledge, Psal. 119:99. I have more understanding then all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. The Apostle Paul recommends meditation on God's word to

Timothy, as an excellent means to promote his growth in grace, 1 Tim. 4:15. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all: So also when he took his leave of the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, he commends them to the word of the Lord, as the means whereby they might be built up in that grace which they had already received, Acts 20:32. And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

I might have added in the tenth place; After God hath prospered you in this work of building, and you have finished your houses, dedicate them to God. It was a custom among the Jews after they had built a new house, to dedicate it unto the Lord; as you may see, Deut. 20:5, but of this I shall have occasion to speak afterward, Quest. 3. Sect. 7, where I shall show, how we should dedicate our Houses to God; and therefore I shall add no more upon this Question, but proceed to the third.

CHAP. VI. Question 3.
What shall they render to
the Lord for his Mercy,
whose Houses and Goods
were Preserved from being
Consumed by the late
Dreadful Fire?

*B*efore I answer this Question, I shall premise five or six things.

1. It was God's Providence, not your own prudence, or diligence, or any other act of yours, that preserved you from sustaining any loss or damage by the late Fire, Psal. 16:5. Thou maintainest my lot. Psal. 3:8. Salvation belongeth to the Lord. Psal. 40:17. Thou art my help and my deliverer. Whenever a righteous man is delivered from any trouble, his deliverance proceedeth from the Lord, Psal. 34:17. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles. As God

ordereth the rain where it shall fall, and where it shall not fall, Amos 4:7. I caused it to rain upon one City, and caused it not to rain upon another: so it is he also that ordered this Fire, what City, and what Houses, and Goods it should consume, and what it should not consume. The Fire, the Winds, and all other Creatures do nothing but at God's appointment, Psal. 148:7,8. Praise ye the Lord from the earth, ye Dragons, and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind fulfilling his word. The fire and the wind are ruled by God, they spare those whom God appoints them to spare; they afflict those whom God appoints them to afflict; they do nothing but by commission from God. The same God that sets the bounds of the Sea, and saith, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed, Job 38:11, did set bounds to this raging Fire, and appointed how far it should proceed, and where its flames should be stayed: wherefore such as were preserved from suffering damage by this Fire, must not ascribe their safety partly to God's Providence, and partly to themselves; but must give all the glory to God, and say as David did of his deliverances, Psal. 4:8. Thou Lord only makest me to dwell in safety. Psal. 62:2. He only is my rock and my salvation.

2. We ought to look upon it as a great mercy to be spared from God's judgments, Neh. 13:22. Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy. Lam. 3:22. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed: especially we should account it a great mercy to be spared from God's judgments in a time of common calamity; when multitudes, as good, or better than we are, have been great sufferers. When Lot escaped with his life out of Sodom, though he sustained some loss by the burning of that City, yet he looked upon it as an exceeding great mercy, that his life was preserved, Gen. 19:19.

Be hold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shown unto me in saving my life.

3. When the Lord hath given us any remarkable deliverance, or bestowed any other signal mercy upon us, it should put us upon enquiring, what return we should make unto God for his benefits. When David had received a great deliverance, he maketh enquiry, what he should render to God for so great a mercy, Psal. 116:12. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? This is needful, because God expects that when he hath done great things for us, we should be returning something to him, Isa. 5:1,2. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he fenced it—and he looked that it should bring forth grapes. —Luk. 17:17,18. Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. Where we may observe, 1. The Lord Jesus expects that when we have received any eminent favor from him, we should return something for what we receive; else why did he ask, Where are the nine? 2. The Lord takes notice who they are that do, and who they are that do not return according to the mercies that they receive from God. The Samaritan returned to give glory to God, the others did not. 3. There are very few, scarce one in ten, that make a return according to the mercies that they receive. There were ten cleansed, and only one returns to give glory to God.

4. When any man faileth to return according to the benefits which he hath received, though he be a good man, God is much displeased at it, 2 Chron. 32:25. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. God had in a wonderful manner delivered Hezekiah from death; and though he was a good man, so eminently good,

that he excelled all the Kings that lived before him, and came after him, according to what we find, 2 King. 18:5. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. Yet this good man Hezekiah failed to render again according to the benefit done unto him; and what followed thereupon? Wrath came upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem for this very thing.

5. It is not every return will answer God's expectation, but there must be some suitableness, some proportion between the mercies that we receive from God, and the returns that we make to God. Hezekiah was not wholly wanting in making return to God, for he praised God for recovering him from his sickness, Isa. 38:19. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: and after his sickness he composed a Song or Psalm to set forth God's praise, and resolved to sing this Song in the house of God all the days of his life, Isa. 38:9,20. The writing of Hezekiah King of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness; then follows the Song itself, to the 20th verse, where he expresseth his resolution by way of gratitude, to sing this Song all the days of his life, The Lord was ready to save me, therefore we will sing my Song to the stringed Instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord. Yet notwithstanding all this, Hezekiah is taxed with not returning according to the benefit done unto him.

6. They whose Houses and Estates have been preserved from this dreadful Fire, may know what they ought to return to God for this great deliverance, by observing what the Servants of God have returned unto the Lord, at such times as God hath vouchsafed unto them any eminent deliverances, though it were not a deliverance from Fire, but from some other evil; and also by

considering what special duties God calleth for in his holy Word from such as have escaped those judgments that have fallen upon other men, or have received any other signal mercy from the Lord. These things being premised, I shall now answer the third Question.

SECT. 1.

1. Render to God your love for his great mercy in preserving your houses and substance from being consumed by this Fire: God deserves to be loved by all those whom he preserveth from any evils, Psal. 31:23. O love the Lord all ye his Saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful. When David was in a wonderful manner delivered from the hands of his enemies, he resolves with himself, that he would love God with an entire and an endeared love, for the deliverances he had received from him, Psal. 18:1, compared with the title of the Psalm, A Psalm of David, the Servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this Song, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul; and he said, I will love the Lord my strength. The Hebrew word that is used in this place, signifieth more than barely to love; it notes an inward, entire, cordial love; it is translated by Junius, and also by Piscator, *Exintimis visceribus diligam te*. And at another time when David was communing with his own heart, about what return he should make to God for delivering him from the gates of death, upon his crying to him, Psal. 116:3,4,12, he determines to give God his love, ver. 1. I love the Lord, because he heard my voice, and my supplications. That thing which a Christian prizeth most, and desireth of God above all other things, is his love, Cant. 1:2. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine. Psal. 63:3. Thy loving kindness is better than life. So it is with God, that which he prizeth most from us, and that which he desireth above all other things, is, that we should

give him our love, Deut. 10:12. And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. Cant. 4:10. How fair is thy love! My Sister, my Spouse, how much better is thy love than wine? And the smell of thine ointment than all spices? If any ask, which way shall we express our love to God for this great deliverance? I answer,

1. By hating and abhorring all evil, and endeavoring to root out all manner of sin, both from yourselves, and your families, Psal. 97:10. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil. Sin is an abominable thing in the sight of God, and therefore he entreateth us, that if we love him, we would not do that which his soul hateth, Jer. 44:4. Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate.

2. Express your love to God by being careful to keep his Commandments, Joh. 14:15. If ye love me, keep my Commandments. 2 Joh. 6. This is love, that we walk after his Commandments. God accounted obedience of his Commandments a truer token of love, than the offering of a multitude of sacrifices, in those times when sacrifices were in use, 1 Sam. 15:22. Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey, is better than sacrifice: and to hearken, than the fat of Rams.

3. Express your love to God by doing all the service you can for his Saints and Servants: You cannot be any ways beneficial to God, but you may be to his people, Psal. 16:2,3. My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. And what you do for them, the Lord will account of it as done unto himself, Matth. 25:40. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Three times our

Lord Jesus calls upon Peter to express his love to him, by doing good to his members, Joh. 21:15-17. Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; He saith unto him, Feed my Lambs. He saith unto him the second time, Lovest thou me?—He saith unto him, yea, Lord; He saith unto him, Feed my Sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? Feed my Sheep.

SECT. 2.

2. They that have sustained little or no loss by this dreadful fire, wherein so many thousands of persons and families have suffered very deeply, have great cause to give thanks unto God for sparing and delivering their substance, and their houses from this devouring Fire. The Prophet Isaiah having mentioned a time of great desolation, wherein a little remnant should escape, telleth us what this remnant should render unto the Lord, Isa. 24:13,14. When thus it shall be in the midst of the Land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an Olive Tree, and as the gleaning Grapes when the vintage is done; they shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord: —Four times in one Psalm doth the Holy Ghost call upon the children of men to praise the Lord for delivering them out of their distresses, Psal. 107:8,15,21,31. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. When David was delivered from the hands of violent men, he was much affected with the mercy of God, and determines to give God hearty thanks for it, Psal. 18:48,49. Thou hast delivered me from the violent man; therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and sing praise unto thy Name. To be delivered from the violence of fire, is as great a mercy as to be delivered from violent men; and therefore you should resolve to give

God thanks for your deliverance, as David did for his. Be not only affected with this mercy for the present, but let the sense and remembrance of it abide with you as long as you live. When the Israelites escaped safe through the Red-Sea, where the Egyptians were drowned, they were much affected with this mercy for a little while; but in a short time it was as much forgotten, as if it had never been received, Psal. 106:12,13. They sang his praise, they soon forgot his works. David was of another spirit, he charged his soul never to forget God's benefits, but to bless God and be thankful for them all the days of his life, Psal. 103:2. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Psal. 34:1. I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. Psal. 30:12. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever. Psal. 104:33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise unto my God, while I have my being. We please God exceedingly, when we give him praise and thanks by Jesus Christ, for the mercies he bestoweth upon us, Heb. 13:15,16. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name—for with such sacrifice God is well-pleased. Psal. 69:30,31. I will praise the Name of God with a Song, and will magnify him with Thanksgiving; this also shall please the Lord better than an Ox or Bullock that hath horns and hoofs. God accounts the praise that his servants offer up to him in the Name of his Son, melodious and delightful music, Eph. 5:19,20. Making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God, and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. To raise up your thankfulness to God for sparing your houses and substance, and not suffering them to be destroyed by the late dreadful fire: Consider,

1. What a great affliction it is to be destitute of a habitation, and of necessary food? When David was in a wandering, unsettled condition, he met with such difficulties as made him shed many a tear, Psal. 56:8. Thou tellest my wanderings, put thou my tears into thy bottle: And when God gave him a settled habitation, he dedicates his house to God, and resolves to be thankful all the days of his life, Psal. 30:12. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever. This purpose of giving thanks forever, relates to the time that he dedicated his house to God, as you may see in the title of the Psalm. When the Israelites were destitute of a habitation, and were tried with hunger and thirst, it was such an affliction as made their souls faint within them, Psal. 107:4,5. They wandered in the Wilderness in a solitary way, they found no City to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them. When Jacob was forced to flee from his father's house to avoid his brother Esau's fury, and knew not what straits he might meet with, he looked upon it as such a great mercy to have food and raiment, that he Covenants with God to become his servant, if he would but give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on, Gen. 28:20,21. Jacob vowed a Vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,—then shall the Lord be my God. To be stricken with hunger, and not to have wherewith to satisfy our hunger, is a greater misery than to be pierced through with a Sword, Lam. 4:9. They that be slain with the sword, are better than they that be slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through, for want of the fruits of the field.

