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Living Truths

I N

D Y I N G T I M E S :

S O M E

M E D I T A T I O N S

(Upon *Luk.* 21. 30.)

Occasioned by the present
Judgement of the

P L A G U E.

By T H O M A S B L A K E.

Isa. 26. 21. For behold the Lord cometh out
of his place to punish the inhabitants of the
earth for their iniquity, &c.

Exod. 9. 13. Let my people go, that they may
serve me.

Isa. 27. 7. Hath he smitten him, as he smote
those that smote him ? &c.

London, Printed Anno Dom. 1665.

1850

1851

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To all that love our Lord
Jesus in sincerity, peace
be multiplyed.



*I*t is a law of Cu-
stomes making, to
usher in, what-
soever is made
publike, by an E-
pistle : That which invites me
to this general Dedication , is
that of the Apostle in 1 Cor.
3. 21, 22. All things are
yours , whether Paul, or
Apollos , or Cephas : The
abilities of the Saints are in-
tended for the benefit of the
Saints, and those of a lower as
well as of a higher Orbe ; he

that hath but one Talent, it is given him for the edification of the body, as well as he that hath ten; and therefore I am willing to cast my Mite into your Treasury. Such who are taught of God, are also taught to bear with whatever weakness may discover it self in the following Treatise. If you will be at the pains to look it over, you will find (I hope) truth useful, though in a plain and homely dress; Milk, rather than meat for Strong men; and though but Milk, yet my hope is, It will be *ἄδολον γάλα*, sincere Milk, as Peters expression is, 1 Pet. 2. 2. I have not at all endeavored to make things acceptable by flourishes of Wit and Learning, being

The Epistle.

being perswaded, that that fire
in which the Lords people
have bin held, now some years,
hath purged you from the dross
of nice and curious appetites :
My design through the whole
is, to help you a little through
the distresses of the present day,
and after that to present you
without blame in the day of
Christ : I think I may say be-
fore the searcher of hearts,
my designs in this undertaking
have been upright, and as far
as I am able to judge, I have
been drawn to this Publication
by the over-ruling hand of the
Lord, in as much as such a
thing was never in my
thoughts, untill eight parts of
ten of this little Treatise were
fini-

The Epistle.

finished. The day in which we live, is a scattering day; and as the sad providences of the day drew me to consider the Text which I have enlarged upon, so the scatterings of poor souls, and the remembrance of absent friends, whose faces I have not long seen (into whose hands what I have written will I hope fall) hath much engaged me to send it abroad. Into what hand soever it shall come, whether Saint or sinner, the Lord, who supplyeth seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater, bless this seed, and make it useful to its intended ends, as is the prayer of

Tho. Blake.



LIVING TRUTHS IN DYING TIMES.

Some Meditations upon this Text,

Luk. 21. 36.

Watch therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.



UR Lord Jesus in this Chapter, is laying down some certain fore-runners of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and of his own coming: He is answering that question, which you will find the Disciples put to him, what the signs should

B be,

LIVING THINGS

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be, and what should be the fore-runners of the destruction of *Jerusalem*; and also what should precede his own appearance and coming; and he tells them that there should be providences very amazing and dreadful, that should be the Antecedents of both: So it is expressed in the 25, 26. verses, *And there shall be signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and upon the earth distress, and distress not limited and confined to a little corner only, but distress of Nations; and the distress of Nations should have this effect, Mens hearts should fail them for fear, and for looking at the things that were coming on.*

Now considering those things that were to come to pass, our Lord subjoins a serious and weighty piece of counsel for the directing of his own poor disciples, what they were to do, and how they were to carry it; that ye have in the words I have read, *Watch ye, &c.* In which words you have these three things observable, among others.

1. Dreadful things supposed, and that you have in that expression, *These things*

things that shall come to pass; that is, these wonderful, amazing and tremendous providences that I have hinted to you.

2. You have a double duty imposed and given in charge, to the poor Disciples of Christ, and that is, Watchfulness and Prayer; well, saith he, watch ye and pray, I (saith he) and pray always; not always in every time, that is not the meaning; but pray always in every season (as the originall word is properly to be understood) pray in every season, be as much at it as you can; get to it in every opportunity you can meet with, and follow the work closely.

And then 3. You have a double end proposed, to which these duties are a means; and that is, first, The escaping the shock and weight of these dreadful providences; And secondly, after that, the being enabled to *stand before the Son of man*: For truly that is that we are to have a look unto, and not onely to fix the eye upon and be anxious about present Dispensations, and the weathering through such a storm, but how to *stand before the Son of man*, which

will be more weighty, and a greater and other kind of thing, than any present providence can be; it will have more of terror in it than any present providences can possibly have. There are abundance of excellent truths would flow from this Scripture; I shall content my self to collect four or five, which I conceive to be the especial design of our Lord Jesus in these words, and that (through Grace) may be especially useful to your souls.

1. Then from hence I would commend to you this truth, that there are certain times and seasons, in which dreadful things, sad providences must unavoidably break in upon the world: this I gather thus, *All these things that shall come to pass*: as if he should have said, There are sad things, there are providences very grievous, such as shall make the heart to ake, and trembling to possess the spirits of most men upon the face of the earth; yet saith he, they are such as must come to pass, if all the Angels in heaven stood up to prevent the breaking in of these providences; there is an unavoidable necessity of it, come they must.

2. I would note, that in and under these dreadful providences, the God of heaven is especially thoughtful for, and careful about his own people; when he thrusts these providences into the world, I say the Lord is especially thoughtful of and careful about his own people; this I suppose also to be fairly gathered from this Scripture, *Watch ye and pray* (saith he) *that you may escape these things*: As if he should have said, My brethren, my poor disciples with whom my heart is, and for whose weal and welfare, I am greatly ingaged; it is true, sad things must be in the world, but I would take a little care of you, and stand by you, and be a help to you by what means I may, that you may ride safe in and through that storm; and when the world shall be in a flame, and every corner of it full of trouble, I would that things might then go well with you, and your weal might go forward notwithstanding: that is the second.

3. But note this, that the escaping of common calamity, it is a great honor and great mercy, and that that gracious hearts ought to put out earnestly

for. I gather this note thus, that it is a great honor, a great mercy, from that expression, *That ye may be accounted worthy to escape*; I tell you souls, those that God thus in a way of mercy shelters and preserves, and carries through days of evil and times of common calamity, it is a mark of honor that God puts on them; and it is a mercy also that gracious souls should make after, and put themselves forward for the attaining of; that I gather thus, *Watch ye and pray always*, make out after this mercy, put out earnestly for it: look not upon it as an indifferent thing, whether you escape or not, but look upon it as a mercy worth the seeking after; that is a third thing that lyeth plainly in the words.

Again 4. Note, that watchfulness and prayer are the necessary mediums, the proper means, at least a part, and great part of the proper means, to which we are directed for preservation in times of common calamity.

5. And then one thing more I would also recommend to you from these words, and that is this, that it is not the escaping common calamities only,
that

that we are to be solicitous about, but also, and above all, and more especially, how we may after all stand before the Son of man; &c. Alas my brethren, what if God should satisfie and assure you or me, and tell you from heaven, you shall survive, and out-live the distresses of your day; but yet when this is done, and you are past this storm, you must stand before the judgement-seat of Christ, every soul must appear at that great Tribunal, from which there is no exemption by any means whatever: and the presence and glory, the dread and majesty of that day is more, and another kind of thing, then any dispensation upon earth can be supposed to be; therefore how to hold up the head and stand with comfort at such a time, is the great thing that we are especially to be solicitous about, and that which our souls should be making out the hardest after.

Now I confess the two latter of these notes will be most spiritual, and that that the soul and its concernments lye most in; and therefore I shall be much the shorter in the three former, though it is requisite to spend sometime

on them, considering the dispensations of God at this day. I shall begin with the first, and shall be brief in the speaking unto it, *viz.* That some dreadful providence must break in upon the world; there are times and seasons when dreadful things must come upon the earth, such as shall sink the souls of many of the inhabitants of the earth: and there is a threefold reason of it.

1. Because God hath spoken it, and he must not be a lyer; he is true, therefore what he hath said must come to pass. I tell you, though it were the razing up the foundations of the earth, or the most dreadful evil that the heart of man can imagine, if God have said it, his word must stand; that must be effected, rather than any reflection should be upon the truth and faithfulness of God; therefore saith our Lord Jesus in *Luk. 21. 33.* *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away:* God stands so much upon his word, that he will not give any on earth occasion to reflect upon him as unfaithful and wanting in his truth; not the least Iota or tittle of the Lords
word

word shall fail, but shall be fulfilled to every letter of it; and therefore *Mat. 25. 18.* it is thus written, *I say to you, Until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, untill all be fulfilled.* The Law is taken here in a comprehensive sence, for the whole book of Scripture; and heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one tittle of the mind and will of God that he hath revealed, shall be made void, but shall stand and be accomplished: and it is sufficiently bound and confirmed, in that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. You shall find in Scripture that God stands greatly upon his word: what he speaketh touching a particular people or person, he will be sure to accomplish it, whether it be good or evil; and therefore in *Gen. 18.* it is said of *Abraham*, that he will command his children to keep the way of the Lord, &c. that he may bring upon *Abraham* that which he hath spoken of him in *verse 19.* as if he should have said, God hath spoken a great deal of good concerning *Abraham*; now having spoken it, he must bring it to pass. Truly God hath been

been wont to do so, he is accustomed to it, he is used to confirm his word unto his servants, and to do to them according to what word is gone out of his mouth; and therefore when discreet *Abigail* comes to plead with *David* that he should not take revenge upon *Nabal*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 30. she tells him, that when the Lord should have done according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning him, it should then be a grief to him that he had shed blood causelessly; she concludes that God would do *David* good as he had spoken: And it is as if she should have said, I know the word of God having gone forth, he will do good unto *David* according as he hath said: And therefore you shall find *David* doth wonderfully rejoyce in a word from God; if God do but speak it, *David* is comforted. *Psal.* 60. *David* is in the beginning of the *Psalms* under some kind of diffidence and distrust, and a little discouraged; but in *vers.* 6. God hath spoken (saith he) in his holiness, and I will rejoyce: Why, saith he, it is true, my condition is sad; it was a time when *David* was in distress and trouble,

trouble: but now God hath spoken, and given me a word that it shall go well with me; and in that I am satisfied, in that I can bear up my heart, I will rejoyce. *I will divide Sechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth: Judah is mine, &c.* so when God hath spoken a word to a people, he will make it good: hence is that of *Balaam, Numb. 23. 19.* You know he was sent to curse *Israel*, but instead thereof he blest them, and speaketh good to them; and wherefore did he do it? Why, saith he, God hath spoken good of *Israel*, and that he will do; so that what God speaketh, he stands upon his word to have it accomplished. Secondly, when he speaks evil against a people, that must be accomplished: God hath spoken evil against *Babylon, Jer. 51. 62. verse to the end,* And what, must it be accomplished? Yea it must; and as a sign that what he had spoken should be confirmed, *It shall be,* saith the Lord there, *that when thou hast made an end of reading this book, thou shalt binde a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates; she shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her; I have not spoken evil onely,*

onely, but I will bring evil upon her ; and as a sign for confirmation of this, the book was to be cast into the River *Euphrates* , and so should God cast her down, that she should never rise more. So take for confirmation of this, *Jer.* 32. 24. God had threatned evil against *Jerusalem*, that the *Caldeans* should come and fight against it , and take it ; and what then? behold the mounts, they are come unto the City to take it, and that that God hath spoken is come to pass, and thou seest it, thy eyes behold; the thing the Lord hath spoken and threatned, it is come to pass : that is the first reason what God hath spoken must come to pass , and God hath spoken dreadful things , that sad judgements shall break in upon the world, the vials of the wrath of God shall be poured forth , and in this Chapter he hath said distress of Nations shall be ; and having determined it, it shall be accomplished.