2. Consider how many there are, who lived as plentifully and comfortably as you do, that were as good, or better than you are, that are brought to want and exceeding great straits by the losses they have sustained by this Fire. And have not you cause to admire God's goodness, and to bless him as long

as you live, for sparing you, when so many have suffered so deeply, who yet it may be provoked God less than you have done?

SECT. 3.

3. Let the great calamities that are come upon others, and the goodness of God towards you, lead you to repentance, and cause you to humble your souls before God for your sins, and to put away far from you all iniquity, and to be more careful and conscientious in keeping the Commandments of God, Ezra 9:13,14. After thou hast given us such deliverance as this, Should we again break thy Commandments? Rom. 3:4.— The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. God expects that we should be led to repentance by others sufferings as well as our own. Daniel reproveth Belshazzar because he did not humble his soul before God, notwithstanding he knew what great things his father had suffered, Dan. 5:20-22. When his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his Kingly Throne, and they took his glory from him, &c. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this. When Judah had seen the great judgments which God sent upon her sister Israel, and was not brought to unfeigned repentance by them, God was much offended at it, and Judah's case was rendered thereby far worse than Israel's, Jer. 3:7-11. I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me, but she returned not; and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her way, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the Harlot also. And yet for all this, her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord: And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. When but eighteen

persons suffered by the fall of the Tower of Siloam, Christ tells us that the meaning of that Providence, was to call all that heard of it unto repentance Luk. 13:4,5. In the time of the Law, when but one person suffered exemplary punishment, and that not by an immediate stroke from God, but by the hands of men; all Israel was to take warning from his sufferings, and to be afraid of sinning against the Lord, Deut. 13:10,11. Thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die:—And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall done more any such wickedness as this is among you. See also Deut. 17:12,13.— Even that man shall die,—And all the people hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously. If the suffering of one man, by the hands of the Magistrate, did strike such terror into the hearts of all Israel, as to make them afraid of sinning against God; then what a forcible argument should the sufferings of so many thousands of persons, and families, by the late Fire and Pestilence be to all the people of this Land, to persuade them to repent of their sins and turn to the Lord? That you may be awakened both by your own mercies, and others sufferings, to set upon the serious performance of this duty of repentance, let me propose to you three or four Considerations.

1. It angereth the Lord exceedingly when we go on in an impenitent condition, after he hath bestowed any eminent deliverances upon us, Ezra 9:13,14. After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; Should we again break thy Commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wouldst thou not be angry with us, till thou hast consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? When Israel sinned at the red Sea, where they had been in a wonderful manner preserved from the

hands of Pharaoh, it did mightily provoke God to displeasure, Psal. 106:7.
— They provoked him at the Sea, even at the red Sea.

2. Such as are not led to repentance by God's goodness, are despisers of the riches of God's grace, and do treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. 2:4,5. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

3. Though God may spare you a while, yet he will not spare you always; but without repentance, divine vengeance will pursue after you, and overtake you, and fall upon you, to your utter and eternal destruction, Luk. 13:3. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Psal. 68:21. God shall wound the head of his Enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses. Prov. 29:1. He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. It is neither wisdom, nor riches, nor honor, nor power, nor any other excellency that shall or can exempt that man from destruction, that doth not repent of his sins. Not Wisdom: for, He respecteth not any that are wise of heart, Job 37:24. Nor Riches, Job 36:19. Will he esteem thy riches? No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength. Prov. 11:4. Riches profit not in the day of wrath. Nor Honor, Isa. 23:9. The Lord of Hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the Earth. Neither shall power, or strength avail to keep of God's wrath from impenitent persons, 1 Sam. 2:9. By strength shall no man prevail. Nah. 1:6. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide the fierceness of his anger? Though a man were for gifts and other excellencies, equal to the Angels; yet none of his excellencies or endowments will keep of God's

wrath from him, if he go on in his sins, 2 Pet. 2:4. God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

SECT. 4.

4. Do not judge those to be the greatest sinners, who have been the greatest sufferers by this fire. It is a sin which easily besets those that are in prosperity, to despise and censure those that are in adversity, Job 12:5. He that is ready to slip with his feet, is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease. Job's three friends censured him for a hypocrite, and an irreligious person, because God laid such great afflictions upon him. When the Barbarians saw the Viper upon Paul's hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he bath escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live, Acts 28:4. To prevent this Error. Consider,

1. It is expressly against the mind of Christ, to judge those to be the greatest sinners that are the greatest sufferers. He cautioneth us twice against this sin, Luk. 13:1-5. There were present at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices; and Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish: Or those eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and slew them; Think ye that they were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

2. It is the property of humble persons to think better of others than themselves; Phil. 2:3. In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. They are wont to account themselves the least of Saints, and the

chiefest of sinners, Eph. 3:8. Unto me who am less than the least of all Saints. 1 Tim. 1:15.— Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

3. It hath been the lot of righteous men in all ages of the world, to meet with many troubles and afflictions, Psal. 34:19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; —yea, their afflictions and troubles are more than what other men meet withal. David speaking of wicked men, saith, Psal. 73:5. They are not in troubles as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.

4. We wrong God, and provoke him to anger, when we misjudge his Providences and dealings with his servants, Job 42:7. My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. And what was it wherein Eliphaz and his two friends offended in speaking such things of God as were not right? Was it not in misconstruing of God's Providence in sending afflictions?

SECT. 5.

5. Put on bowels of compassion towards such as have been sufferers by this fire, and towards all others that are in an afflicted, distressed condition; and be ready upon all occasions to do all offices of love for any of them, as far as it lieth in your power to be helpful to them. Pity them, Job 6:14. To him that is afflicted, pity should be shown from his friend. Mourn over their afflicted condition, Job 30:25. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor? Rom. 12:15. Weep with them that weep. There is a woe pronounced against those that are not affected with their brethren's miseries, Amos 6:1,6. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion —That drink Wine in Bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief Ointments, but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Pray for

them, that God would comfort and support them under, and bring them out of their distresses, Psal. 25:22. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. Psal. 132:1. Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions. Counsel and help them in the management of their affairs, and carry yourselves like a father to them, Job 29:15,16. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame; I was a father to the poor. Visit them, and comfort them in their afflicted condition, Jam. 1:27. Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Relieve them that are in want, Eccl. 11:1,2. Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days: Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the Earth. Job 31:16-23. If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof: (for from my youth he was brought up with me as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep: If I have lift up mine hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate; then let mine arm fall from mine shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone; for destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness, I could not endue. Lend to them that would borrow anything of you in their necessity, Matth. 5:42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Lending as well as giving, is a duty enjoined by God; but both the one as well as the other, must be managed with discretion, Psal. 112:5. A good man showeth favor, and lendeth, he will guide his affairs with discretion. And to make you

willing to lend upon all occasions unto those that come to borrow ought of you, (if they be such persons as your Conscience tells you, it is your duty and your discretion, that it is meet to lend to them) consider, that for this very thing God will greatly bless you in all that you set your hands unto, Deut. 15:7-10. Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth: Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto: yea, God will not only bless you, but your posterity also for this thing, Psal. 37:26. He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed. In all respects carry yourselves towards those that are in a suffering condition, as you would desire they should have carried themselves towards you, if they had been in your condition, and you had been in theirs; for this is according to the rule which is given us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Matth. 7:12. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. When you see any in distress, and find yourselves backward to relieve them; say to your own hearts as Mordecai did to Esther in another's case, when she was unwilling to put forth herself for the help of the distressed Jews, Esth. 4:14. Who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this? Who knoweth whether my Estate was preserved from the fire for such a time as this?

When therefore you are considering with yourselves, what you shall render unto the Lord for his great mercy towards you, in preserving your substance from the fire, determine with yourselves to do what I have been

exhorting you unto; namely, to put on bowels of compassion towards all that are in distress, and to do all the good you can for them, according as God shall Minister ability and opportunity unto you; for God is all-sufficient, and needeth not anything that you can do for him, Act. 17:25. Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. Your goodness extendeth not unto him, Psal. 16:2, neither can you be profitable to God as you may be profitable to his people, Job 35:7,8. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy righteousness may profit the Son of Man. God expects this from us, that when he hath bestowed any eminent mercy upon us, we should express our gratitude by doing good to others that are in distress, Luk. 22:32. When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. As it is in respect of comfort, when God gives us comfort it is not only for ourselves, but also to enable us to comfort others, 2 Cor. 1:4,6. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God—Whether we be comforted it is for your consolation and salvation. So it is with riches, they are not given to us only for our own use, but also to enable us to relieve the wants and necessities of others. We are not Lord's, but Stewards of our Estates, and must one day give an account of our stewardship: And it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful, 1 Cor. 4:2. Stewards must not dispose of what is committed to their charge, according to their own, but according to their Lord's will.

SECT. 6.

6. Seeing God hath so mercifully spared you, beware that you deal not rigorously, or cruelly with any that have been sufferers by this Fire; do not

speaking or doing anything that may add to the affliction of the afflicted, and instead of oil, pour vinegar into their wounds. God is sorely displeased with those that add to the affliction of the afflicted, Zech. 1:15. I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Psal. 69:24-26. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them; let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents; for they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded: Therefore do not use any insulting language, or speak any bitter words to such as are brought low, Rom. 11:17,18. If some of the branches be broken off—boast not thyself against the branches. Jer. 48:26,27. Moab shall wallow in his vomit, he also shall be in derision; for was not Israel a derision unto thee? Was he found among thieves? For since thou speakest of him, thou skippedst for joy. Do not trample upon those that are under God's feet; it is said of God, Lam. 3:33,34. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth. If the great God do not willingly grieve the children of men, or crush under his feet the meanest sort of men, the prisoners of the earth: then it doth not become us to grieve, or trample upon, or crush under our feet any man, how mean soever he be. Do not oppress any one in his right, that is become poor by this Fire; in so doing you will be guilty of reproaching God, Prov. 14:31. He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker; it is the ready way to come to want yourselves, Prov. 22:16. He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, shall surely come to want. It is said of Sodom, Ezek. 16:49,50. She did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy—therefore I took them away as I saw good. If the men of Sodom were destroyed with fire and brimstone for neglecting to strengthen the

hand of the poor and needy; what shall be done unto them that weaken the hands of the poor, and endeavor to make them more poor? Do not exact upon those that are harborless, when they come to hire houses of you, by demanding an unreasonable price for your Houses, Shops, or Ware-houses. Nehemiah reproveth those Jews very sharply, that did exact upon their poor brethren after they had suffered great affliction by the Babylonish captivity, Neh. 5:1-14: By taking advantage of our neighbor's necessity to set unreasonable and excessive rates upon our houses, we may be guilty of extortion. Our Savior joins these two together, Extortion and Excess, Matth. 23:25.— Within they are full of extortion and excess. Now Extortion is a great sin, as we may see, 1 Cor. 6:9,10, Ezek. 22:12,13. Have patience towards such as are indebted to you, and are disabled by this Fire from paying their Debts, and do not deal cruelly with them, by casting them into prison, or seizing upon that little which God hath left them, but wait with patience till God shall enable them to pay what they owe: God hath dealt mercifully with you, and therefore you should not deal cruelly with your brethren. Remember the parable of him that dealt cruelly with his fellow servant after he himself had found great favor with his Lord, Matth. 18:28-30. The same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants, which ought him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest: and his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all: and he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. And what was the issue of this cruel dealing? His Lord was wroth, and rebukes him sharply, and delivereth him over to the tormentors, ver. 32,33,34. Then his Lord after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me;

shouldest thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, yea, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormenters, till he should pay all that was due unto him. Do not exercise cruelty towards the afflicted any of these fore-mentioned ways, or in any other kind; but let your hearts stand in awe of such precepts as these, Zech. 7:9,10. Shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother, and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless; the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. Levite. 25:43,46. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God—Over your brethren the children of Israel: ye shall not rule one over another with rigor. Rom. 12:10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. 1 Cor. 16:14. Let all your things be done with charity. If you cast off all pity towards such as are impoverished by this Fire, who knows but God may send a fire to consume your houses: This very sin of casting off pity towards the afflicted, is threatened with fire, Amos 1:11,12. Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Edom, and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity; and his anger did war continually, and kept his wrath forever: but I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

SECT. 7.

7. Let God's mercy in preserving your houses from this Fire, cause you to dedicate your houses unto God. When God gave David a peaceable and settled habitation, he dedicated his house unto the Lord, and composed the thirtieth Psalm at the dedication of it, which beareth this title, A Psalm, and Song at the dedication of the house of David. Some conceive this dedication to have been after God put an end to his wanderings, by reason of Saul's

persecuting of him, and gave him a settled habitation in Jerusalem. Others think it refers to his returning to his house after he had been driven from it by Absalom. Whensoever the time was that he made this dedication, it may teach us thus much, that when it pleaseth God to give us quiet, and settled, and comfortable habitations, we should by way of gratitude dedicate our houses unto God. Those mercies which we receive from the Lord, we should return back again unto him: as Hannah when she had obtained a son, giveth him unto God, 1 Sam. 1:28. He whom I have obtained by petition, shall be returned (so 'tis rendered in the Margin) unto the Lord as long as he liveth. If any ask, How should we dedicate our Houses to God? I answer,

1. Reform and cleanse your houses, put away iniquity far from your Tabernacles, if you be purposed to consecrate them unto God, Job 22:23. We must not vow and sacrifice to the Lord a corrupt thing, lest we bring a curse upon ourselves rather than a blessing, Mal. 1:14. Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. If there were anything of fraud and unrighteousness in building or purchasing your houses, make satisfaction to your neighbor before you give your houses to God, Isa. 61:8. I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery forburnt offering, Humble yourselves for whatever sins either you or your predecessors have committed in your houses, whereby they have been defiled; for sin defileth not only a man's person, but the place where he dwelleth, Lev. 18:27,28, Jer. 2:7.

2. If you would dedicate your houses to God, let holiness to the Lord be written upon your houses, and upon all persons that dwell in them, and upon all affairs that are transacted in your houses: You know it is said, Psal. 93:5. Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever. If therefore you would give your houses to God, let those that are the masters of the house in the

first place look unto themselves, that they be holy in all manner of conversation, and follow the example of David, Psal. 101:2-4. I will walk within my house with a perfect heart, I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me. Then endeavor to bring your Children, and your Servants, and all that live in your houses, to serve God in holiness and righteousness, Josh. 24:15. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Endeavor to get godly servants into your houses, or at least to make them such after they are come under your roof, Psal. 101:6,7. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me; he that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight. Let holiness be written not only upon all persons, but upon all your household affairs. Be holy in your eating and drinking, govern your Children and Servants, and follow your Calling in an holy manner; entertain all that come to your houses in a godly sort: In a word, be holy in all manner of conversation, and do not think this to be too great preciseness, for 'tis no more than what is commanded, 1 Pet. 1:15. As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. God would have us so eminently holy in managing our civil employments, that all that converse with us may see holiness so evidently in what we do, as if it were written upon our employments, Zech. 14:20,21. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the Altar; yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness to the Lord of Hosts.

3. Suffer none that come to, or dwell in your houses, to speak, or do anything that may tend to the dishonor of God; but endeavor as much as in

you lieth, to glorify God yourselves, and to bring all that live with you; so to speak, and so to walk, as that God in all things may be glorified, Psal. 29:9. In his Temple doth everyone speak of his glory. If you would have your houses become as it were Temples of God, you must suffer no cursing, no lying, no scoffing, no back-biting, no rotten communication in your houses; but everyone must speak and walk, so as God may be glorified. When David dedicated his house to the Lord, he begins the Psalm that he composed at the dedication thereof, with a purpose and resolution to extol and glorify God, Psal. 30:1. I will extol thee, O Lord. Extol God in your hearts, extol God in all your discourses, extol God in your conversations, extol God in all your ways. After David had been delivered from the hands of his enemies, he thought it not enough to give glory to God himself, but calleth upon others also to magnify God with him, Psal. 34:3. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Do you follow his example, seeing God hath so graciously preserved your houses, and substance from this fire, do not only glorify God yourselves, but call upon your Wives, and Children, and Servants, and all that are in your Families: O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together.

4. If you would dedicate your houses to God, make them houses of prayer; pray with your Family every morning, and every evening: and besides praying with your Family, go into your Closet, and pour out your souls to God in secret, and call to your Servants and Children to pray in secret, as well as to join in family prayer, Matth. 21:13. My house shall be called the house of prayer.

5. Entertain with a willing and cheerful mind all God's friends and guests, that he at any time sends to your houses: After you have dedicated your houses to God, you should be as willing to entertain God's friends and

God's guests as your own. If you ask who are God's friends, and who are his guests? I answer, 1. All godly men, Joh. 15:14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. When God puts it into the hearts of any of his servants to come to your houses, you should most gladly receive them; for they leave a blessing behind them, Matth. 10:41. He that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. 2. All godly Ministers; when you receive them into your houses, the Lord Jesus taketh it as kindly as if you received himself, or his Father, Joh. 13:20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that received whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. 3. Such as are strangers, Matth. 25:35. I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Heb. 13:2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares. Job 31:32. The stranger did not lodge in the streets, but I opened my doors to the traveler. 4. Such as are driven from their own Houses, or their own Country for Conscience sake, Isa. 16:3,4.— Hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth; let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab, be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler. When we see any persons harborless that are honest, and well disposed, we should take pity on them, and receive them into our houses, Isa. 58:6,7. Is not this the fast that I have chosen?—Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry? And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house; when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.

SECT. 8.

8. Seeing God hath spared and preserved your Estates from this Fire; by way of gratitude, devote and dedicate your Estates to God, and resolve to spend them according to his will, and employ them for his glory. We are

commanded to honor God with our substance, and we shall be no losers by spending any part thereof for the advancing of his glory, Prov. 3:9,10. Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. If you ask how you should honor God with your Estates? I answer,

1. Do not spend them upon your lusts; what is spent for the satisfying of pride, sensuality, curiosity, vain glory, or the like, that is spent upon your lusts; and you may be sure, that what is spent upon your lusts, that is not spent to God's glory; for it is mentioned by the Apostle as a vice, to spend those things which God gives us upon our lusts, Jam. 4:3. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Now no vice glorifieth God.

2. Let the abundance wherewith God hath blessed you, raise up your hearts to serve God more cheerfully than other men who want what you enjoy. It is said of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. 17:5,6. The Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought Jehoshaphat presents, and he had riches, and honor in abundance; and his heart was lift up (or, as 'tis in the Margin) was encouraged in the wages of the Lord. God is displeased when our riches produce not this effect, to make us serve the Lord with cheerfulness, Deut. 28:47,48. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things.

3. Do good according to your ability with what God hath given you, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the Fatherless and the Widows; then you glorify God with your Estates when you do good with them, and relieve

the poor and the needy, Prov. 14:31. He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker; but he that honoreth him, hath mercy on the poor. He that ministereth to others necessities, be it more or less, if it be according to the ability that God hath given him, glorifieth God, 1 Pet. 4:10,11. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God—If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability that God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Wherefore give freely and liberally upon all occasions to such as are in necessity, remembering how the Scriptures charge and encourage you to give bountifully to the poor: let me mind you of a few places to this purpose, 1 Tim. 6:17,18. Charge them that are rich in this world—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 2 Cor. 9:6. This I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully. Prov. 11:25. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Luk. 6:38. Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running ever, shall men give into your bosom; for with the same measure that ye meet withal, it shall be measured to you again. Prov. 22:9. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor. Eccl. 11:1,2. Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days: Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth?

If any say, There are so many sufferers by this Fire, and so many objects of Charity, that we know not where to bestow our Charity,

seeing we are not able to relieve all; who are they whom we are obliged in an especial manner to relieve with our Charity? I answer,

1. If you have any near Relations that are in want, you ought in an especial manner to take care to relieve them, 1 Tim. 5:4. If any Widows have Children, or Nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their Parents; for that is good and acceptable before God: and ver. 8. If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an Infidel. When Job had lost his Estate, all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, gave him everyone a piece of money, and an ear-ring of gold, Job 42:11.

2. If you know any godly men to be in want, you should in an especial manner be careful to relieve their wants, Gal. 6:10. Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith: and as you should have respect unto godly men above others, so in a more peculiar manner to godly Ministers. When the Apostle Paul, who was a Minister of Christ, was relieved in his necessities by the Philippians, see how acceptable this was unto the Lord, Phil. 4:18. I have all, and abound, I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. The smallest kindness that we can imagine done to any of Christ's servants, whether Ministers, or others, upon this account, because they belong to Christ, shall not go without a reward, Mar. 9:41. Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my Name, because ye belong to Christ; verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward.

3. Such as are in greatest want and necessity, either because they are burdened with Children, or have formerly lived plentifully, and so know not

how to bear a low condition; such as on any account are brought into a necessitous condition, and are like to perish for want of relief: these ought in an especial manner to be looked after, and relieved, Job 29:13. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me. Lev. 25:35. If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner, that he may live with thee. Here we are directed what sort of persons we should relieve: 1. We are to relieve such as have lived well formerly, and are waxen poor, and fallen in decay; whether he be a brother or a stranger. 2. We are to relieve those that live in the places where we live, before others at a farther distance. If a brother be fallen in decay with thee, thou shalt relieve him. 3. Such as know not how to live without some relief, that he may live. But as was said before, if the necessity of persons fearing God, be as great as other men's, their necessities are to be considered before others, Rom. 12:13. Distributing to the necessity of Saints: and if we know or hear of any of God's servants that are in want, we should send relief to them, though they live in places that are at great distance from us. The Disciples of Antioch sent relief as far as Judea to the distressed Servants of Christ, Acts 11:29. Then the Disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea.

4. Such persons as are most shiftless and friendless, as Widows, Fatherless Children, Orphans, and Strangers, these also ought to be considered in a more especial manner, as being great Objects of Charity, Job 29:12,13. I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him—I caused the widows heart to sing for joy. God taketh a special care of the Widows, and Fatherless, and Strangers, Psal.

146:9. The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and widow —And we should labor to resemble God: see also Job 31:16-20.

5. We should mind what opportunities God puts into our hands, and embrace our present opportunities; and we should be doing good to those, unto whom our opportunity leadeth us to do good, Gal. 6:10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men —Eccl. 9:10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Prov. 3:27,28. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it; say not to thy neighbor, Go and come again, and tomorrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee. You see here, we should not defer our opportunities of doing good so much as for one day.

I shall add no more upon this head, but only put you in mind of the courteous carriage of the barbarous people of Melita, towards such as had suffered shipwreck, and were cast upon their coasts; they received every one of the shipwrecked persons in a courteous manner, and at their departure did abundantly supply all their necessities, Act. 28:1,2,10. When they were escaped, then they knew that the Island was called Melita: and the barbarous people shown us no little kindness; for they kindled a fire, and received us everyone, because of the present rain, and because of the cold—who also honored us with many honors, and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary. Will it not be a shame for Christians to be wanting in relieving their brethren, that have suffered the loss of their Estates by fire; when as these Barbarians shown great kindness to men that they never saw before, when they suffered shipwreck and lost their ship, and all their goods in the Sea.