2. It must be to stain the pride of all glory (and so I suppose where that expression is, that I shall turn you to by and by, the Spirit of God intends) the staining the pride of all glory is the let-
ting

ting us see the vanity and emptyness of all the glory in the world, and whatever we are apt to be taken with: now for the letting us see the emptiness of it, the Lord must introduce sad providences upon the world, nothing else will do it: Alas, where the Gospel of Christ is, God hath been preaching it a great while; we have been told of the excellency of God, and of Communion with him, & the excellency of spiritual things; but who is sufficiently affected with their excellencies, and the emptiness of the things of this world! and if this way will not do it, God will go another way to work, and will cause judgement to break in, and that will cause him that hath honor to see how little that is worth, and they that have the riches of this world, to see how little they are worth; the judgements of God knock off our fingers from these things, they open our eyes and possess us throughly with a sense of the vanity of all these things. That is a full Scripture that you have to this purpose, *Isa. 23. 9. The Lord of hosts hath purposed it to stain the pride of all glory, &c.* Now for opening this Scripture, and
 letting

letting you see how it is to my present purpose, give me leave to take up a little time, and I desire you to consider two things in this Text, that I may let you see how it is to my present purpose.

First, Consider who are the honorable that God will bring into contempt.

And secondly, By what means God will bring contempt upon them: and when I have done this, you will find that the judgements of God are Gods great ways and means to stain the pride of all glory.

1. Consider, who this was spoken unto, it was to the City *Tyre*, the burthen of *Tyre*; well, and what was the glory of this City? There are divers things that were its glory.

First of all, it was a City, that was part of its glory; and so it is called once and again in this Chapter, as at *vers. 7. Is this your joyous City?*

Secondly, It was a City in an Island, therefore of more then ordinary strength, and some peculiar excellency it had upon that accompt; and that it was upon an Island, is plain from *v. 2. Be*

still

still ye inhabitants of the Isles ; he speaks still to Tyrus: and so at *vers. 6.* Howl ye inhabitants of the Isle ; he speaks still to this City Tyrus.

Thirdly, It was an ancient City, so you see at *vers. 7.* *Is this your joyous City, whose antiquity is of ancient days?* that was a part of its glory and honor; the antiquity of it could plead its Charter for a long time.

Fourthly, A great trading City, that you have at *vers. 3.* *The harvest of the River is her revenue, and she is a mart of Nations,* with which the Nations of the world come and trade, whither they come from all parts of the world: well, that is a fourth part of her glory.

Fifthly, It was a very rich City, which is excellently expressed at *vers. 8.* *Who hath taken this counsel against the crowning City;* mark the expression by which it is called, *The crowning City;* the meaning of the expression is this, *Tyre* it is such a City that it crowns her Merchants, makes them Princes, rich and mighty ones in the world; her Merchants are Princes, and her traffickers the honorable ones of the earth, as is
after

after expressed ; she fills them with treasure, and makes them admired in the world ; now this was the glory that the Spirit of God here speaks that he would stain, to be a City, a City in an Island, an ancient City, a great trading City, and a rich crowning City ; this was *Tyres* great glory, and yet this the Lord purposed to stain. But now

2. How will God do it ? You will find it must be by judgement, *Howl ye ships of Tarshish, for it is laid waste,* vers. 1.

That is the way to shew men the emptiness of the things of this world, and to bring them out of conceit with them ; and therefore in *vers. 8. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre,* that is, of laying it waste, who hath such purpose ? Oh, saith he in *vers. 9. The Lord hath purposed it :* this little word *It* hath a strong reference to the 8. and 1. *vers. Who hath taken this counsel, &c.* that is, the Lord hath done it, and *who hath laid it waste ?* it is the Lord hath done it, he hath purposed to bring judgement, and to lay waste, and so to stain the pride of their glory.

Thus you see that this Text is full to my purpose, that the judgements of
God

God are needful in order to the staining the pride of the world. Thus also in the case of *Nebuchadnezzar* in *Dan. 4.* What was it that humbled the heart of that man? It was the judgments of God did it; he comes in a proud spirit, more like a God than man, and in the pride of his heart he swells exceeding, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built? &c. vers. 30.* Well, but what course doth God take to humble him? Why in *vers. 31.* while the word was in his mouth, he was took from men, and turned to graze among the beasts; this was Gods way to stain the pride of *Nebuchadnezzar*, to bring him down in a way of judgement, the like we never read or heard of; and you find when his seven years were accomplished, then he comes and adores God in a calm spirit, and gives glory to him; the man was cooled and humbled, and it was this dreadful stroke upon him that did it. Take one Scripture more, and that you have in *Isa. 2.* you may peruse the whole Chapter, and you shall there see how the judgments of God are designed to humble men, but particularly at *vers. 17.* And

the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, &c. Now how shall this be brought to pass? look back to *vers. 12.* and there he tells you, *The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, &c.* the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon him, that is, the day of Gods indignation, of his judgements, the day of his breaking forth in great displeasure, that shall bring them down: We poor creatures, a little thing lifteth us up, but it must be a great thing must bring us down, it must be the day of the Lord of hosts; he that commands the Armies of heaven and earth, he that commands the Armies of Angels, and sends them out to do execution; he that commands judgements: they are his hosts, the creatures are his hosts, and the Angels are his hosts; he sets the sword to work, and the pestilence to work; and by fighting against them with these hosts, he humbles them, and brings them down, and layeth the heart of the haughty and lofty low; and so in the *19, 20, 21. verses,* *They shall go into the holes of the rocks, &c.* What is it makes them do it? *It is for fear of*
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the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth; then all men they throw away their Idols. Oh that we might all throw away our idols! have we made the world, riches, honors, pleasures, our idols? Oh it is time to throw them to the Owls and to the Bats; it is fit for them onely to live upon such things as these are: when God comes forth thus in judgement, then they shall throw their idols to the Owls and to the Bats; and why so? it is because they shall then be convinced of the vanity and emptiness of these things. That is my second reason why such providences must be, it is to stain the pride of all glory; God hath reserved himself no other way to do it for ought we know, and the heart of man will not be brought down at any cheaper rate: Alas, the great men of the world they think they may do as they please, but when God comes thundering with his judgements, he makes them to tremble, and confess that they are but as other men.

But then one reason more why such such things must come to pass in

their time and season, why it must be.

3. To vindicate Gods holiness, that there may not be a reproach left upon the God of heaven, as if he were pleased with the sin and wickedness of an evil generation. With reverence be it spoken, the God of heaven hath no other way to vindicate his holiness, but by the execution of these judgements of his; I say that is the Lords way: do but mark how the wicked of the world do sometimes challenge God to shew himself in his judgements, if he be a holy God; and therefore God is constrained to do it. In *Mal. 2. 17.* *You have wearyed God with your words, and wherein? even when you say every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, or where is the God of judgement?* Wicked men they say that God loves men that walk wickedly; and though we sin, he loves us never the worse: why if he do not love the workers of iniquity, where is the God of judgement? If our evil doings displease him, why doth he not execute judgement? why doth he not let us see his displeasure? God may say in his word what

he will, wicked men will not understand that; They better understand the language of his judgements, and therefore if he be not the God of evil, and do hate all iniquity, why doth he not shew it by his judgements? Now I say God is put upon this, he is constrained to vindicate his own holiness by his judgement: *Because sentence against an evil-work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil, Eccl. 8. 11.* The meaning of the Text is plainly this, because wicked men are not punished in ways of sin, say they, we may live as wickedly as we will, for ought we see, we shall fare as well as those that are more precise: This is the desperate wickedness of the heart, but God will make known himself by his judgements, and thereby he will take off this reproach; and therefore that is a notable place *Psalms. 9. 16.* I think you have not this word *Higgaion Selah* above once more in the Scripture; this *Higgaion* doth import, Consider, Meditate upon this: why what is it we should take such notice of? why it is this, *The Lord is known by the judge-*

ments that he executes, that is, God is known by his judgements, in his holiness, in his purity, and it is that that sets him forth in the glory of his attributes; when God brings judgement on the wicked, then they must confess that God is a holy God: and therefore take that Scripture more, where you have this confirmed, *Psal. 58. 9, 10. Before your pots can feel the thornes*; it is a metaphorical expression, and I suppose the meaning is this, before the thornes or any other combustible matter put under the pot can heat it, that is, in a very little time, God shall take away the wicked: what shall be the effect of this? *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, and a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth*: See what effect Gods judgements have, that a meer man that hath not any thing of grace in his soul, shall be forced to say that there is a reward for the righteous. They that say, Where is the God of judgement? when God comes forth in ways of judgement, he will make them change their note, and say, There is a
 God

God that doth righteously. Now here you have my reasons why God will bring great judgements upon the world, having spoken it, as also to stain the pride of all flesh, and lastly to vindicate his own holiness.

Now we will try a little how this may be improved, what use we may make of it: truly I think it may inform us of some such things as these.

1. If it be thus that dismal providences must come into the world, that God hath spoken of it, and given warning of it; then what a stupid sottish thing is a carnal heart, that will not believe it untill he feels it! I say, such is the stupidity of a carnal heart, that it will not believe it untill he feels it; this we find oft in Scripture, *Psal. 50. 21. These things thou hast done* (speaking about a great many miscarriages of wicked men) *and I kept silence*, saith God; and what then? thou thoughtest that I liked all thy wickedness very well; but saith God, *I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thee*; I, and consider it you that forget God! You do not think what I am, untill I come

to tear you in pieces : consider it you that forget God; consider his holiness, his purity, his truth, his faithfulness in his threatening, for saith God, I am coming to tear you in pieces, I am coming with providences that will awaken you: So 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4. This is the hardness, the sottishness of wicked men, they are saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* and who is the God of judgement? they would believe that all things continue as they were; they will not consider it until the judgement of God breaks forth among them. That is the first inference, what a stupid sottish thing is a carnal heart.