SECT. 9.

9. Render yourselves to God by way of gratitude for his sparing of you from this sore judgment which hath fallen so heavily upon others. Your Houses and Estates are too little to give unto God for this mercy; and therefore you shall do well to give yourselves, both body and soul, all that you have and are, unto the Lord. When David was debating the case with himself, what he should render to the Lord for his benefits, he resolves to give himself to God, to be his servant, and that not only in profession, but indeed and in truth, Psal. 116:12,16. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Oh Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, —2 Chron. 30:8. Be ye not stiff-necked,—but yield yourselves unto the Lord, —2 Cor. 8:5. But first gave their own selves to the Lord. What the Apostle said to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 12:14. I seek not yours, but you: The like may be said of God, He doth not seek ours, but us; he is more pleased when we give him ourselves, than with any other gift that we have to give him. As a Christian looketh upon it as the greatest favor that God can bestow upon him, for God to give himself to him; he prizeth none of God's gifts so much as the gift of himself: so it is with God, he esteemeth a man's giving up himself to God, above all the gifts that he can give to God. Let therefore the mercies which God hath given you, prevail with you to give yourselves, your whole selves, both body and soul unto God. 1. Let God's mercies prevail with you to give God your bodies, Rom. 12:1. I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. It may be some will say, What? Doth God care for our bodies? Will that be an acceptable gift to God? The Apostle assureth us it will be an acceptable present, when they are preserved holy, present your bodies, holy, acceptable unto God. And he telleth us elsewhere, that the

Lord is desirous of our bodies as well as of our souls, 1 Cor. 6:13. The body is—for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Now then we give God our bodies, when we keep our bodies in subjection to the will of God, when we rule and govern all the members of our bodies by the Word of God, when we are content to do or suffer anything in our bodies for the sake of God, that God and Christ may be magnified in our bodies, Phil. 1:20, when we do not suffer sin to reign in our bodies, neither do yield the members of our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but do readily yield up all the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness to do the will of God; this is to give God our bodies. And this is that which the Apostle calls for, Rom. 6:12,13. Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 2. Give God your souls as well as your bodies, otherwise you do not present your bodies to God a living sacrifice, according to the forementioned exhortation, Rom. 12:1, for, The body without the spirit is dead, Jam. 2:26. And if the body be a dead carcass without the spirit, then we cannot present our bodies a living sacrifice unto God, unless we give him our souls together with our bodies. The soul is that which God desires above all things, Prov. 23:26. My son, give me thine heart. —Matth. 22:37,38. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great Commandment. And why should any of us stick at this, the giving ourselves both body and soul unto God, seeing it is our reasonable service? Let me show you the equity of what I am exhorting you unto, that so such of you as have

received great mercies from God, may be persuaded by way of gratitude, to give yourselves the more cheerfully both body and soul unto the Lord.

1. Our bodies and souls are not our own, but the Lord's; and shall we refuse to give God his own? Shall we be backward to glorify God with that which is his own? 1 Cor. 6:19,20.— Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. God did not make either our bodies or our souls for the service of sin or Satan, but for himself, 1 Cor. 6:13.— Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, —Prov. 16:4. The Lord hath made all things for himself. Rev. 4:11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Now seeing our bodies and souls were created for God's pleasure; Is it not meet they should be yielded up unto God?

2. The Lord Jesus gave himself both body and soul for us. He yielded his body to be crucified for us, which was both a shameful and a painful death, 1 Cor. 11:24. This is my body which was broken for you, —1 Pet. 2:24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the Tree, that we being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. Isa. 50:6. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked of the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Why should we refuse to give our bodies to be burned, imprisoned, banished, tortured, or to suffer any affliction for the sake of Christ, seeing he gave his body to suffer such a shameful and painful death for us? The Lord Jesus did not only give his body, but his soul also an offering for our sins, Isa. 53:10. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, —Shall we stick at

giving our souls to Christ, when he did not stick at making his soul an offering for our sins?

3. It will be much for the advantage both of our bodies and souls to give them unto God; for he will sanctify them, and make them his Temple, and come and dwell in them, 1 Cor. 3:16. Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? 2 Cor. 6:16. Ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them. —Now, who are they to whom the Apostle speaks, when he saith, Ye are the Temple of the living God, &c. They were such as had given themselves to God, as you may see, chap. 8:5. But first gave their own selves to the Lord, —What greater honor or happiness are our souls and bodies capable of, whilst they are in this world, than to become Temples of the living God? But besides this, if we give our bodies and souls unto God, he will glorify both our bodies and souls in an inexpressible manner in the Kingdom of Heaven to all eternity. The Sun is a glorious creature, it dazzleth our eyes to behold it; God will give his Saints in Heaven a glory equal to the brightness of the Sun, Matth. 13:43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father: yea, they shall excel the Sun in glory, for they shall be equal to the Angels, and the Angels are far more glorious creatures than the Sun, Luk. 20:36. Neither can they die anymore; for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection: yea, they shall be made like to Christ, their bodies shall be made like to his glorious body, Phil. 3:21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, —and their souls shall be made like to his glorious soul, 1 Joh. 3:2. — We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. We,—that is, not our

bodies only, or our souls only; but our persons, both body and soul shall be like him.

SECT. 10.

10. Render to God the Sacrifices of righteousness. When we have received any eminent mercy from God, he expects that we should offer up unto him the sacrifice of a righteous and godly life, which will please him better than all the Sacrifices that were offered up under the Law, Psal. 4:5. Offer the Sacrifices of Righteousness. Psal. 51:17,19. The Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,—Then shalt thou be pleased with the Sacrifices of righteousness. —When David was wonderfully delivered from the snares of death, he determines to offer this Sacrifice to God, namely, to walk humbly and holily before God all the days of his life, Psal. 116:6-8. I was brought low, and he helped me: Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. Then see what he renders to God for this mercy; I will walk before the Lord in the Land of the living. I have touched upon this head before, and therefore I shall not enlarge farther upon it; only I shall add two Scriptures, which do imply, that it is our duty after we have received any eminent deliverances, to labor after a more eminent degree of holiness than we had before; and are also promises, that God will sanctify our deliverances, for the making of us more holy, Obad. 17. Upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness. Isa. 4:2,3. In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the Earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem. In the former Chapter, the Prophet had foretold the ruin

of Jerusalem, and the fall of Judah, Isa. 2:8, and here he foretells, that a little remnant should escape; and promiseth, that God's judgments on others, and his mercy in delivering them, should conduce much to the promoting of their holiness, and cause them to prize highly the Lord Jesus (who is understood by the Branch of the Lord, Zach. 3:8.) by whose merits and mediation they should obtain their deliverance.

SECT. 11.

11. Let this deliverance cause you to seek after, and to trust in God for farther mercies and deliverances, when you are brought into straits. This use God servants have been wont to make of their deliverances, as you may see by these instances, Judg. 15:18. And he was sore a thirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised. 1 Sam. 17:37. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lion, and out of the paw of the Bear; he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. 2 Cor. 1:10. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in him we trust that he will yet deliver us. This God expects that when he hath shielded us from, or helped us out of one trouble, we should trust him when we come into another, Psal. 115:9. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord, he is their help and their shield. Psal. 61:3,4. Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong Tower from the Enemy; I will abide in thy Tabernacle forever, I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Psal. 4:5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. God was much displeased with the Israelites when they did not trust in him, notwithstanding he had done great things for them, Psal. 78:21-24.— Anger came up against Israel, because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation, though he had commanded the clouds from

above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down Manna upon them to eat: —see also ver. 32,33. For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works; therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. We render that which is very pleasing and acceptable to God, when we put our trust in him; for, The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy, Psal. 147:11.

If you ask, For what should great and remarkable deliverances cause a man to trust in God? I answer,

1. When a man hath had any remarkable deliverance out of any trouble, it should encourage him to trust in God under all his straits and troubles that come upon him all the days of his life, Psal. 18:50. Great deliverance giveth he to his King, and showeth mercy to his anointed, to David and to his seed for evermore. This Psalm was penned upon the occasion of that deliverance which God gave David out of the hands of Saul, as you may see in the title of the Psalm; and from this deliverance, he concludeth, that God would deliver him forever, Psal. 6:9. The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my Prayer: see the fore-quoted Scriptures, 1 Sam. 17:37, 2 Cor. 1:10. But some may say, How can this be, That deliverance from one trouble or calamity should cause us to trust in God for deliverance from another; when as we see, they that escape one judgment, are cut off, or suffer deeply by another? I answer, 1. When God cuts off, and destroys those whom he hath formerly delivered, it is usually such as distrust him, and turn away from him, Jude 5.— The Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. Josh. 24:20. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. 2. When God brings his servants who trust in him, into new troubles, their faith is not

vain, but brings down a great blessing; for, when they are not delivered from troubles, they are delivered in trouble, and are kept from the evil of trouble, that it doth not hurt them, and this is a great deliverance, Job 5:19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

2. Deliverance from temporal evils should encourage the servants of God, to trust in the Lord for deliverance from spiritual evils, and the bestowing upon them spiritual blessings. As for instance,

1. When they have had deliverance out of trouble, they should conclude, that God will also deliver them from all their sins, and preserve them in a state of grace, till he hath brought them to himself in glory. Thus Paul concludes from his deliverance that he had from Nero, that God would deliver him from every evil work, 2 Tim. 4:17,18. I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.

2. The servants of God that have escaped great calamities, and been delivered from great dangers, should trust in God for a broken heart to mourn for their sins; for God promiseth this mercy to such as escape great judgments, Ezek. 7:16. They that escape of them, shall escape, and shall be on the Mountains like Doves of the Valleys, all of them mourning, everyone for his iniquity.

3. When the servants of God escape out of great troubles, it should cause them to trust in God to deliver them from the deceit of their own hearts, and to direct the work of faith and repentance in truth in their souls, Isa. 10:20,21. The remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the House of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel in truth: the remnant shall return,

even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. This remnant, unto whom God promiseth faith and repentance in truth, are such as should escape the great calamities that were coming on the Jews, as you may see ver. 21,22.

4. When the servants of God have received any eminent deliverances, they should be encouraged thereby to trust in God for power and strength to walk before God in holiness and righteousness as long as they live, Psal. 56:13. Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

If any say, What grounds have the servants of God to take encouragement from temporal deliverances, to trust in God for all spiritual blessings? Amongst others that may be named, I will mention these two.

1. Redemption from outward troubles, is given to the servants of God by virtue of the Covenant of Grace, as well as spiritual blessings, Psal. 111:9. He sent redemption unto his people, he hath commanded his covenant forever. Psal. 106:44,45. Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry; and he remembered for them his Covenant. Now when we find God remembering his Covenant in one kind, it may encourage us to trust in God for all the other blessings which are promised to us in God's Covenant.

2. Redemption from outward troubles, is given to the servants of God from the same love of God that spiritual blessings are bestowed upon them, Isa. 63:9. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. Isa. 38:17. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness, but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption. —Psal. 18:19. He brought me forth into a large

place, he delivered me, because he delighted in me. Now even outward deliverances being tokens of God's love to his Servants, they may thereby be encouraged to trust in God for spiritual blessings, Psal. 36:6-8. There is much of God's love seen in his preserving our persons and goods; O Lord, thou preservest man and beast, how excellent is thy loving kindness? His loving kindness should cause us to trust in him— therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. And this loving kindness of God should cause us to trust in him, not only for outward, but also for spiritual blessings, as appears from the eighth verse.