Again 2. It may inform us farther of the desperate estate of sinners that are not awakened with the judgements of God that are begun; such there are in the world, that though God be come forth in a way of judgement, and have begun to do what he hath spoken; yet they do little consider it. Indeed many sinners before judgements are begun, do hope they will never begin, & they feed themselves much with such fancies: much such a people you read of in Ezek. 11. 2. *It is not near, let us build*

build houses, &c. there were a people there, that the Prophet had threatned grievous things against. Well, what say they? why if these things shall come, they are a great way off; and though they come, it is not like that it will be in our days; and so hardened themselves against the judgements of the Lord that were to come upon them: So that *Amos 6. 3. Ye put far away the evil day,* and perswade your selves that things are like to go well enough, and that judgements were a great way off, if they should ever come; and therefore the Lord directs the Prophet in his message, *Ezek. 12. 22. Son of man, what is that proverb? &c.* Usually God did in Scripture give some time between threatning and execution, and what effect had this? Why the days are prolonged, say they, and every vision faileth: Judgements did not come presently, therefore they minded them not; and therefore saith God, *I will cause this proverb to cease; the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision; judgement shall come: and yet such is the security of mens hearts, they would first secure themselves that judgements should*

should not begin ; and when they are begun , they are not much minded : doubtless this is great carnal security , therefore *Amos 3. 8. The lion hath roared, who would not fear ? I will at least allude to it ; when the Lion doth roar, when God is come out in the way of his judgements, who would not fear ? it is a great evil to be of a stupid spirit under the judgements of God. I shall here a little , before I leave this head, shew first when souls are not affected with the judgements of God : And secondly , whence it is that they are not affected.*

1. When souls are not affected with the judgements of God , it is when they do not hear and consider what providences they lie under, *Isa. 26. 11. When thy hand is lifted up they will not see ; they go on in their own course, and do not so much as consider that there is a fire kindled, and a fire that may burn very far , and do dreadful things.*

2. Again secondly, The heart is not affected, when it doth not inquire into the ground of the controversie : we are not onely to speak of the judgement

ment it self, but we are to inquire into the ground of the controversie: when *Israel* fled before the men of *Ai*, *Joshua* he fell on his face to inquire what the matter was, what the ground of this controversie was. How many are there in this great City that do not say, What have I done? wherefore doth God do this!

3. When men do not endeavour to set things right; when they do not labor to find out what is the controversie, and having found it out, compose the breach that is between the Lord and his people, *Jer. 8. 6. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented of his evil way, saying, What have I done?* they spake not aright; why pray when do a people speak aright in time of judgement? saith he, *No man repented of his wickedness, &c.* observe it: What is a right spirit in a day of judgement? It is to be saying, What have I done? to say, What hath the Nation done, is a duty, and What have others done, but especially to say, What have I done? and wherein have I contributed to the evil of the day? Nay and this inquiring spirit is
not

not all, but there must be a reforming spirit; he must turn from his course, and leave the trade of sin that he was wont to drive; thus is it when we are not affected with the judgements of God. And whence is it? it is from ten causes.

1. From secret hope it may go well with them: and I tell you, for the most part, wicked men are apt to think themselves most secure: *Amos 9. 10.* You read there of a strange spirit; they were sinners, a wicked people, and yet saith he, *They say the evil shall not overtake nor prevent us:* but saith God, *The sinners of my people shall dye by the sword, I shall meet with them;* that is the purpose and determination of God.

2. They do not consider the dread that there is in the judgement of God: I found a poor soul speaking of this judgement lately, saying, What should we fear? we must all dye, and of what should we be afraid? but I fear such souls that can look upon things of such moment so slightly, hardly know what dying means, *Psal. 2. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way;*
when

when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him; a little of the wrath of God is dreadful: God is very terrible in his judgements, though wicked men do not minde it, *Psal. 66. 3.* Say unto the Lord, How terrible art thou in all thy works? In thy works of judgement how terrible art thou? the judgements of God would make men bow, but they do not consider the dread of them, untill they are under them; the servants of God they do melt under them, and have a sence of them, not a dread and fear that discomposeth the soul, and puts it by its duty, but such as is an awful sence, *Psal. 52. 5, 6.* Observe what a mixture there is in the spirit of a Saint under Gods judgements: Gods judgements as they are revelations of his righteousness, making good his threatnings, working out his glory; so the righteous laughs, but yet he fears too: There is a holy dread and awe upon his soul when he seeth how much of majesty shines forth in them: Yea hypocrites are brought to fear because of Gods judgements sometimes; but now they that do not see what dread there is in them.

them, they are not affected. *Isa. 26.* *When the judgements of God are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants thereof shall learn righteousness,* that is, the good inhabitants of the earth shall do so: mercy doth not any good to the wicked, nor will judgement, because they mind not the majesty of the Lord, therefore they are not affected: that is a second inference.

3. If it be thus that sad judgements must break in upon the world, then how miserable will the wicked of the world be? Truly they fall under a double misery; miserable first, in that they shall have the greatest part of present judgement. Secondly, In that they shall have an eternity of misery hereafter. Miserable in that they shall have the greater part of present judgement: Mind that *Isa. 33. 13, 14.* *Hear ye that are afar off what I have done, and you that are near acknowledge my might: The sinners in Sion are afraid, &c.* mark, as if he should say, Men at length begin to consider: Oh present judgements are sad, *You that are near acknowledge my might:* you see much of terror is in present judgements; but if such be terrible,

rible, what will an after-judgement be? what will devouring fire be? therefore take heed where your lot is cast, and among what sort of men you are.

4. What should sinners do? will such judgements break in upon the world? what should sinners do? they should come and submit to Christ. Be any of you sinners? I tell you dreadful things will be upon the world; whether they be now begun or no, I cannot tell you; but such there shall be; and what will you do? your work is to come and close with Christ; the second *Psalm* is worth your reading an hundred times over, he tells you what he will do with the wicked, he will break them in pieces, he will scatter them; Well, what then? Oh, *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry*, come bow before him (for that kiss is a kiss of subjection) it is a dreadful thing to meet with an angry Christ: He is a Lamb, and he is a Lion; he is a Lamb slain, and come but and kiss him, and he will be a Lamb slain to you; if not, he will be the Lion of the tribe of *Judah*, to tear you in pieces. *Now knowing*, saith the Apostle

Apostle, *the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; we persuade them, to what? why we beseech you to come and submit to Jesus Christ; that is that that we pray of you, and that we are earnest with you for: and one text more I would give you to this purpose, Isa. 28. 14, 15, 16. Take the sence of this text, and you shall see it much to my purpose: God was coming forth in dreadful judgements, but the wicked of the world they think to secure themselves: How? When the over-flowing scourge shall pass over, it shall not come nigh to us: Why not? why, We have compounded with death, and with hell are we at agreement. I but saith the Spirit of God, take a little of my advice; do not give trust and confidence to your own ways, But, saith he, I have laid in Sion a chief corner-stone, and trust to that: this is the meaning of it; do not talk of your agreeing with Death, and compounding with hell, but to go to Christ, to the foundation that I have set and laid for you to build upon for your safety & security. Will you ask your heart how it is with you? Have you built on this foundation-stone? if you have, that is the way*

way not to be ashamed; he that believeth shall not be confounded.

5. Must such judgements break in upon the world? it should teach us and direct us in praying with respect to present judgements, and that thus: we cannot absolutely or peremptorily beg that present judgements might be stayed, but with this reserve, that provided it be not the time, when God is coming forth with his great work in the world; if it be not that time, that God would stay his hand; and also if God do purpose to do dreadful things in the land, that he would make them serve the designs of his glory, and for the furtherance of those things which he hath to do in the world: but I say absolutely we may not (I think) beg of God that he would remove such a judgement; beg that he would preserve his people, and do them good by it, and if it be not the beginning of what he hath said himself shall come to pass, then that he would divert it and stay his hand.

6. If God be coming forth in judgements, and such terrible ones too, how good is it to be a Saint, and to be found

in a right spirit in the day when God contends and comes out with his indignation against the world? I tell thee, if thou art a Saint, and that in a right spirit; it will be well with thee in the day that God contends. And thus I have dispatched the first Doctrine, namely, that dreadful providences must come upon the world: and having done with this, I pass on to the second note from the words,

2. Namely, that when God doth come forth with these dreadful dispensations, he is especially thoughtful for and careful about the weal and welfare of his own people. He doth not hurl his judgements into the world at all adventures, carelessly and inconsiderately, not caring where they light; but his eye is much upon, and his care much after his own people: He hath a great respect to them in all that he doth in the world.

1. In prosecution of this truth, I shall first confirm it to you, that in publike calamities, God is very mindful of his people, and his heart is much to them.

And

And 2. Give you the Reasons of it, and then make a little Application.

But first of all, for confirmation of the truth, it is evident from two or three things, that the Lord doth take a special care of his people in days and times of common calamity: It is evident from what he hath done in such seasons in times past; you shall scarce find a common calamity recorded in the book of God, but you shall find some care taken of his people: therefore though there is a true sence in that word, that *all things come alike to all*, I say a sence that hath a truth in it, yet this is also true, that God hath a care of his people in all the common calamities that ever come upon the world: Thus it was when God came to sweep away a whole world, was there none to be thought of? nobody to be remembered? yes, there was a *Noah* that God could not forget, *Gen. 6.13, 14.* *Noah* might say, What, the end of all flesh? what shall become of me then? what shall I do when all flesh is destroyed? Why, saith God, *Noah*, make thee an Ark, *ver. 14.* I will not so destroy all flesh, but I

will remember thee *Noah*, and therefore make thee an Ark; and saith God to him in *vers. 18. With thee I will establish my covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy sons wives with thee.* Thus it was in the destruction of *Sodom*, God came with resolution to destroy that place, *Gen. 19. 12, 13.* Great provocations call for great desolation; dreadful judgements are the necessary consequents of great preceding iniquities: but *Lot* he must be taken care of, and a shelter and refuge must be provided for him. Thus in the land of *Egypt*, when the Lord sent his Plagues amongst them, ye this very judgement of the Plague I believe that was the judgement, and I will give you a Scripture to prove it; the threatning was, he would destroy all the first-born of *Pharaoh*, *Exod. 11. 5, 6, 7.* Now the question is what judgement it was that he did destroy the first-born of *Egypt* by; I think it was the Plague, and that that confirms me in my thoughts of it, is that *Amos 4. 10.* where he saith, *I have sent among you the Pestilence after the manner of Egypt:* Now I do not know any
time

time when God did send the Pestilence into *Egypt*, unless when he destroyed the first-born; and yet at that time when he did destroy the first-born of all the house of *Egypt*, the Lord took care of his people, *Israel* must be preserved, not a dog must move the tongue against any of them. *Gen. 42.* when there was a famine in *Canaan*, yea a famine in all lands, and a great scarcity grew over the face of the Land of *Egypt*; yet *Jacob* and his children must be provided for, and God must look after them, and he bids them go down to *Egypt*; and you find how they were there fed; God had by a signal providence sent *Joseph* before hand, as he saith himself, to save *Jacob* and his family alive. *Jeremiah* in the time of captivity, and great destruction, what must become of him? must he perish with the rest? No, saith God, I will deliver thee in that day, *Jer. 39. 17, 18.*

Now this is my first argument to confirm this general truth, that in times of common calamity, God takes an especial care of his people, as is evident from what he hath done.

2. From the promise of what he will do ; he makes special promises to his people of what he will do in such seasons, *Psal. 91. 9, 10. Because thou hast made the most High thy refuge, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy dwelling : Souls that are Saints, and Saints in a right spirit, here is a promise, a singular special promise made to them ; and so you have it in Isa. 38. Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord : By the way observe, God takes notice what we say, as well as what we do : well, what now? is Jerusalem fallen, and Judah ruined? what shall become of the Saints then? why saith God, Say unto the righteous, It shall be well with them, vers. 10. 11. Jerusalem it is true is ruined, but why? why, say to the wicked it shall be ill with them, but unto the righteous it shall be well with them, Isa. 25. 21. Behold, the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity : Doth he so? what then? what will he do unto his people? why if you look vers. 20. Come, saith he, my people, enter*

ter into your chambers, and shut the doors about you, hide your self for a little moment, untill mine indignation be over-past. I am coming to punish the world for their iniquity; but my people I have a word for your comfort, I will find retiring Chambers for you; *Hide your self*, saith he, *for a little moment, untill mine indignation be over-passed:* So *Joel. 3. 16.* He shall roar out of Sion, &c. the Lord will work for his people, and do his people good; he will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of *Israel*: Therefore this is my second argument, God makes special promises to his people, therefore, he will take special care of them.

3. He gives special counsel and direction to them what to do in order to their preservation in times of common calamity.

There are three parts of counsel that the Lord gives to his people in such seasons, and he directs them sometimes to one of these things, and sometimes to another, according as he thinks good in himself; sometimes he calls his people out of the places that shall be the seats of his judgements: he did

so in the case of *Sodom*: and it is worth your considering that you have *Luk.* 21. 20, 21. *When you shall see Jerusalem compassed with Armies, know the desolation thereof is nigh; that shall be a sign to you, that I am coming against it with a desolating judgement: Well, what then must be done? Let them that are in Judah flye to the mountain, and let them that are in the City depart out, and let not them that are in the Countries enter thereinto.* This was his counsel at that time; and thus God doth sometimes: he calleth some out of the places by the method of his providence, he tells them his will, and brings them out of the seat of his judgements.

2. He calls all in all times in, order to preservation, from closing with and cleaving to the sins of the places which are to be judged, and for which he judgeth and condemneth; that one known Text may serve in stead of many, *Rev.* 18. 4. *Come out of her my people (that is, out o' Babylon) and be ye separate, partake not of her sins, lest ye also partake of her plagues; sin as sinners do, and you must expect to suffer as they do.*

3. He

3. He doth direct his people to some special duties that have an especial tendency to preservation, sometimes to faith, to trust in, and dependance upon the Lord; and sometimes to prayer and watchfulness, as here in my Text: to some such special duties, that have an especial use in order to the preservation of a people from destroying and ruining calamities. Thus, I say, put these things together, what God hath done, what he hath promised to do, what counsel he gives unto his people, in respect to common calamities, they are evident tokens of love to his people in times of distresse: But now what is the reason? wherefore is it that God should especially be careful of his people in days of great distress and trouble? I answer, he doth it for two or three reasons.

1. For the love he bears them, and the interest that he hath in them; he hath an interest in his people, they are neer unto him in a neer relation, and he hath great love to them; therefore it is he especially bears an eye to his people, and looks after them, that things may go well with them in the days of evil;

evil; some Scriptures you have to this purpose: That *Jer. 30. 10, 11. Fear not, O my servant Jacob, &c.* though, saith God, I make a full end of other Nations and people, I will save thee. Truly one might have replied to the Lord as *Judas* did (not *Iscaiot*) And why us Lord, and why not the world? Because thou art *Jacob* my servant, thou art *Israel* a people that I have interest in, therefore I will look after thee, and shew kindness unto thee; I will do it for that reason: and add to this, that *Jer. 43. 4.* Observe here, *I will give men for thee, and people for thy life.* What is the meaning of that? I will let my wrath and rage vent it self upon the world, but I will spare my people: Why so? I have loved them, therefore I will give men for them; hundreds of men God will give for his people, they are near the heart of God, therefore he is pleased to exercise this peculiar kindness to them.

2. He doth it because of the preciousness and worth that is in them; not that a Saint by nature is better then others, but through grace he is become a choice and precious one; and because

cause of the worth, choiceness, and excellency of a gracious soul, God loves him: The Saint is an excellent piece; The righteous is more excellent then his neighbor: It may be the righteous man is in a poor low condition in the world, & his neighbor a great rich man, abounding in the things of this world, and yet for all that the righteous is more excellent then his neighbor. God hath a great care of his people, and that because they are precious, *Isa. 43. 4.* *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee;* therefore others shall dye, and thou shalt be saved: Why? namely, because thou art precious in my sight, I see a worth in thee, and an excellency in thee, and therefore others shall go for thee; they shall perish, but thou shalt be preserved. In *Psal. 116. 15.* *David* hath an expression to this purpose, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints;* and the *Psalmist* gives this as a reason why the Lord did preserve him when time was, saith he, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints. Psal. 72. 14.* You have a Scripture something of like
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nature, Precious shall their blood be in his sight.

3. But one reason more, Why the Lord in common calamities is especially careful of his people, it is because they trust God with themselves, they charge God with them, and God will be faithful to his charge; he will not betray his trust, he is the hope of his people. So Jer. 14. 8. *Oh thou the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble*: So Jer. 17. 16, 17. *As for me, I have not hastened from being a Pastor to follow thee, nor have I desired the woful day; be not a terror unto me, Thou art my hope in the day of evil*: Oh saith the Lord, think upon me, I desire to be faithful unto thee, to mind thee in thy work, and follow thee in thy way; and I have not desired the evil day, thou knowest, that that came out of my lips was right before thee, and thou art my hope: Mind it, this was the reason why God did give *Jeremiah* a special preservation; it was because he made the Lord his trust, Jer. 39. 18. *For I will surely deliver thee, &c.* thou hast committed the keeping thy self unto me, therefore I will be good

good to thee, and I will preserve thee. It is worth the thinking of, that the Lord doth it because his people trust in him. Thus much for confirmation of the point, and the Reasons of it.

Object. But you will say, If this be a truth, this may be objected, *If the Lord chuse to have a particular respect unto his people in times of common calamity, how comes it to pass that any of his people should fall in such a dispensation, as we sometimes see they do?*

To that I answer, There are these reasons why, notwithstanding Gods special care of his people in common calamities, some of them do fall therein: it is for one or more of these reasons usually.

1. It is sometimes through unbelief; God keeps them while they trust him, but when their trust fails, then the promise fails, and God is not a security to them: it is sometimes through unbelief; so we find it in the case of *Israels* going to *Canaan*; there were abundance fell in the wilderness, and truly among those that fell we may think there were some upright ones that had grace in their hearts, but
yet

yet they distrusted God, they thought the journey was long and tedious, and the way was difficult, therefore they fell in the wilderness, it was because of their unbelief: *By whom was he grieved forty years in the wilderness? Was it not by them whose carcases fell in the wilderness? To whom he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest,* Heb. 3. 17, 18, 19. And why entered they not? because of unbelief: So it is in this case, God makes special promises of preservation; but when the faith of his people failes, sometimes God suffers them to lose the fruit of the promise.

2. When his people sin as the world doth, then he causeth them to taste of judgement with the world; when they keep not clear from the sin for which God contends, he suffers them to fall in and by the judgements wherewith he contends: So in that of the *Revelations, Partake not of her sins, lest you partake of her plagues*: in which words you have a promise and a threatning; promise, if you do not partake of her sin, then you shall not suffer with her; but if you do, you may expect to share
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with her in judgement : and therefore you find *Moses* a choice servant, and he suffered in the wilderness as well as the rest ; and it was because he sinned as they did that dyed in the wilderness, *Numb. 27. 12.* Why might he not go into *Canaan* ? VVhy, saith he, *For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, &c.* You rebelled when the Congregation rebelled, and therefore for that reason, although it was the one time that *Moses* did miscarry in his way towards *Canaan*, and yet for joyning with the people in that one sin of murmuring, he was cut short of *Canaan* : and so it is in cases of common calamity, if we sin with the world, we may be led to suffer with the world. Therefore by the way, make this your care, Touch not with the abominations of the Day in which you live, for which you may conclude God contends ; rather suffer any thing in the world, then put your self under the stroke of God, by doing any thing against him ; and say not it is a little sin, because *Moses* sinning but once with the people, he fell with them in the wilderness.

3. It is sometimes for want of making use of the means that the Lord hath appointed for preservation. It is not good to sin against the use of means: God doth great things, but he doth use to tye us to the use of means: *Naaman* he came to the Prophet, and the Prophet bids him go to *Jordan*, and wash seven times, and he should be whole. Now he was vexed at this, and why would not other waters do as well? but his servants encouraged him to use the means the Prophet had prescribed; and if he had not, he might have gone a Leaper to his grave. So Christ he takes clay and spittle, and anoints the eyes of the blind man therewith, and bids him go wash in the waters of *Siloam*, and he should receive his sight: Now the neglect of the means the Lord is pleased to provide for us, is enough to make us fall by the publike and common stroke. The children of *Israel*, as you read, *Acts 7. 25*. When *Moses* was full forty years old, he supposed that they would have understood he was to have been their Saviour, and that they would have taken hold of him for their deliverance

verance at that time ; but they did not see the means proposed , and did not make use of it , and what followed ? you shall find it was forty years after before he returned unto them again , as you may see at *vers. 30.* This is plain , that *Moses* did offer himself to them at that time , as a deliverer appointed by God , but they not see it , and make use of it , and therefore they continued in their bondage forty years more. I quote this , to tell you that you ought to look up unto the Lord for what means he doth allow , for the communication of that mercy that we wait for , and by his providence he seems to point out to us : That the neglect hereof may be the occasion of our falling.

4. God doth sometimes suffer Saints to fall by common strokes , to prevent some greater evils , as you have it *Isa. 57.* *The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart , and merciful men are taken away , none considering that they are taken away from the evil to come.* Truly God sometimes takes away his people in the beginning of a calamity , and that because there are more dreadful

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things behind ; and that because he would preserve them from that evil, he is pleased to suffer them to fall.

And these may serve as an account why notwithstanding Gods peculiar and singular care of his people, he suffers sometimes some of them to fall in and by publike calamities.

And thus I have dispatched the Doctrinal part of this truth , and I shall conclude what I have more to say to it in a little Application.

Is this true , that God doth in a peculiar way in times of publick calamity look after his people ?

1. Surely then it should stir up all that have any mercy of this kind, to give the Lord the glory of his goodness, and speak good of his name, that he is pleased thus to bear a hand upon his own people.

2. The Lord taking this care for his people , you ought to serve him in the making use of any thing that he prescribes you in order to self-preservation, to wait upon the Lord in watchfulness and prayer ; and whatever means he doth direct you unto , in order to preservation : As the life of a
Saint

Saint is precious in his eyes, so should it be in yours, and whatever God looks upon as a mercy worth the bestowing, you should look upon as worth the receiving: Ah souls! let me tell you, the judgements of God they are no slight things, but things that carry a great deal of dread along with them, and it is eminent kindness (as I hope to shew you hereafter) to be safeguarded at such times and under such providences.