SECT. 12.

12. Let this deliverance cause you to prepare for your day of visitation, and to be ready to undergo whatever afflictions God shall see meet to lay upon you, Amos 4:11,12. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning—prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. Both they that have suffered by this Fire, should prepare for farther sufferings (as hath been hinted in the second Question) and they that escaped this burning, should prepare against the day of their visitation. Preparing yourselves for afflictions, is no way inconsistent with that trusting in God, to which I exhorted you in the former Section, but is an effect and fruit of Faith. It was Noah's faith, and not his diffidence that moved him to prepare an Ark, when he understood the Flood was coming, Heb. 11:7. By Faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark —This being a needful point for a Christian to be prepared for all sorts of affliction, I shall enlarge a little upon it, and show you, 1. Why it is needful that we should be prepared for all kinds of affliction. 2. How this may be done. There is great reason that

we should prepare ourselves and stand ready for all sorts of affliction, because,

1. As we are men, men that carry about with us a body of sin and death, we are liable to troubles and calamities every day, as long as we live in this world, Job 5:7. Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. Job 14:1. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of troubles. For ought we know every day may bring forth as much trouble as we are able to bear; if it be otherwise we must ascribe it to the goodness of God, Matth. 6:34. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof: and this is our condition as long as we live, to be liable to trouble and sorrow all our days, Gen. 3:17. Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. There is not any one creature in the world, no not that from which we promise ourselves most comfort, but at one time or another it may vex our very souls, Eccl. 2:17. All is vanity and vexation of spirit.

2. As we are godly men, so we are liable to many and great troubles, Psal. 34:19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Rev. 7:14. These are they which came out of great tribulation. Acts 14:22. We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. God would not have any godly man promise himself immunity from trouble, but would have him prepare for the sharpest trials, 2 Tim. 3:12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. If we look over the examples of God's servants, we shall find they have all gone through very great trials. What crosses did Jacob meet with from his brother Esau, his Uncle Laban, his own Children, &c. there was scarce a day wherein he did not meet with some trouble, as he tells Pharaoh, Gen. 47:9. Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been. David who was a man after God's own heart had a great portion of troubles, Psal. 73:14. All the day long have I been

plagued, and chastened every morning. Psal. 31:9,10.— Mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly; for my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. Heman was full of troubles, and that from his youth up, and those so great, that he was ready to die under them, Psal. 88:3,15. My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave—I am afflicted, and ready to die, from my youth up. Yea, Jesus Christ who was God's own Son, was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, Isa. 53:3.

3. We cannot assure ourselves that we shall be exempted from any kind of trouble; for whilst we are in the body, we are liable to all kinds of adversity, Heb. 13:3. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Better than we are, have met with all sorts of troubles, Psal. 88:7. Thou hast afflicted me with all thy ways. Psal. 42:7. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. We may meet with such afflictions as we never looked for, or scarce so much as thought of them, Isa. 64:3. Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for. And as all sorts of afflictions do attend us; so at all times, and in all places, we cannot promise ourselves freedom from affliction in any place, Acts 20:22,23. I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, That bonds and afflictions abide me. Neither can we promise ourselves freedom from trouble any one day, Prov. 27:1. Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Now seeing we are liable to all sorts of afflictions in all places, and at all times, is it not our concernment to stand prepared continually for all sorts of trials?

4. God oftentimes makes very great and sudden changes in our conditions, when we least think of them: when we are in the height of prosperity, and adversity is far from our thoughts; when we are looking for nothing but good days, God suddenly exerciseth us with great trials, Job 30:26. When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there came darkness. Psal. 30:6,7. In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved; Lord by thy savor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. When Job said, I shall die in my nest, I shall multiply my days as the sand, Job 29:18. It was but a little after he complains, Terrors are turned upon me, they pursue my soul as the wind, and my welfare passeth away as a cloud; and now my soul is poured out upon me, the days of affliction have taken hold upon me, Job 30:15,16. When Abraham was full of joy for his Son Isaac, there ariseth a great affliction in his Family; Ishmael scoffs at Isaac, Sarah makes suit to Abraham to cast out Hagar and her Son: and it is said, The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his Son, Gen. 20:11. Afterwards when God was so eminently present with Abraham, that Abimelech takes notice of it, and desireth to make a league with him, Gen. 20:22,23, and after he had been worshipping God, ver. 33, on a sudden God brought as great a trial upon him as possibly could befall him; he calls him to offer up his Son Isaac for a burnt-offering, and that without any delay, Gen. 22:2. Take now thy Son, thine only Son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering —'It is not, take a year, or a month hence, but, take now; he was to set upon the work without delay.

5. God calleth upon us with great earnestness to prepare ourselves to undergo such afflictions as he shall lay upon us, Amos 4:12. Thus will I do

unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. Jer. 46:14. Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Moab; say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee, for the sword shall devour round round about thee. This exhortation to prepare for approaching judgments, is pressed with great earnestness; it is ushered in with a four-fold call, Declare ye, publish, publish, say ye. What is it must be declared, and published with such great earnestness? Stand fast, prepare thee —see also ver. 19. O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into captivity —

6. If afflictions come upon us before we are prepared for them, we shall be in danger to sink under our burdens; but if we be well provided beforehand, we shall go cheerfully through, whatever it seemeth good unto the Lord to lay upon us, Psal. 57:7. My heart is fixed (or as it is in the Margin) My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared, I will sing and give praise. David was fled into a Cave when he penned this Psalm, as you may see by the title of it, and was surrounded with great calamities, as you may see, ver. 1, 4. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Yet in the midst of his troubles, he sings for joy and praiseth God; and what helped him to bear his troubles so cheerfully? His heart was prepared for them, My heart is prepared, I will sing and give praise. Joseph who had prepared for seven years Famine, lived comfortably, and felt no great inconvenience by it; other persons that had laid up nothing beforehand, would have fainted and died, had not Joseph relieved them. The Apostle was so far from being discouraged at his sufferings, that he joyed in the greatest of them, even to lay down his life

for the Gospels sake, Phil. 2:17. Yea, and if I be offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. And how came he to do thus? He was ready and prepared to suffer anything for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, Acts 21:13.— I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus. Now having given you some reasons why we should prepare ourselves for all sorts of afflictions, I shall in the next place answer a weighty and necessary case of Conscience, viz.

What shall we do that we may stand prepared to undergo any affliction that the Lord shall be pleased to lay upon us?

Answ. 1. We must give ourselves much unto prayer; we must pray before our afflictions come, and pray in our afflictions; we must not pray in a cold manner, but cry mightily to God, to strengthen and support us in our troubles. By prayer we shall obtain from God a heart prepared to undergo any troubles, Psal. 10:17. Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. Psal. 57:2,7. I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me. And what did David get by crying unto God? A heart prepared to bear his afflictions; as you may see ver. 7. My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared. The Apostle adviseth Christians that would be able to stand in an evil day, to be much in prayer, Eph. 6:13,18. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand—praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints. Observe how the Apostle multiplieth words to excite us to prayer, he doth not barely bid us pray, but pray always; and as if that were not enough, he adds, with all prayer and supplication —and not only so, but

he bids us watch thereunto, watch with perseverance, yea, with all perseverance. And adds, that this duty must be performed in a spiritual manner, With all prayer and supplication in the spirit: if we do not pray with our hearts and spirits as well as with our lips, yea, if there be not the graces of God's Spirit exercised in prayer, as well as the actings of our own spirits, our Prayers are worth little in God's account. The Apostle joins these two together, Patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, Rom. 12:12. Implying, that such as desire to be patient in all their tribulations, must be, and continue instant in Prayer.

2. Endeavor as much as in you lieth to strengthen and increase your Faith. Faith is the chiefest piece of the spiritual armor, which above all the rest will help us to stand in an evil day. The Apostle would not have us neglect any piece of the spiritual armor, all must be put on; but Faith above all the rest, Eph. 6:13,16. Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Above all, taking the shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. By faith a man may be able to do and suffer all things, Mar. 9:23. All things are possible to him that believeth. The Apostles did, and suffered great things for God: and how? It was through faith, 1 Tim. 4:10. Therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God. The servants of God have endured all sorts of tortures, and the most painful deaths that their enemies could inflict upon them, and all other afflictions, by the help of faith, Heb. 11:35-37. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trials of cruel mocking's and scourging's, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep's skins,

and goat's skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: and that they endured all these things through faith, you may see, ver. 33. Whatever difficulties, snares, or discouragements a man meets with in the world, either in respect of the good things, or the evil things of the world, faith will overcome them all, 1 Joh. 5:4. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Faith will enable a man to resist and overcome all the temptations of Satan, whereby he endeavoreth to disturb and foil us in times of affliction, 1 Pet. 5:8,9. Your adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. Fear weakens the heart, and makes it faint at approaching troubles, Luk. 21:26. Men's hearts failing them for fear —Now Faith conduceth much to the fixing and establishing the heart against fears, Psal. 112:7. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. Psal. 56:11. In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. And therefore it conduceth much to the preparing of a man to undergo his afflictions. I might show you here what you should believe in reference to your afflictions, to enable you to bear them with cheerfulness: among many things that might be instanced in, I will mention only these three.

1. Believe that no affliction doth, or ever shall befall you, but by the wise and gracious providence of God; and that not only every affliction, but every circumstance in every affliction, is ordered and disposed by the infinite wisdom of God. This is agreeable to such Scriptures as these, Rom. 11:36. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things. Eph. 1:11.—Who worketh all things, after the counsel of his own will. Amos 3:6. Shall there be evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it? Matth. 10:30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. The believing that God's hand is

in our afflictions, will bow our hearts, and make them stoop and submit to God, though it be a smarting Rod wherewith the Lord corrects us. They were dreadful judgments which Samuel denounced against Eli, yet he submits himself readily to it, because it came from God, 1 Sam. 3:18. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

2. Believe that in every affliction God designeth the bringing glory to his Name, and the doing good to your own souls; you have good ground to believe this, for the Scriptures do assure us, that God aims both at our good and his own glory, in all our afflictions, Heb. 12:10. He chasteneth us for our profit —Rom. 8:28. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. 2 Cor. 4:17. Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Rom. 11:36. To him are all things: All things are not only of God as the efficient, but they also tend to him as their end, Isa. 5:16. The Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment. This made the Apostle joyful in his afflictions, that they did illustrate the glory of God, 2 Cor. 12:9,10. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. —He rejoiced also in his afflictions, because they did promote the good of his soul. When some preached Christ out of contention, with a design to add affliction to his bonds, Phil. 1:14. Was he troubled at the affliction they created to him? No: for he saith, I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, ver. 18. And what made him to rejoice herein? He gives us the reason of his joy, ver. 19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your Prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

3. Believe that you shall be delivered out of your troubles; this will be a means to support you under them, Psal. 27:13. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. You have good ground from the Word of God to believe, that you shall be delivered out of all your troubles, though they be very many, Psal. 34:19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. And though they be great as well as many, such as you never met with, or heard of the like, yet you may rest upon God that he will deliver you out of them, Jer. 30:7. Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it? What is your affliction? Is it the rod of men? God will not suffer it to lie over-long upon you, Psal. 125:3. The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hand unto iniquity. Is it the Rod of God that is upon you? Do the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in your soul? Doth he contend with you? This will not last always, Isa. 57:16. I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wrath; for the spirit should fail before me, and the soul which I have made. Doth the Lord do more than contend with you? Doth he seem to reject and cast off your soul? You may be assured that he will not deal thus with you always because he himself hath said it, that he will not cast off forever, Lam. 3:31,32. The Lord will not cast off forever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. Is it a temptation of Satan that disquiets you? Wait but a while on God, and he will tread Satan and all his temptations under your feet, Rom. 16:20. The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Is it some sin that vexeth and troubleth your soul? Wait a while upon God, and he will deliver you from your sins as well as your other troubles, Mic. 7:19. He will turn again, he will have

compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities. —Psal. 130:7,8. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. When David was under many sorrows that disturbed and cast down his soul, he bore up himself with hope of a better state; that though for the present he was in a mourning condition, the time would come wherein he should praise God for helping him out of his troubles, Psal. 42:5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

3. If we would be prepared to undergo every affliction that God shall lay upon us, we must labor to get God's strength engaged with us, and for us: Though of ourselves we can do nothing, yet through the help of God, we shall be able to do and suffer great things, Psal. 60:11,12. Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man; Through God we shall do valiantly, — Psal. 18:29. By thee have I run through a Troup, and by my God have I leaped over a Wall. By the help of God we may do and suffer everything, Phil. 4:13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. If a man have God for his strength, he need not fear anything, though an host of men should set themselves against him, Psal. 27:1,3. The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, mine heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident: yea, though all the world should set themselves against us, if we have God with us, we need not fear anything, Psal. 118:10. All Nations compassed me about, but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them. Rom. 8:31. What shall we then say to these things, If God be for us, who can be against us? Though the whole world should be turned upside down, and all places should be full of trouble and confusion,

and there should be no peace or safety either on the Sea or Land; that man that hath God for his strength need not fear anything, Psal. 46:1-3. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: Therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea; though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled, though the Mountains shake at the swelling thereof. If then you would bear up comfortably under all your afflictions; remember the exhortation of the Apostle, Eph. 6:10. Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Do not trust to your own strength, but seek to be strong in the Lord, and to get his mighty power to assist you.

It may be some will say, What shall we do that we may get God's strength to support us under, and to carry us through all the troubles of this life? I answer,

1. Be sensible of your own weakness, and renounce all confidence in your own strength. God is wont to communicate his strength most eminently to his servants, when they have lowest thoughts of their own strength, and are under deepest apprehensions of their own weakness, 2 Cor. 12:9,10. My strength is made perfect in weakness,—When I am weak then am I strong. Isa. 40:29. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. When we grow conceited of our own abilities, God withdraws himself from us, and leaves us to fall under small trials. Peter being over confident of himself, that he could suffer anything, yea death itself for the sake of Christ, and that though all men should deny Christ he would not, Matth. 26:33,35, fell under the first temptation that assaulted him; a Damsel did but say, Thou wast with Jesus of Galilee, and he denied Christ in the presence of all that were in the Palace, ver. 69,70. God is so far from helping proud persons, that he is wont to set himself against them,

Jam. 4:6. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. I will mention three ways whereby you may be convinced of your own weakness, and of the absolute necessity of God's strength, to carry you through your afflictions. 1. Weigh well what the Scripture saith of man's impotency; we are such weak creatures, that without divine assistance we cannot do or suffer anything, though it be never such a small matter, Joh. 15:5. Without me ye can do nothing. Thinking is much easier than either doing or suffering; yet of ourselves, we have not ability so much as to think anything, 2 Cor. 3:5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. 2. Observe how unable you have been when God hath withdrawn himself, to bear those small and light troubles wherewith God hath exercised you. Hath not a trifle, that which hath been an affliction and a trouble in your imagination, rather than in reality, dejected and cast you down? If you have fainted under small troubles, what will you do when great ones come, if you have not the Lord's help? Jer. 12:5. If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with Horses? And if in the Land of Peace, wherein thou trustest, they wearied thee; then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? 3. Consider what great men have fainted under small trials, when the Lord hath left them but a little to themselves. Jonah a Prophet of the Lord, for the loss of a gourd, which sprung up and withered in a day, fell into such a fret, that he was even angry with God, and weary of his life, and wished that he might die. The Apostle Peter upon the speech of a maid, denied Christ, and swore that he did not so much as know the man. If such eminent persons as these fainted under such small trials; what shall we do without the help of God?

2. Being sensible of your own weakness, cry unto God to give you his strength, Psal. 86:16. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me, give thy strength unto thy servant —Psal. 119:28. Strengthen thou me according to thy Word. But will this do? Will God give us his strength if we cry to him for it? Yea, he will, Psal. 138:3. In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

3. Rest and rely upon God for the communicating of his strength to your souls. The way to engage God to help and strengthen you, is to trust in him, 1 Chron. 5:20. They were helped—for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them; because they put their trust in him. 2 Chron. 13:11. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee. Psal. 28:7. The Lord is my strength, and my shield, my heart trusted in him, and I am helped. God's power is communicated in an eminent manner to those that believe in him, Eph. 1:19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Though we are never so weak in ourselves, we may become strong by resting upon God, Heb. 11:33,34. Who through faith—out of weakness were made strong. If you ask, What ground have we to rely upon God, that he will give us his strength to support us under all our troubles? I answer, We have a sure Word of Promise; we have not only one promise, but many to assure us, that God will not leave us destitute of his help and strength, Isa. 41:10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Zech. 10:12. I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his Name, saith the Lord. Psal. 29:11. The Lord will give strength unto his people. Joel 3:15,16. The Sun and Moon shall be darkened, and the Stars shall withdraw their shining; the Lord also shall

roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the Heavens and the Earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Object. I have cried unto God, and hung upon, and pleaded his Promises for his strength, and still I remain in a weak helpless condition.

Answ. Though it be so, yet cry still to the Lord, Isa. 63:15. Look down from Heaven, and behold from the Habitation of thy Holiness, and of thy glory; where is thy zeal, and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies towards me? Are they restrained? Isa. 51:9. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Psal. 105:4. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore. And wait patiently upon him, and in due time he will strengthen you, Psal. 27:14. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord. Isa. 40:31. They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

4. Keep in God's ways; when we go out of God's ways we cause God to withdraw himself, and when God withdraws, our strength departs from us; as it was with Sampson, when his God departed from him, his strength departed also, Judg. 16:19. His strength went from him. How came he to lose his strength? By losing the presence of God, ver. 20. I will go out as at other times; and he knew not that the Lord was departed from him: so it is with Christians, when they lose their God, they lose their strength. But by keeping in God's ways, they shall keep God with them, and increase their strength. That this is the way to get God's strength, to keep in God's ways, you may see Prov. 10:29. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.

Psal. 84:5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them. Job 17:19.

5. Get your interest in God made out to your souls. The knowing of God to be our God, conveyeth great strength into our souls, and will support us in our greatest troubles. What Solomon saith of knowledge, Prov. 24:5. A wise man is strong, a man of knowledge increaseth strength, is eminently true of this knowledge that God is our God; for the more clearly we know God to be our God, the more we shall increase in strength, Isa. 49:5. My God shall be my strength. 1 Sam. 30:6. David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him;—but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. The knowledge of our interest in God, filleth our hearts with joy, Luk. 1:47. My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior; and joy strengthens the soul, Neh. 8:10. The joy of the Lord is your strength. Wherefore grow in acquaintance with God, if you will grow in strength to suffer the will of God cheerfully, Col. 1:10,11.— Increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness; especially labor to grow in the knowledge of your interest in God.

6. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in your souls; the Word of God abiding in you, will be a great means to strengthen you, 1 Joh. 2:14. Ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. The efficacy and power of the Word of God is wonderful. By speaking of a word, God created the whole world, Psal. 33:6,9. By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the hosts of them, by the breath of his mouth: For he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast. By his Word he governs and upholdeth all his creatures, Heb. 1:3. Upholding all things by the Word of his Power. Is there such power in the

Word as to uphold all things, and dost thou doubt whether it be able to uphold thy soul? If a man's heart be broken in pieces and melted with grief, the Word of God will heal and strengthen him, and settle him in a comfortable condition, Psal. 107:20. He sent his Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Psal. 119:28. My soul melteth for heaviness, strengthen thou me according to thy Word.

7. If you would be strong in the Lord, put on the whole armor of God, Eph. 6:10,11. Finally my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. But some may say, How shall we be strong in the Lord? The next words shows this, Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. No part of the armor of God must be neglected, if we would be strong in the Lord. What this armor of God is, the Apostle showeth from the 14th to the 18th ver.

4. If we would be prepared to undergo all afflictions cheerfully, we must labor to get our sins pardoned, and get our pardon evidenced, and keep clear our evidences of our justified estate. Sense of guilt bows down the soul, and weakens our strength, and renders us unfit for a suffering condition, Psal. 31:10. My strength faileth because of mine iniquity. Such of the Jews as were under the sense of unpardoned guilt, were ready to faint under their afflictions, when they were carried captive into Babylon, Lam. 3:18,19. I said my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord; remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. And if you would know what made their cup so bitter, that they fainted under it, you may see ver. 42. We have transgressed, and have rebelled, thou hast not pardoned. But when our sins are pardoned, that will help us to bear afflictions cheerfully, Isa. 33:24. The Inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the People that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Matth. 9:2. They

brought unto him a man sick of the Palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the Palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee. Sickness is a great affliction; and this man was so sick that he kept his bed, yet Christ bids him be of good cheer, because his sins were forgiven him, before he speaks one word of removing his sickness. A man that is in a justified estate, may triumph and glory in his greatest troubles, Rom. 5:1,3. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:—And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also. —

5. If we would be prepared for a suffering condition, we must acquaint ourselves with, and cleave and adhere to the death and sufferings of Christ, and labor to understand and get an interest in the imputed righteousness of Christ. Christ's righteousness is one of the main Pillars our Souls have to lean upon, for our support under all our troubles; Isa. 41:10. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Our chiefest strength lieth in our right hand, and when God calleth his righteousness, his right hand; it may imply, that Christ's Righteousness (which is oft called the Righteousness of God, as Rom. 1:17, Rom. 3:22,23.) is the chief and principal means for the strengthening and upholding of our souls. David found great support in all his troubles, by looking to this righteousness, Psal. 71:16. I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy Righteousness, even of thine only. It is recorded of the servants of God, mentioned in the Revelation, who went through great tribulations, that they were carried through their sufferings by looking and adhering to the sufferings of Christ, Rev. 7:14. These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their Robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 12:11. They overcame (that is, the Devil who raised up persecutions against

them, as you may see, ver. 17.) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their Testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.