3. If it be thus, that God in calamity takes a singular care of his people, you also should take singular care to glorifie God, and answer his providence and designe in and under common calamities: Ever mark this, in whatever thing God shews kindness unto his people, they also stand much ingaged to shew kindness unto God, as I may with reverence phrase it, that is, that they be careful to honor him. But you will say, How are we to carry it in such a day?

Why for answer, First of all study the judgement well; when the hand of God is abroad, do not slight it, do not make light of it, but see that it is

Gods hand, and his hand in a more then ordinary way ; labor to see and be affected with that majesty that shines forth in it : *David* saith, *My flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of all thy judgements*, Psal. 119. 120. He did not look upon the judgements of God with a slight spirit, but did see much of the glory of God shining therein.

2. You are much to study your own hearts ; such dealings of God without you, do call upon you to be looking within you , to be considering the frame of your souls ; it calls upon you loudly to be finding out the plague of your own heart, *1 King. 8. 38.* Every man is to study his own heart, to labor to know that , and see the sinfulness, vileness, and wretchedness of that. I tell you souls, the judgements of God that are abroad are not things of an empty sound, but they do speak powerfully and plainly , and are loud calls of God unto you, that you should make it your business and the design of your souls, to be more acquainted with your selves then ever.

3. He

3. He calls to you to mourn over your own and others abominations, *Ezek. 9. 4.* The spirit of God speaks of them that mourn, sigh and weep, for the abominations of the wicked; that is it that the God of heaven calls for at your hands.

And then lastly, if this be a truth, that the Lord bears a special eye of favour to his people in the day of their calamity, then let every soul of you pass into the number of Saints.

There are three sorts of persons in the world, and but one of the three that can promise themselves safety in a day of evil. 1. Openly prophane. 2. Secret hypocrites; And 3. real Saints: and of the three, it is but the latter sort that can promise themselves any security.

1. Of the openly prophane, what shall come of them? *Isa. 3. 11.* *Wo to the wicked, it shall go ill with them, for the reward of their hands shall be given them.*

2. As for the secret hypocrites, what shall become of them? things shall go ill enough with them also, as you have it in the prophecy of *Isaiah, The sin-*

ners in Sion are afraid, and fear hath surprised the hypocrite, and who can dwell in everlasting burnings?

But 3. The Saints they are the people that shall have the especial kindness of God over them; they are the people that God will look after; and therefore I recommend this to you, to make it your business to see that there be something of God in you in truth, and that you may be found in a spirit suiting the providences of this day, and then the Lord may make you partakers of this special mercy of being preserved in the time of common calamity.

Which leads me to the third Doctrine, namely, That it is a great honor and an especial mercy, and that that Saints should put out earnestly for, to be preserved and kept in times of common calamity.

In treating of which, I shall endeavour distinctly to confirm these three things. 1. That it is a great honor. 2. A great mercy. 3. That the Saints should put out hard for preservation in a time of common calamity.

For the first therefore, that it is a great honor to be preserved, when God cometh forth with desolating judgement : Methinks that Scripture carrieth much of weight in it, that you have *Gen. 6. 8.* *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord :* What is that? *Noah* found favour in the eyes of God; that is, he was a man that became a favorite of God; he was one honored in the Court of heaven. It is the known signification of the term in our common language, such a one finds grace in the sight of his Prince, that is, he is his favourite, and he is honored by him : So *Noah*, he was one that God put an honor upon ; and what was the honor? it was to make him a preserved one in the time of that common calamity. It may appear if we consider three things, that it is a great honor to be preserved in a desolating calamity.

I. If you consider this, That usually such as the Lord preserves, they are such upon whom there are some marks of honor found, or (mind what I add more) if any other be preserved, it is for the sake of them upon whom something is found very honorable and

worthy. I shall clear up this from many instances, that there is some excellent thing found in and upon those whom the Lord usually preserves in a desolating judgement; and my first instance is that of *Noah*, and you shall find something in him very honorable and commendable: *Noah* found favor with God, and what was the reason that he should be marked by God for this special favour? If you look *Gen. 5. 9.* you shall find that *Noah* was a just man and perfect in his generation, and he walked with God: You must bear with me if I take up a little time in insisting upon this, that I may shew you the design I have herein.

There were three excellent things found upon *Noah*, upon which account God marked him out for the man that should be preserved from this deluge.

I. He was a just man, an upright, sincere, single-hearted man; he was a man that did in the truth of his soul follow God, which is an admirable thing: Hypocrisie and guile is one of the most dishonorable things under heaven; I tell you souls, a hypocritical pro-

professor is worse then a downright sinner, and so the Lord himself accounts him, *Psal. 51. 6. Thou desirest truth in the inward part, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to understand wisdom*; thou art, saith *David*, for simplicity, for sincerity and integrity; that is a thing that takes much with the heart of God. Hypocrisie is one of the worst things, and hath one of the saddest issues and consequences in the world, and therefore hypocrites they are said to heap up wrath, in *Job 36. 13. Hypocrites in heart they heap up wrath*: This juggling and false-heartedness is a most displeasing thing to God, and is of most wretched consequence, for they shall not onely fall under wrath, but under heaps of wrath, that are found in this frame; they shall have the indignation of God heaped upon them: now I conclude on the other hand, sincerity is a thing of great worth, and this was found upon *Noah*.

2. He was a perfect man in his generation; that is thus, he was perfect in the sight of men among whom he lived and conversed; he was such, and so walked, that none about him could
tell

tell how to accuse him ; he was a man that gave them no just offence, nor laid a stone of stumbling before those that lived about him: the world (as wicked as it was) could not say that he gave them any ill example, but he was upright in that wicked world ; now this is a very honorable thing : I tell you many professors do profession more hurt then good, and it were well they were out of it, for they carry it so wickedly and basely, that they harden the hearts of sinners, and make them think ill of the ways of God: but it is an excellent thing so to carry it, that they may be good examples : is not this Christs command? *Mat. 5. 16. Let your light so shine, as that others seeing your good works, may glorifie your Father which is in heaven: carry it so in the world, as that you may incourage all, and discourage none, that is the meaning of it, that you may not be a hinderance unto any in their closing with and giving up themselves unto God. Paul that servant of the Lord injoynd the same thing, 1 Cor. 10. 32. Give none offence neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor to the Church of God; carry it*

it so, that you may not justly cast a stone of stumbling in their way ; this was found in *Noah*, and was a thing very honorable in him, and it is commended in others in that *Luk. 1.* and the beginning: it was the commendation of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, that they walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless, as you have it in *ver. 6.* Observe what is commended in these two persons, what marks of honor were upon them, they were righteous before God ; a righteousness they had, that was so in Gods account; and in their walking before men they were blameless, as to commandments and ordinances. Mark this text, there is a great fault in many in the world ; two sorts of people especially are to blame by vertue of this Text : some walk in commandments, but are not for ordinances ; and some in ordinances, and not in commandments : whereas it is the glory of a people to walk both in commandments and in ordinances : my meaning is, the carrying of it so in the worship of God, and in your conversations also among men, that they may not have just occasion of offence. Now
this

this was found upon *Noah*, he was just in his generation.

And the other thing is this, *And Noah walked with God*, that is the third honorable character upon *Noah*, *He walked with God*: What is that? truly I think walking with God is the having friendship and acquaintance with God: Can two walk together unless they be agreed? saith *Amos*, 3. 3. *Noah* he had friendship and acquaintance with God, and therefore he could walk with him, he could keep company with him: in walking together we have the company of one another; this had *Noah*, he was in Gods way, he kept in his way. Also the having and maintaining peace and communion with God, is intended in this walking with God. We are apt to account it a great happiness to have friendship with great men; surely it is much more and a great deal better to have communion with the God of heaven; to have it and keep it, is the great glory of a Christian. This *Noah* had, and it was greatly his honor: Saith 1 *John* 1. 3. *Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*; as if he should have said,

said, Brethren, we are a people interested in choice and excellent mercies, and we would invite you to a part in them; but pray what is this choice mercy? Why it is this, *We have fellowship with the Father through his Son Jesus Christ*: A great honor to the souls that have it; and these were the honorable marks upon this *Noah*: Now he was the man that God pickt out to deliver and keep in this common calamity when all the world was drowned, he and those that went upon his score (for his family was taken in upon this account) they must be preserved: and that is my first instance.

My second is the instance of *Lot*, a man preserved in a common calamity, and a few others for his sake: Well, was there any honorable Character found upon him? Yes, there was, look *2 Pet. 2. 6. 7. He delivered just Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.* Here is the honorable Character found upon *Lot*: He was just *Lot*, and just *Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked*: I shall onely a little insist upon that clause, *Vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.*

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The sin of the world was a burthen to his soul, and that that he could hardly bear up under: You shall find that is an excellent frame, and that that God is pleased much to honor: saith *David*, *Psal.* 139. 21. *Do I not hate them that hate thee? and am I not grieved with them that rise up against thee?* Oh, saith he, Lord, thou knowest my heart, and thou knowest that there is something in me that thou prizest, that is his meaning; now what is it? Why, saith he, they that grieve God, they grieve me too; they that carry it so as that they are a burthen to the Spirit of Grace, they are also a burthen to my spirit, I cannot bear it: And hence he cryeth out in *Psal.* 120. 5. *Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar;* that is, that I dwell among a wicked ungodly people, a people whereby God is greatly dishonored; wo is me that my lot is cast among such a people: This was the honorable character found upon *Lot*, he was grieved with the filthy conversation of the wicked, therefore God markes him out, and would not suffer him to fall by that judgement.

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My next instance is, that of *Caleb* and *Joshua*, upon them were also some marks of honor, upon *Caleb* especially, *Numb. 14. 24.* But my servant *Caleb*, because he had another spirit, and hath followed me fully, &c. Here was *Caleb's* mercy, his going into *Canaan*, and the honor put upon him, was his not falling in the wilderness among the many thousands that fell, but he must go into the good land.

His honorable characters were these two. First, he was a man of another spirit. Secondly, He had followed God fully.

1. He was a man of another spirit, of a more excellent spirit than the rest of *Israel*: I, let me tell you, a man of a more excellent spirit than some of the worthies of *Israel*: To have some excellency of spirit, is one of the most excellent things in the world; a man is truly excellent according to the excellence of his spirit, and that was found upon *Caleb*. *Moses* was a man of a very good spirit, yet (it seems) *Caleb* was of a more excellent spirit than he. I say, *Moses* was a man of a very good spirit, *Num. 12. 3.* Now the man *Moses*.

was

was very meek above all the men on the face of the earth; he had great meekness of spirit, which is one of the most excellent spirits in the world: See what testimony God gives of such in that 1 Pet. 3.4. *The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* Now, I say, *Moses* he had this excellence of a meek spirit, and yet it seems *Caleb* had some greater excellency of spirit then he; for *Moses* dyeth in the wilderness, and *Caleb* is carried unto *Canaan*: that was one of the marks upon him, he was a man of a more excellent spirit: And the other was, he followed God fully. What is the meaning of that? It is this, he he was for all sorts of work, easie and hard, and all together, never made a difficulty where God made none; whatever God called him to, that he was for. You shall find wherein he did discover his following of God fully, *Num.* 13.31. When the bad spies came and brought an ill report on the good land, and cryed there are great difficulties, we shall never be able to encounter with them: Now *Caleb* he discovers his excellency, and shews that he was

a man of another spirit; saith he in *Numb.* 14.6,7. It is an excellent good land; and in *Chap.* 13.30. says he, *We are well able to overcome it*: in this he followed God fully, resolving according to the call of God, though the difficulty were ever so great: a heart to follow God, and following of him through all difficulties, was the excellency of this *Caleb*. Here is a man that followed God to purpose, this excellence was upon him, and he is the man must go to *Canaan* to possess the good land, though *Moses* and *Aaron* must dye by the way. In *Ezek.* 9. 14. you have there an Angel commissioned to go forth and set a mark upon the foreheads of those that sigh and cry for the abominations that were committed in that day: Here are some men must be spared; Who are they, pray? They are a people sighing for the abominations of their day; such a spirit as *Lot* had, vexed for the abominations of their time, therefore these must be preserved; and this is what I shall say to the first head, that it is an honor to be preserved; it is so from this consideration, that usually God

preserves none in such a season, but those upon whom there is something of excellence to be found; or if others, it is for the sake of those upon whom those honourable Characters are found.

2. It is a great honor to be preserved from common calamity, if you consider, that those that he doth preserve are usually such as he doth mean to honor with himself for ever; or if he do honor others with this mercy, it is for the sake of those that he intends to honor with himself for ever: There was a kind of typifying out of this, in the slaying the first-born of *Egypt*: At that time, who must be preserved? Why *Israel*: Now all *Israel* were Types of Gods own people, and in that God did Typically foretell what he would do in aftertime, especially in the latter times, that his saved ones should be his true *Israel*. There is a Scripture I will recommend to you, make what use of it the Lord shall help you, *Isa. 4.3.* And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in *Zion*, and he that remaineth in *Jerusalem* shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the

the living in Jerusalem: Now what time doth this relate unto? It was a time of great destruction, as you have it *Chap. 3.26.* *Her gates shall lament and mourn, and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground; and in vers. 25.* *Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty men in war:* Now in this desolation some shall escape, and who shall they be? What sort of men shall they be? Mark what he says, and make of it as much as the Lord shall help you; they that escape of *Israel*, they that are left in *Sion*, and they that remain in *Jerusalem* shall be called holy; that is, shall be holy, for God calls things as they are, or he will make them to be what he calls them: And is that all? No, *such as are written among the living*, or (as the word may be rendred) *such as are written to life in Jerusalem*: written to life, is the same with being written in the Lambs book of life; such as he will make holy, they shall be the escaped, they shall be preserved. I will give you another text, *Mat. 24.22.* It speaks of the tribulations of the latter times, most dreadful things; And what then? *Except these days be shortened, no flesh shall be saved:* They should

be such as should cut off every soul from the earth: but God hath an elect upon whom his heart is set, and for their sakes it shall be shortned. The meaning of the text, I take to be this, there shall be dreadful tribulations in the latter days, such as if they were let run on their course, would cut off every soul; but they shall be so cut short, that a people written unto life shall out-live them. And if this be so, surely it is a great honor to out-live common calamities, especially in the latter days, into which we are come, or unto which we are drawing nigh apace.

But one thing more, a third argument is this, it is an honorable thing to have preservation in times of common calamity, if you consider, That such who are so preserved, are preserved to very honourable ends; God doth not preserve them for nothing, but to very honorable ends; the Prophet *Isa. 66.* tells us of dreadful providences, *vers. 15, 16.* *For behold, the Lord will come with fire, &c.* Well, shall any escape at that day? Yes, there shall, if you look to *vers. 14.* *And when ye see this, your heart*

heart shall rejoyce, &c. The hand of the Lord that shall be known to his friends for their preservation, to his enemies for their destruction; but to what end will he reserve them that he doth preserve? That you have in *vers. 19. I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them to the nations*; the escaped people, what shall they be for? They shall be to make known, set up, and advance the glory of God, and to tell of his wondrous workings. I confess, that I conceive this text doth relate to the Jewish Nation; but there shall be a remnant preserved, and the reserved are reserved to honorable ends, to make known much of God, to reveal and speak of his glory: To which add that *Jer. 50. 28.* you read of some that escaped there in that day of distress; and what do they escape for? It is to declare in Zion the vengeance of the Lord; they are a remnant reserved to speak the praise of God, to magnifie and admire him in the dispensations of his providence; and therefore being reserved to honorable ends, it is an ho-

norable preservation : That is the first thing in the Doctrine.

2. As it is an honor, so it is an especial mercy, to be preserved in times of publike judgements; it is not like the honor of this world, which is but an empty blast of breath, but such as is a mercy as well as an honor : and, Oh how great is the mercy of surviving, and out-living common calamities ! I shall briefly shew you it is great mercy, and it will be evidenced in the consideration of six or seven particulars.

1. It appears to be so, from the thankfulness of those that have been preserved : You shall find some souls have been much taken with the goodness of God, and have admired his kindness in the delivering a people from common calamity. *David* in his time under a common distress, how doth he admire the grace of God, that shined forth in his preservation? What, saith *David*, they cut off, and I alive ! What have I done? these sheep what have they done? *Ezra* 9. 7, 8. here was a reserved people, a people brought back from Captivity, and what doth

Ezra say? Oh, saith he, it is great grace, there is abundance of mercy in it, that we should be preserved, that the Lord should keep us alive, and hath not suffered us to fall in our bondage, but hath given us a nail in his house. Now the thankfulness of a people delivered from such calamity, is a great ground to think it a great mercy, *Jer. 20. 13. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord, for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers.* Now that I say that the people of God are so thankful for, and do praise God for, certainly it is a great mercy.

2. It is a great mercy to be preserved in common calamities, if you consider this well, that though God may find some honorable things upon his people, that he is pleased to honor with preservation, yet (if he would look throughly) he might find something in them that might provoke him to let them fall with others: It is true, God when he doth preserve, doth find something honorable upon those that he doth preserve, it is so for the most part; as he found faith in *Jeremiah*, a relying and recumbency upon him,

and therefore honored him with preservation. In *Psal.* 91. the Lord found three things honorable upon a people, to which he annexeth a promise of preservation; one you have *vers.* 9, 10. He finds faith there, and that he honors with a promise of preservation; and in the 11, 12. *He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways*: Here he finds a people walking with him, and therefore he promiseth them preservation. Now if God do find any thing of excellence upon a people, yet how often is it cold and dead, and at a very low ebb? if he finds faith, How much of unbelief is there in the soul? Also if he finds him walking with God, how much turning aside? And is it not great mercy that God is yet pleased to crown them with preservation, because he finds but some small matter of excellency upon them? You shall see how *David* speaks, *Psal.* 130. 3. *If thou shouldest mark iniquities, Oh Lord, who shall stand?* That is, if thou comest to search us thoroughly, and resolvest to do according to all that thou seest in us, who then shall stand? But it is the kindness of God, that he doth

doth not mark all iniquity, and doth not look upon every miscarriage of his poor people, he covers many of them; therefore in *Lam. 3.* how much are they there taken with Gods mercy? *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not, vers. 22.*

3. It is a great mercy, if you consider Gods' preservations are special kindnesses, a great deal of love goes therewith: *Hezakiab* when he was sick of the Plague, God carryeth him through it, he did not let him fall by it; and what saith he? *Isa. 38. 17.* Thou hast not let me fall, but hast kept me, and thou hast done it in love to my soul: And to this add that *2 King. 19. 30, 31.* Mark it, the *Assyrian* (I think it was) that did hardly bestead poor *Israel*, who were greatly distressed by them; well, but saith God, *Out of Sion shall go a remnant, and some shall escape; but how? Why, the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform it.* That is, his love and care shall be ingaged for a remnant; so that it is great mercy to be preserved, and that because God doth preserve in great kindness.

4. It is a great mercy, if you consider that God oft shews a great deal of mercy to the souls of them that do escape: in *Isa. 4.* you see what a mercy the Lord shews, and what good he doth upon the souls of those that should remain in *Sion*: in *vers. 4.* The escaped remnant shall not carry their dross along with them, but God will take away their dross, and do away their filth: this shall be the mercy of this escaping remnant: and so *Mal. 3. 2, 3.* *Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?* Why, what is it makes that day so terrible? Oh this is it, *He shall sit as a refiners fire, and as Fullers soap:* In *vers. 6.* Oh, saith he, when I come in my dreadful calamities and judgements, *Jacob* shall not be consumed; Why not? what shall then be done upon him? He will take away their dross, and their Tynn, and purifie them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and truly this is more then to escape: to escape is not so much, as to escape it and your corruption too; to be out of trouble, and freed from
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fin too, this is a mercy of mercies.

5. Great mercy to be preserved in and through a common calamity, in as much as it gives farther opportunity to get the soul into a better order, to mourn over past miscarriages: for the soul of the best, and the frame of the best had need be better; and he that out-lives a calamity, lives to a farther opportunity of getting his heart better prepared; saith *David*, *Oh spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more seen.* Length of time is an advantage to getting more of strength, and they that are wise whom God hath delivered, they should improve it, *Ezek. 6. 8, 9.* *Yet will I leave a remnant, &c.* This improvement shall the escaping remnant make of their escaping, they shall mourn over their hearts and ways at a greater rate then ever: So *Ezek. 7. 16.* *But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity.* The best of Saints, I am perswaded, that God carries through common calamity, they do
there

there & thence take opportunity of looking into their hearts more thoroughly, and bemoaning them in the presence of God, *They shall mourn every one for his iniquity*: and is not this a mercy, to have a reserve of time to mourn over their waies in the presence of God?

6. It is a mercy, if you consider the reserved people are a reconciled people; usually God is well pleased with them, and pacified towards them, as *Hezekiah* said in the text I quoted to you just now, *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, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* This is usually Gods method; a people that he reserves through calamity, to them he pardons all iniquity, with them he is at peace, and unto them he is pleased graciously to be reconciled. So *Jer. 50. 20. I will pardon them whom I reserve; I will not onely reserve them, but I will pardon them: that is a mercy, and double mercy, to be a reserved and a pardoned people.*

7. It is a great mercy to be preserved through publike calamitiés, if you consider God often makes the issue of it the inabling the soul to be more for God, and to walk more with him than ever at former times, *Isa. 37. 31.* *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah, shall again take root downwards, and bear fruit upward:* It hath a spiritual as well as a litteral sence, no doubt, They shall be a rooted people, and also a fruitful people: it is a mercy when God makes the issue of these Dispensations, the purging of us, to make us bring forth more fruit; the fire of affliction, a means for their purging, and consequently of their bearing more fruit to the praise of God: So *Isa. 10. 20, 21.* *And it shall come to pass in that day, the remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob to the mighty God.* We are apt to be running from God, but there shall be an escaping remnant, and what shall the issue of it be? They that return unto the Lord, God shall have more of their hearts then ever he had before. This is a great mercy, and doubtless the soul should admire it, and seek it; which leads me to the third thing

thing in the Doctrine, namely, that it is that that gracious souls should put out hand after, to be delivered and preserved in the times of publike calamities.