6. Let us get good evidences, that we are in the love and favor of God. Well-grounded apprehensions of God's love to our souls, will help us to bear up cheerfully under the greatest trials, as Persecution, Sword, Famine, &c. and enable us to overcome them all, Rom. 8:35,37. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us. The apprehensions of God's love to us, will cause us to love God, 1 Joh. 5:19. We love him, because he first loved us. And when we love God, we shall bear anything that comes from him. Love to men will make us bear with all things that we meet with from them. The Apostle speaking of love, saith, It beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, 1 Cor. 13:7. How much more will love to God, cause us to bear and endure all things that we meet with from God? Love will carry us out to suffer all afflictions, even death itself, Cant. 8:6,7. Love is strong as death,—Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. When it was a time of great affliction with the people of God, they pray hard for the light of God's countenance; and if they could but obtain that, they would account themselves in a safe and happy condition, notwithstanding all their troubles, Psal. 80:4-7. O Lord God of Hosts, How long wilt thou be angry with the Prayers of thy People? Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure; Thou makest us a strife unto our Neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves. Turn us again, O God of Hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

7. We must get and keep God's presence with our souls, that will fortify our souls to undergo any troubles with courage and cheerfulness, Psal. 23:4. Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Isa. 50:7,8. The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed: He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? Psal. 46:2. We will not fear though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be cast into the midst of the Sea, —And why? What put such courage into them? They had God's presence with them, ver. 5,7. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early; the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. This upheld Christ, and carried him comfortably through all his sufferings, (who went through greater sufferings than ever any man met with all) Act. 2:25,26. I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved; therefore did mine heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope. As God's presence with Christ upheld him, so it will also uphold us in all our sufferings. If any say, It is true, God's presence with a man will help him to do great things; but God is departed from me, How shall I gain his presence again? I answer, God's departing from us usually ariseth from our departing from him; and if after we are departed from him, and he is departed from us, we return to him, he will return again unto us, Zech. 1:3. Turn unto me saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts. Mal. 3:7. Even from the days of your Fathers, ye are gone away from mine Ordinances, and have not kept them; return unto me, and I will turn unto you saith the Lord of Hosts. After we are returned to God, and he is returned to us, if we keep with him, he will keep with us, 2 Chron.

15:2. The Lord is with you, while ye be with him. Joh. 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you.

8. We must get our hearts weaned from the world; if our affections be set inordinately on any earthly things, we shall find it an hard matter to bear up under our afflictions, Jer. 45:3. Thou didst say, Woe is me now; for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow, I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest: And what caused Baruch to faint under his trials? We may see the root of his distemper, ver. 5. Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. Though Baruch was a good man, his affections were carried out too much after great things in the world, and that made affliction very burdensome to him. The Apostle Paul who was crucified to the world, was prepared and ready to suffer whatever God should call him to, Gal. 6:14. The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Acts 21:13. I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Lord Jesus. We must not only set loose to all worldly things, but to our own lives also; when we are willing to yield up our lives to God, we shall not be much moved by any troubles that come upon us for the Lord's sake, Acts 20:23,24. The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself. Rev. 12:11. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their Testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.

9. We must accustom ourselves to bear our lesser trials with patience and submission to the will of God, and that will fit and prepare us for greater. There is scarce a day passeth over our heads, wherein the Lord doth not in one kind or another, try our patience and submission to his will; now the right bearing of those crosses which every day bringeth forth, would fit us for greater trials, Lam. 3:27. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his

youth. If we would know what good cometh by an early accustoming ourselves to bear the cross, the following verses show, that it will make man patient and silent under his sufferings, ver. 28. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath born it upon him. It will make a man suffer humbly, ver. 29. He putteth his mouth in the dust —It maketh him suffer willingly, ver. 30. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him. Our Lord Jesus exhorts us to take up our cross daily, Luk. 9:23. He said unto them, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. If we did practice this counsel; if we did every day expect crosses, and quietly submit ourselves under such crosses as every day bringeth forth; if we could but deny ourselves, and resign up our wills unto God's will, this would prepare us to undergo any trial that the Lord shall see meet to lay upon us.

10. A well-grounded hope of eternal life, will help us to bear all the troubles of this life cheerfully. A Christian that hath good hope through grace, that he shall go to Heaven when he dieth, may by virtue of this hope rejoice and glory in the midst of his greatest tribulations, Rom. 5:2,3. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God,—we glory in tribulations. It was this carried Moses through all the difficulties he met with in leaving Pharaoh's Court, in wandering among the Israelites by the space of forty years in the Wilderness, Heb. 11:24-26. By faith, Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's Daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. The hope of the reward that he should have in heaven, caused him to make light both of the good and evil things of this world. Hope of salvation is like an helmet,

which is of great use for our preservation, 1 Thess. 5:8.— putting on for an helmet the hope of salvation. Hope is of the same use to the soul in afflictions, that the Anchor is to the Ship in a storm, which keeps it from perishing by being driven upon the Rocks or Sands, Heb. 6:19. Which hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil. Therefore if we would prepare ourselves for afflictions, we must get a solid and well-grounded hope of eternal life.

11. Let us consider what it is which we have found in our own experience, hath made our yoke heavy; and also what we have observed either in reading, or by discourse, hath made the yoke of affliction heavy and hard to be borne by others, and let us take care to prevent those things: As for instance. 1. We may observe, that the want of God's presence in the time of affliction, hath made affliction very burdensome and hard to be born, 1 Sam. 28:15. I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more. When Saul's Enemies came against him, and God was departed, this put him into such distress, that he knew not what to do. When God withdrew from Job in his affliction, the want of God's presence made his affliction very bitter, Job 23:2,8,9. Even today is my complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning: Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him. When David was in trouble, he tells God, if he did hide his face from him, he should be like a dead man, Psal. 143:7. Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Therefore it is our wisdom to do what in us lieth to get and keep God's presence with our souls, as was hinted before. 2. A galled and guilty Conscience. When David was under

the sense of guilt in the time of his sickness, it was such a burden, that he was ready to sink under it, Psal. 38:3,4. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sins; for mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. 3. When we promise ourselves a settled course of prosperity, and do not look for trouble, this makes affliction dreadful and terrible, Isa. 64:3. Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for. Psal. 30:6,7. In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved,—thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled. 4. When we have not learnt to deny ourselves, and to resign and to submit our wills unto the Will of God. It is very irksome to self-willed persons, and such as abound with self-love to meet with crosses; Our Lord Jesus exhorts us to deny ourselves, before he exhorts us to take up our cross, Mar. 8:34. Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross: which implies that no man can bear affliction with a cheerful contented mind, but such as have learnt to deny themselves. 5. When God doth not only withdraw his presence (of which I spoke before) but showeth himself terrible to us in an evil day, this maketh affliction very irksome to the soul. This the Prophet prayeth against, Jer. 17:17. Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil. This made the calamity of the Jews exceeding heavy, and hard to be born, that God set himself against them in the time of trouble, Lam. 3:3,7. Surely against me is he turned—he hath made my chain heavy.

12. Treasure up in your hearts the promises of God which relate to an afflicted condition. It is a great help to the bearing of affliction, to be well acquainted with the promises that God hath made to his people that are in an afflicted condition. David found great comfort from God's promises in his afflictions, Psal. 119:49,50. Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon

which thou hast caused me to hope, this is my comfort in mine affliction. When he met with such hard trials that he stood astonished to see how God dealt with him, he was filled with joy when he called to mind the promise of God, Psal. 60:3,6. Thou hast shown thy people hard things, thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment; God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice. He telleth us elsewhere, if it had not been for the comfort that he found in God's word, he had perished in his afflictions, Psal. 119:92. Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. It was by the help of the word of truth that the Apostle went through his manifold troubles with great patience, 2 Cor. 6:4-7. Now there are variety of promises which do relate to an afflicted condition, which may be of great use to us in our afflictions, which we shall do well to store up against an evil day. I will mention some of them.

1. God hath promised to moderate our afflictions, and to lay no more upon us than he will enable us to bear, 1 Cor. 10:13. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Isa. 27:8. In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind, in the day of his East wind. Jer. 15:11. The Lord said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction. This promise is added after the mentioning of God's unalterable purpose to send four sore Judgments upon the Jews, Death, the Sword, Famine, and Captivity, ver. 1,2. So also after mention of a time of trouble, such as there had not been the like, God comforts his people with his promise, that he would not correct them out of measure, though he suffered them to partake of the

common calamity, Jer. 30:7,10,11. Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble —Yet the Lord encourageth Jacob not to be afraid, Fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel—for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee, though I make a full end of all Nations, whether I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

2. God hath promised us his presence in our afflictions, Psal. 91:15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble. Isa. 43:1,2. But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not—When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. This promise hath dependence on the last verse, where the Prophet telleth us, what calamities were come upon Israel, He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle; and it hath set him on fire roundabout —and then addeth, but now, thus saith the Lord—Fear not—When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee —God would not have his people fear any trouble, because he will be with them in all their troubles, in one as well as another; and that not only when they first enter into them, but till they are safely passed through all the troubles of this life.

3. God hath promised to strengthen, and support, and uphold us in all our troubles: I have mentioned several promises to this purpose already, as Joel 3:15,16, Isa. 41:10. I will add two or three more, Nah. 1:7. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him. Psal. 37:39,40. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their

strength in time of trouble: And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them because they put their trust in him. Isa. 41:14. Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer the Holy One of Israel: see also Isa. 25:4.

4. God hath promised to comfort and revive our souls when we are in affliction, Psal. 138:7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. Mic. 7:8. When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. Psal. 71:20,21. Thou which hast shewn me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth, thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. Isa. 66:13. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. Joh. 14:18. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.

5. God hath promised to sanctify our afflictions, and he hath promised they shall purge out our sins, and make us more holy, and shall be all of them so blessed unto us, that they shall work together for our good, Isa. 27:9. By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away their sin. Zech. 13:9. I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined —Rom. 8:28. We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

6. God hath promised in due time to deliver us out of all our afflictions, 1 Pet. 5:6. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Job 5:19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. Psal. 34:19. Many are the afflictions of

the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. God hath promised when he seeth it to be most for our good, and for his own glory to preserve us from afflictions, Psal. 121:7. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, he shall preserve thy soul. Psal. 32:7. Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance: but when he doth not preserve us from trouble, he hath promised to deliver us out of trouble, Psal. 50:15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

SECT. 13.

13. Endeavor to demean yourselves in such sort towards God, that you may prevail with him to continue still to watch over, and preserve both your persons, houses, and substance. If you ask what you should do that you may engage the Lord to continue his preservation of your persons and substance. I answer;

1. Walk in the fear of the Lord, and serve him with an upright and sincere heart. Satan saith of Job, who was an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil, Job 1:9,10. Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and increased his substance in the land. Prov. 2:7.— He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. Psal. 84:11. The Lord God is a Sun and Shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly. Protection from evils is a good thing, if you walk uprightly with God he will not with-hold his protecting providence from you; but as he hath been, so he still will be your shield.

2. Shew mercy to the Poor, and do good with your Estates, that is the way to have them preserved, Psal. 41:1,2. Blessed is he that considereth the

poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble; the Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies.

3. Love the Lord for preserving you hitherto, and thereby you shall be preserved still, Psal. 145:20. The Lord preserveth all them that love him. Psal. 91:14. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him.

4. You must not preserve any of your sins from destruction, if you would have God preserve your persons and substance; for God threatens to destroy both the persons and the substance of such as live wicked and ungodly lives, Job 15:20,21,29. The wicked man travelleth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor: A dreadful sound is in his ears, in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him. He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue; neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth. Zophar speaking of a man that spares his sins, and will not forsake them, among other Judgments mentioneth this, that God will not spare, but will destroy such a man's substance, Job 20:12-15,26,28. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again; God shall cast them out of his belly—All darkness shall be hid in his secret places, a fire not blown shall consume him—The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath. If this merciful providence of God, will not prevail with you to cast away your sins; your continuing in your sins, will cause God to cast away your substance, Prov. 10:3. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish, but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

5. Commit yourselves and your substance into the hands of the Lord, and trust in God who hath graciously preserved you hitherto, to preserve you

and all that belongeth unto you for the time to come. There is no better way to engage God to help us, than to commit ourselves to him, and to put our trust in him, Prov. 29:25. Who so putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. Psal. 17:7. Shew thy marvelous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand, them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them. Psal. 10:14. The poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. Psal. 5:11. Let all those that put their trust in thee, rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them. Psal. 22:4. Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. Dan. 6:23. Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

Now in regard that trusting in God availeth much towards our preservation, I shall mention three or four considerations that may encourage you to trust in God for preservation of your persons and substance, at such times as you apprehend yourselves to be in greatest danger of suffering either in your Persons or Estates.