You shall find sometimes the people of God have been very earnest for the diverting a judgement, for the taking of it off if it might be; that was the case of *Abraham*, Oh how he pleads for poor *Sodom*! And in times when that cannot be prevailed for, how do the people of God sue for particular preservation! That they may be the spared people; the Prophet *Jeremiah* begs this mercy from God, *Jer. 17. 16, 17. As for me, I have not hastened, &c.* Oh, saies he, I have not done any thing toward the pulling down of these troubles: I have not indeavoured to hasten them; Lord let not me feel the dread and terror of them: here I say the good man is begging for an immunity and freedom, for a particular preservation in times and days of evil: So *David*, *Psal. 71. 2.* He is also lodging some requests in the bosom of the Lord, *Deliver me in thy righteousness, cause me to escape; let me be of the escap-*

escaping side, and in the number of those whom thou wilt preserve: and so also in the prophecy of *Joel*, such kind of counsel is given, in *Joel 2*. There was a day of great distress and trouble in *vers. 1*. *Blow ye the trumpet in Sion, &c.* Well, but what must we do at such a time? why in *vers. 17*. *Let the Priests the Ministers of the Lord stand between the Temple and the Altar, and cry, Lord spare thy people, &c.* Whatever thou doest, and whatever sad providences be abroad, Oh, saith he, *Spare thy people*: That was the thing they should seek and begg at the hands of God; and truly could we pray more, and seek more, who knoweth what might be done? In *Isa. 37*. you find there King *Hezekiah* sends to the Prophet, and bids him lift up a prayer for the remaining remnant, at *vers. 4*. *It may be the Lord thy God will hear, &c.* Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left: Here are some escaped out of the hand of the King of *Assyria*, Oh, saith he, Pray unto the Lord, and beg hard, that this escaping remnant may be delivered from the rage of the King of *Assyria*, and may not fall by the stroke

stroke of his hand : Thus we should beg for preservation in times of common calamity : how and in what manner, and at what rate this prayer is to be managed, will be shewed in the next Doctrine. And if you would know the reason why we should beg this mercy, much might be said, but onely this shall suffice.

1. Because it is a mercy of great worth, and therefore should be greatly sought ; and also I might say, it is the proper means to fetch down this and every other mercy ; and therefore if we would have it, we must set to the seeking of it.

But here an Objection may be made against what I have said, If we should beg preservation in times of common calamity, what shall we say of *David* ? *2 Sam. 24. 17. And David spake unto the Lord, &c.* I have been shewing you that Saints should beg preservation in common calamities, and *David* here he begs destruction, And did he do well in it ? I say, he begs he may be destroyed, or at least it seems as if he did ; he doth not say : Lord preserve me and my fathers house, but, *Let thine hand be*
against

against me, I pray thee, and against my fathers house; and therefore how shall we reconcile these, and bring them together?

I answer therefore in two or three things plainly thus.

1. *David* he speaks this, because he supposed that a strictness of justice required it should be so; he it was that was the onely offending person, it was the numbering the people that caused God to send this judgement, and that *David* did, and no body else; therefore he could not but confess that in strictness of justice he should have dyed; and the people have lived, and therefore he could not but say, *Lord let thy hand be upon me, but as for these sheep what have they done?*

2. This is to be considered, that it is a particular case, we have not the like of it that I know; it was the punishment of a particular sin, and *David* had chosen the punishment, he had submitted himself to it, and beforehand given himself up to the stroke of God; for the Prophet comes unto him, and tells him, he had sinned, and now he must fall under one of the three

Judgements, sword, famine, or pestilence; and therefore, saith he, Let us have the Pestilence; it was his own sin, and he chose the judgement, and therefore he supposed it was his due to suffer because he had sinned.

And 3. It argues his great love to the people, he would willingly have dyed if their lives might have been saved; and I know not but another might say in such a case, Lord, if the hand of God being upon me, might save many others, let it be so: Not that he did simply desire to fall under the stroke, but conditionally, if his life might save the lives of others: But this was a particular case. Now the judgement of God as it comes among us, we know not who it is particularly pointed at; it is our duty in the meantime to seek unto God that we may be his hidden ones in the day of his anger.

Thus I have dispatcht the doctrinal part, the Application now remains.

Is it true that it is a great honor, and a mercy much to be sought for, to outlive a distress and common calamity?

Then

Then what shall we say to the desperate wickedness of those that run themselves upon the judgements of God? I mean, that do the things, and go on desperately in the sins that seldom find an escape under such judgements? Ah, my friends, we are a people with whom God is contending, his hand is lifted up, Oh that there were none found among us pertinaciously going on in those desperate ways of sin and rebellion, that are usually attended with destruction and desolation. My friends, let me tell you, the men that adhere to, and are found readily going on in the ways of sin, that provoke to desolation; their case is very desperate: Oh that we could all with brokenness of heart, mourn over such a generation! That we could lay their case to heart! It is a dreadful thing to stand before the stroke of Divine indignation, a dreadful thing to dare the God of heaven to his face, to bid defiance to him, as if he were not a God of power, as if there were no dread in his judgements, as if standing before his rebuke were an easie matter. But you will say, Are there any so desperate in common

calamities to dare God to his face? I wish there were none. But I shall tell you of six or seven things that God hath resolved those that be found under such sins, they shall not be of the escaping remnant.

1. Such as grievously corrupt the worship of God, when he cometh forth in ways of judgement he sometimes determines against them that they shall not escape, *Ezek. 5. 10, 11. Wherefore as I live saith the Lord God, because thou hast defiled my Sanctuary with thy detestable things, mine eyes shall not spare, &c.* Oh miserable! how sad is the case of such a people? I will follow thee without mercy, thou shalt have no mercy in such a day: here is the sin, grievous corrupting the worship of God, and Gods determination concerning such, he will destroy them utterly: Oh stand at a distance from such a people, it will be sad to have any thing to do with them in such a day, *Isa. 13. 19. And Babylon the glory of Kingdoms, &c.* And at *vers. 15. Every one that is found shall be thrust through, and every one that is joyned to her shall be thrust through, &c.*

2. Corruption in worship, which
God

God hath witnessed against : when God comes to judge for such things, there is seldom any escaping, *Jer. 11. 10, 11, 12.* *They are turned back to the iniquity of their forefathers, &c.* Mark, saies God, they live in the sins of their forefathers, sins that I misliked, reprov'd, and punished in them; and *Therefore thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon them that they shall not escape; nay, though they cry to me, I will not bear them:* though they would then come to me, and fawn upon me, and be glad of protection and preservation, I will not hear them; and wo to them upon whom this lot lights. I may allude to that that you have in *Ezra 9. 14.* *Should we again break thy commandments, and joyn our selves in affinity with the people in these abominations? &c.* Mark, we were a vile people, and lived in a great many sins, what then should we return unto them again? if we should do so, the vengeance of God would rest upon us, so that we should be sure there should scarce be any escaping for us.

3. Sinning under Gods warnings, not duely minding of them, whether in

his word, or by his works ; such a people shall escape very hardly, if at all, *Jer 13. 10* *This evil people which refuse to hear my words, &c.* And in *ver 13, 14.* *Then shalt thou say unto them, I will dash them one against another, &c.* It is a dreadful thing to sin against fair warning, I will ruine them utterly : Yea if the warning be by the works of God ; What then ? Why if there be not warning taken, what will come of it ? *Isa 5. 11, 12.* *Wo to them that rise up early, &c.* But regard not the works of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hands. I beseech you mind it ; by the works of God, I understand his works of providence, by which he speaketh terrible things : Well, what do they do in such a day ? Why they drown all these voices in their cups : Now what shall come of these ? that you have in *ver. 13, 14.* *Therefore my people are gone into captivity, &c.* It is a full text to my purpose ; a people that God warns by his word and by his works, and yet would not take warning : *Hell hath opened her mouth, &c.* they shall go by thousands to hell and to the grave, for the original word signifieth both.

4. Covenant-breaking is a sin, that where-ever God finds it, in the day of his judgements, they upon whose skirts this sin is found, do hardly escape. In *Jer. 34. 8.* If you read on several verses, you shall find that *Zedekiah* made a covenant, and he after breaks the Covenant; and see what comes of breach of covenant, in *vers. 17, 18.* *Therefore thus saith the Lord, &c.* This shall be your judgement, says he, the judgement of the God of heaven shall be sure to light upon you that have broken the Covenant: look *Ezek. 17. 15, 16* *But he rebelled against him; &c. Shall he break the covenant and be delivered? surely no such matter.*

5. Hard dealings with the people of God, which is such a sin that when God comes to deal for it, those that are found in that sin hardly escape. There is much in the Scripture to this purpose; you have one passage very suitable in *Jer. 25. 12, 13, 14.* *And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, &c.* It is a strange Scripture, if you consider it well: The people of *Israel* by Gods ordination were

to be seventy years captive in *Babylon*, and yet, saith he, when this captivity shall have an end, I will be sure to punish them, that is *Babylon*, they shall be sure not to escape the sad providences that God will bring them under. Now though persecutors in persecution do nothing but by Gods permission, yet he will punish them for it; and the reason is in *Ezek. 25, 15*. *I will destroy them utterly, I will cut off the remnant, &c.* Why so? Because though I put my people into their hands, they did not deal with you, because I put them upon it, but they acted from a principle of rage and malice. And truly, souls, whoever are found under any such sins as these, the Lord give them repentance, or it is like to go very ill with them: that is the first thing in the Use, how desperate is the folly of such who contend with God, with whom there is no contending, and do daringly venture upon those sins that God will be sure to punish.

2. Is escaping such a mercy? well then souls, let us look homeward; what honourable marks have we upon us, that may give us ground to hope we shall

shall escape? My friends, I must deal faithfully with you, and let us consider if we should be weighed in the balance, what little reason may most of us have to hold up our heads on high, and to be found with confidence of an escape in such a day as this is! Dare we say we have some of these honorable marks upon us, which God hath been pleased to honor with preservation in times past? It is not good to build a confidence too hastily, but it is good to see upon what good ground we do conclude our preservation.

Let me speak a little home to your consciences, and ask your souls these questions.

1. What sence have you upon your souls of the sins of the generation among whom you live? It was an honorable character found upon *Lot*, that he was grieved with the filthy conversation of the wicked; and upon them in *Ezekiel*, *That they did sigh and mourn for the abominations and the evil of that day*: Now is this mark upon you, that the great burthen of your souls is the sin & wickedness of the days in which your lot is cast? It is worth the considering
and

and inquiring into your hearts about it? But if you should ask me how should I know whether my heart be affected with the abominations of the day in which you live?