1. Consider how solicitous and careful God is of your welfare, 1 Pet. 5:7. He careth for you. You are as dear to him as the apple of his eye, Zech. 2:8. He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. He is so careful of your welfare, that he giveth all his Angels a charge concerning you, to pitch their tents about your dwellings, and to take the care of you wherever you go, and to deal tenderly with you, to carry you in their arms, that you may be preserved from being hurt either by evil Angels, or evil Men, Psal. 91:11,12. He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Psal. 34:7. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Besides the charge that God giveth his

Angels to look after his people, he himself taketh a special care of them, the Lord himself is their keeper, and watcheth over them both by night and by day, Psal. 121:4,5. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep; the Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. Isa. 27:3. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. His eyes are always upon his people, to behold their dangers, that he may send them relief and deliverance in due season, 2 Chron. 16:9. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them, whose heart is perfect towards him. His hand is always stretched out for their defense, Deut. 33:27. The eternal God is thy refuge, underneath are the everlasting arms. The Lord is so tender of you, that he doth as it were lay you in his bosom, Isa. 40:11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather his lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.

2. This care of God for his people's welfare extendeth not only to some, but to every one of his servants, Deut. 33:3. All his Saints are in thine hand. Psal. 145:20. The Lord preserveth all them that love him. The meanest of all God's servants is of more value than many Sparrows; yet there is not so much as one Sparrow forgotten of God, Luk. 12:6,7. Are not five Sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Surely then there is not the meanest of all God's servants, which is forgotten of the Lord.

3. God is not only careful of his people's persons, but of their substance and habitations, Psal. 16:5. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. Job 1:10. Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? When you are afraid your houses should be fired, or any other evil should

befall your habitations, think on such Scriptures as these, wherein God hath engaged himself to preserve your habitations in safety, Psal. 91:10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. Prov. 1:33. Whoso hearkeneth unto me, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. Isa. 4:5,6. The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defense, and there shall be a Tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain. Prov. 12:7. The house of the righteous shall stand.

4. The preservation which God hath promised to his people, is not limited to this or that particular evil, or to any period of time; but it extendeth to all sorts of evils, and to all times. He hath promised to preserve them from all evils, Psal. 121. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil —Psal. 91:10. There shall no evil befall thee —Job 5:19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. And as this preservation is not limited in respect of evils, so neither in respect of time; he hath not promised to preserve them for a time, and then give over his care of them, but he hath promised them preservation all their days, Psal. 121:8. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore. Psal. 125:2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even forever. Isa. 46:3,4. Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age, I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you. If any say, notwithstanding these promises of

preservation, we see the servants of God do oftentimes fall into many troubles as well as other men, how then can these promises be any encouragement to us to trust in God? I answer, 1. We must rely on the promises of God, when his providence seemeth to run cross to his promise, Rom. 4:18. Who against hope, believed in hope—according to that which was spoken —Job 13:15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. 2. When God doth not preserve his servants from trouble, he doth them good by their troubles; he fulfils that promise, Psal. 85:12. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good. Now oftentimes it is good for the people of God to fall into affliction, Psal. 119:71. Wherefore we may with much freedom and satisfaction commit ourselves to God in our greatest dangers upon this account, that he will make all our troubles work for our good, when he doth not preserve us from trouble.

SECT. 14.

14. Take heed to yourselves, and to your ways; that you do not provoke the Lord to send anymore such mighty and dreadful Fires as this late Fire was: What counsel our Lord Jesus gave the man that was made whole of his infirmity, Joh. 5:14. Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee; the same may be seasonable to such as have escaped this late Fire: sin no more, lest a worse thing than what befell those that were sufferers by this Fire, come unto you. Pharaoh, though he was exceedingly hardened in his sins, yet when there had been great thunder and lightning, was so affrighted at it, that he calls to Moses and Aaron, and desireth them to pray for him, that there might be no more mighty thundering's; and promiseth also to let Israel go (which was the sin for which God contended with him) Exod. 9:27,28. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked: Intreat the Lord (for it is

enough) that there be no more mighty thundering's and hail, and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. If we be not more hardened than Pharaoh was, this dreadful Fire should put us upon confessing our sins to God, and reforming our lives, and cause us to take heed that we do not provoke the Lord to send anymore such mighty Fires amongst us.

If any say, What should we do that we may not have any more such dreadful Fires break out amongst us? I answer;

1. If we would have no more such dreadful Fires, we must make a good use of this Fire, so as to be led to repentance by it; for if we be not reformed by this Judgment, we may well expect that God will follow us with more Judgments, Lev. 26:21-24. If ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins: And if ye will not be reformed by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. How we should make a good use of this Fire, is shewn at large in the second Question; and although the directions given therein, do chiefly respect such as have been sufferers by the said Fire, there are several things hinted, that may direct others also as well as the sufferers, how to make a good use of this Judgment.

2. We must seek unto God with prayers and tears, that he would send no more such dreadful Fires. When God contended with the Israelites by Fire, by the Prayer of Amos, this Judgment was removed, Amos 7:4-6. Thus hath the Lord God shown unto me, and behold, the Lord God called to contend by Fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part: Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee, by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? The Lord repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God. So also by the Prayer of Moses, the Fire was stayed among the Israelites, when

God had kindled a great burning amongst them because of their murmurings, Num. 11:1,2. When the people complained, it displeased the Lord; and the Lord heard it: and his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the Camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched. Prayers and tears are very prevalent with God for preventing and removing of personal and national Judgments, Joel 2:17,18. Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar; and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach—Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. When the sentence of death was passed upon Hezekiah, by his prayers and his tears he prevailed with God to prolong his life for the space of fifteen years, Isa. 38:5. I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

3. If we would have God cease from sending anymore such dreadful Fires, we must cease from those sins which did provoke God to send this sore Judgment. Until the cause of a Judgment be removed, we can have but little hope it should cease. (What sins they are that provoke God to send this dreadful Judgment of Fire hath been shewn before, Quest. 2. Sect. 4.) If we cease from our sins, and return unto God, we may hope and expect that God will cease from his mighty Judgments, Mal. 3:7,11,12. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts—And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes—And all Nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delight some land. After Judea had been wasted with Fire and Sword, the Lord promiseth, if they would cease from their sins, he would remove his Judgments, Isa. 1:7,16-19,26. Your Cities are burnt with Fire,—cease to do evil, learn to do well.—If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall

eat the good of the Land.—And I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Counselors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The City of Righteousness, the faithful City.

4. If we would have no more such dreadful Fires, we must labor to pacify God's anger that is kindled against us. The mighty Judgments of God that have fallen upon us, viz. the Sword, the great Pestilence, and this dreadful Fire, are tokens of great wrath against this Nation; and we may fear, in regard there is so little reformation, that notwithstanding all that is come upon us, the anger of the Lord is not turned away, but that his hand is stretched out still, as it is said three times of Israel, after mentioning great and sore Judgment, For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still, Isa. 9:12,17,21. Wherefore we must endeavor to pacify and turn away the Lord's anger, else we may expect that the same Judgments will return, or some others, as dreadful as any of these, will fall upon us. Now if you ask, How shall we get God's anger turned away from the Nation? I shall instance only in these two means.

1. God's chosen ones must get into the gap, and cry mightily to God in the Name of Jesus Christ, that he would turn away his fierce anger that is kindled against us. The Prayers of impenitent sinners cannot prevail with God to turn from his wrath, but the Prayers of his Saints and Servants will cause him to lay aside his anger, Psal. 106:23. He said, he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them. Jer. 18:20.— Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them. What Prayers the servants of God put up to God in the Name of Jesus Christ, are presented by the Lord Jesus unto his Father, Heb. 7:25. Rev. 8:3, and when the Lord Jesus intercedes with his Father for the turning away of

his wrath from a Nation, or a particular person, his request shall certainly be granted, Zech. 1:12,13. The Angel of the Lord, said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the Cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the Lord answered the Angel that talked with me, with good words, and comfortable words: and presently after comes tidings of the ceasing of God's wrath, and his returning with mercy to Jerusalem, ver. 16,17. Thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies,—My Cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad, and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

2. We must everyone turn from his evil ways, and turn unto the Lord with all our hearts, and then his wrath shall be turned away from us, Jonah 3:8,9. — Let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands; who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not. Hos. 14:1,4. O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity: and when Israel did return at the call of God, hear what God saith unto him, ver. 4. I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him. Jer. 3:12. Return thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever.

5. If we would have God cease from sending anymore such dreadful Fires, we must set our faith on work on the blood of Christ, and on the Promises of God. It was the blood of the Sacrifice that made atonement under the law, both for particular persons, and for the whole Congregation of Israel, Lev. 17:11.— It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. And as the blood of the Sacrifice made atonement for particular

persons, so also for the whole Congregation of Israel, Lev. 4:13-20. These Sacrifices did type out the blood of Christ, and signified to us, that faith in Christ's blood is the way to procure an atonement for our souls, and to render God propitious after he hath been provoked to anger by our sins, Rom. 3:25.— Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood —This blood of Christ is available to make atonement for whole Nations as well as particular persons, Isa. 52:15. He shall sprinkle many Nations —And as we should set our faith on work upon Christ's blood; so also on God's promises. If you ask what promises? I answer, such Promises wherein God hath promised to cease his Judgments after he hath for a long time been sorely contending with a people. We have divers promises to this purpose, I will mention some of them, Lam. 4:22. The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O Daughter of Zion, he will no more carry thee away into captivity, he will visit thine Iniquity, O Daughter of Edom, he will discover thy sins. Nah. 1:12. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. Isa. 51:21-23. Hear now this thou afflicted and drunken, but not with wine; Thus saith the Lord, the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, yea even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee. —Isa. 60:18. Violence shall no more be heard in thy Land, wasting nor destruction within thy Borders; but thou shalt call thy Walls, salvation; and thy Gates, praise. Isa. 57:16. I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirits should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. Zeph. 3:15. The Lord hath taken away thy Judgments, he hath cast out thine Enemy, the King of Israel, even the Lord is in the midst of thee, thou shalt not see evil anymore. Faith is of great force for preventing and removing of

National Judgments, and the procuring of National Mercies, Heb. 11:32,34. Who through faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of Fire, escaped the edge of the Sword; out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the Armies of aliens. We may see here what great things have been done by faith; it hath subdued Kingdoms, it hath vanquished and put to flight great and puissant Armies; it hath prevailed against the sorest of Judgments, as Fire, Sword, wild Beasts, &c. By Faith and Prayer, we may even, as it were, hold God's hands from destroying a Nation, when they are lifted up to destroy a sinful people, Exod. 32:9,10. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great Nation. Though the Lord was exceedingly provoked against Israel, yet by the Faith and Prayer of Moses, his hands were held that he did not destroy them. Moses takes hold of the Covenant, and pleads that in Prayer, and thereby prevailed with God to turn from his wrath, and to repent of the evil that he thought to do unto the people of Israel, ver. 11-14. The Lord stir up the like Spirit of Faith and Prayer in his Servants in this Nation, that they that make mention of the Name of the Lord, may never hold their peace day nor night, but may cry mightily to the Lord, and give him no rest, until they have prevailed with him, through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, to turn from the fierceness of his anger, and to cease contending with us by his mighty Judgments, and until he establish and make us a praise in the Earth.

FINIS.