1. Do you mourn in secret because of those abominations? saies the Prophet *jeremiah* in *Chap. 13. 17.* *If you will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret, &c.* Can you say when you come into the presence of God in secret, not onely your own, but others sins affect your heart? You know God is as eminently dishonored in this Nation, as he hath been in most Nations of the world; as notorious desperate sinning against light, and against the goodness of God, as almost any people have been guilty of; greater breach of Covenant, sinning against light, despight done to the Spirit of Grace, slighting of and neglecting of the Gospel of Christ, has scarce been found among a people for many years: and by all this, how is God dishonored? to have his Gospel slighted, and turned out of doors, and mens posts set up by Gods posts; for him that departeth from evil, thereby to make himself a prey; Can you say for these things

things as the Prophet, My eyes run down with tears, and for these things your soul mourneth in secret? I would onely put it to your conscience, and ask your souls the question; you would (I believe) be glad to get on the other side of this Horn that is now begun, and have some assurance that you should out-live the present providence; why if you would, then labor to get some of the marks that are to be found upon those that God doth use to deliver from such calamities.

2. What love have you for God? Because he hath set his love upon me, saith God, therefore will I deliver him. Put the question home to your own souls, and see what answer will be made; Can you say you have set your love upon God and Christ? I believe we may say most of us, We see him lovely, we have raised affections and desires after him; but can we say we have set our love upon him, that he is the center upon which our souls have fixed; that we see no excellence in any thing that can satisfie our souls, save onely in him? Can you say you have lived up to that direction of the Apostle,

Apo-
stle,

He, Set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth? Faith and Love are the two great things that distinguish a Saint and an empty professor. Now what say you? Do you love him? If your heart be not onely running out after him, but set upon him, then he is yours, and then you may expect he will look after your preservation: onely this I would say, some souls there are that dare not say they love God, they have a great many doubts and fears, whether they do truly love God or no; and therefore if you should ask me, But how shall I know where my heart is, and whether I have this love or no, I would onely say for present, What desires are there in thee after acquaintance with God? And what desires have you to be found doing the will of God? If thou canst say, Above all things, oh I would know him, and enjoy him above all things in the world, I am jealous lest I should dishonor him, then I would say to thee that thou hast ground to hope the Lord hath circumcised thy heart in truth to love him.

But

But 3. How do you walk with God? You must be in Gods way, if you will have his preservation, *He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,* that is, in all his ways, for we should have no way, but Gods ways, all our ways should be his ways.

There are some things inconsistent with the walking with God, and it will be well if none of those things be to be found upon our souls.

1. The harboring of bosom-sins; if thou harbourest and allowest thy self in any secret sin, thou art not one that walkest with God.

2. If thou art not one pursuing the death of all sin; if thou dost not labor to mortifie the deeds of the body, I dare pronounce thee one that art walking after the flesh.

3. This I add, that if thou art not one that standest upon thy watch, thou art none of those that walk with God; a careless professor, that minds not what he is, nor what he doth, will hardly ever be found in Gods way; the path is too narrow for a soul to keep in, without much diligence. Ask your
souls,

souls, and examine what you have within you, to witness to you that you are a people walking with God.

4. Would you be of the escaping number, pray what Faith have you? how stands your Faith? examine that a little; some there are that say, I bless God I can trust him without any hesitation, without any stumbling; but I beseech you bear with me a little if I try your faith, and help you so to do.

There be three things that expose men to the stroke of the judgement of God, and cut them short of mercy many times, *viz.* Unbelief, Presumption, and Security; and any one of them doth it as well as the other.

1. Unbelief, I say that cuts short of a great deal of mercy, particularly in such a day as this: if you will be carryed through the wilderness, watch against unbelief.

2. Security; a people not being affected with the judgements of God, it lays them as much open to the weight of the judgement, as any thing else, *Isa. 5. 11. And the harp, and the viol;*

viol, &c. a regardless, sottish, stupid people, that are not affected with the judgements of God, shall fall by them.

3. Presumption also, which they call Faith, and that doth as certainly lay open the soul to misery, as any other thing that hath been hinted.

Now consider a little how it is with you; is your Faith true Faith, or is it not Security? Is it not Presumption? Are you sure it is Faith? if not, it will do you no service. You may think it is Faith, when it may prove somewhat else, it may prove security; you think you have faith, because you have not fear: I tell you souls, there may and should be an aw of God, and yet be faith, as I will tell you by and by. You may think it faith, because you are secure, and not much affected; but take heed lest it should disappoint thee: if it be not faith, it may lay you open to the judgement of God, and cut you short of being one of the escaping remnant, as well as any thing else whatever.

If you have true Faith, you will know it by one or two things.

1. You

1. You will be sensible of your great unworthiness to receive any thing at the hand of God, or to be preserved by him ; that is the property of faith, it is an humbling Grace, a self-abasing Grace, *Lam. 3. 22. It is of the Lords mercy we are not consumed* : Here was faith at work, and what effect had it upon their souls? Oh it made them very sensible of their unworthiness, to receive any mercy at the Lords hand, *It is of the Lords mercy that we are not consumed.* Call thy confidence what thou wilt, if it have not some effect upon thee of this kind, it is not true faith.

2. If thou hast faith, it hath an allay and mixture of a holy awe of the judgement of God; faith is not a thing that makes a man stupid, but sensible and tender; faith as it looks to the promise for preservation, so it seeth God in the judgements, and it is affected with that Glory and Majesty of God, that shines forth in such a judgement : it seeth it is the hand of the great, glorious, mighty, terrible God, and therefore the soul that knows who he is, and what he is, cannot but have an awe of his

his judgement resting upon him. *David* was no Infidel, yet a man of fear, *Psal. 119. 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of all thy judgements.* *David* had this, and it was no unbecoming fear; he had a holy awe of God: a dread of the judgements of God upon the soul, is so far from being inconsistent with faith, that it is a necessary concomitant of it.

Again 3. Faith cuts not the throat of the use of means, but whilst thou believest for preservation, thou art waiting on God in the use of that means that he directs thee to; faith it puts upon the use of means, but doth not call off from it: You believe God for salvation, What then? you wait upon God in the use of Ordinances: Now by these things ask your hearts whether you have faith or no. Two or three things more, and I have done. Is preservation such a mercy? I would first say to you, Labor then to be Saints in earnest; for if you should be preserved and not be Saints, you loose the mercy of your preservation, *Isa. 15. 4. His life shall be grievous unto him, &c.* The case of evil men is such sometimes,

that the very living is a burthen to them: and such may be the case of a sinner, though he may not be cut off, their life may be worse to them then cutting off, *Jer. 8. 3. And death shall be chosen rather then life, &c.* the life of a sinner is not worth the living.

2. Above all things, have as little to do with sin as you can, that is one of the best preservatives, *Job 11. 14. If iniquity be in thy tabernacle, put it far away from thee.*

3. And lastly, while you are in the world, and distress is in the world, especially remember and be solicitous for the *Sion* of God. Oh stand up and plead for the poor people of *Sion*, *Jer. 51. 50. Let Jerusalem come into your minds.* Oh my friends, while the distresses of this day lasts, *Let Jerusalem come into your mind!* If God preserve you, I say, while he preserves you, think of *Jerusalem*, plead with God for his poor people, that that interest may be secured, that the Lord would be to his people the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

And thus I have dispatched the third Doctrine, namely, that it is a great honor, and an especial mercy, and that that Saints should put out hard for, to be delivered in times of common calamity.

I shall now go on with the fourth Observation from the words, That watchfulness and prayer are rare preservatives, and excellent means for safety in the time of common calamities. I dare not say they are never-failing means, but they are the best means, and that as seldom fail as any; they are the best preservatives you can have, and will do you most service of any thing; if there be any safety to be had, it is in the use of these means. That is the note I would spend a little time upon; the God of all our mercies knows how to make it of use to us.

I would treat a little distinctly on each of them, and shew how far each of them serve to this design; what part prayer hath in it, and what part watchfulness: I shall begin with the first, *viz.* Prayer; and in what I have

to say to that, I shall propound three things to be treated on.

1. Consider a little what prayer is, because if we mistake the thing it self, we are out in the whole, as if a skilful Physician prescribe one potion, and it be mistaken, and another taken for it, in stead of doing good it may do much harm; therefore it is good to know what prayer is.

2. Consider, what prayer is wont to do: When Physicians prescribe a remedy, they will tell you what great cures such medicines have effected; and therefore I shall shew you what prayer hath done, and then how it comes to be particularly useful in this case of a common calamity.

For the first then, what is Prayer: we oft speak of going to prayer, but what is praying? Why prayer it may be thus described: It is the breathing of a gracious soul, in the help of the Spirit of Grace, whereby it is inabled to go to God in a promise, in the Name of Christ, to begg suitable mercy as the case may require. I will take this description in parts, and confirm each part unto you, that you may see it is a descrip-

scription consonant and agreeable unto the word of truth.

First of all, I say, prayer is the breathing of the soul; heartless prayer is no prayer, it is the work of the soul, the work of the heart; and that in which the heart is not, is not prayer at all; hence you have that expression in *Jam. 5. 16.* *The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much;* it may be better rendred, The Inwrought prayer of the righteous; prayer it is an Inwrought thing, it is first wrought in the heart, before it is brought forth into petitions; and if it be not first wrought in the heart before it is brought forth into desires and petitions; it is not prayer. The heart must go whatsoever is wanting; whether you pray with the voice or not, you must pray with the heart; such a thing you read of in the known case of *Hannah, 1 Sam. I. 13.* *Hannah she speaks in her heart onely, her lips moved, her voice was not heard, she spake in her heart, her heart was in the prayer, and it was a sign it was, by the good issue it had.* *David Psal. 119. 145.* hath an expression that looks that way, *I cryed with my whole heart, Oh*

Lord I will keep thy statutes : If you cry, it must be with the heart, that must not be wanting; for if that be wanting, truly the best ingredient of prayer is wanting; hence you have that expression in *Psal. 25. 1. I lift up my soul unto thee* : the meaning is, I pray unto thee, I call unto thee; but he doth express it by lifting up the soul, because the soul was engaged in the work, *I lift up my soul unto thee*; the like expression you have *Psal. 86. 4.*

Now that is the first thing in the description, it is the breathing of the soul.

2. It is the breathing of a gracious soul: it is not every heart, but a gracious heart that knoweth how to pray, the breathings of a gracious soul, and therefore whatever name the desires of a wicked man may have, yet alas it doth not amount to prayer, *Prov. 15. 8. The sacrifice of the wicked it is an abomination unto the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight*: A wicked man may bring his sacrifice, may think to put up his petition, but what is it? *It is an abomination unto the Lord, but the prayer of the upright that is his delight.*

When

When God comes to speak of the prayer of the wicked, see how he is pleased to phrase it, *Hos. 7. 14.* Says he, *They have not cryed to me with their hearts, when they have howled upon their beds:* The prayer they put up is no better then the howling of a dogg; if it be not the voice of a gracious heart, it is but the voice of a dog, and you know it is so called in the Scripture; and hence in *Zach. 12. 10.* it is said, he will pour out upon the house of *David* the Spirit of Grace and of supplication; first the Spirit of Grace, and then the Spirit of Supplication; if there be not first a spirit of grace, truly there can be no spirit of supplication: and it was hence that *Saul* when he was effectually wrought upon, and the work of grace was begun in his heart, the spirit of God takes notice of it, *Behold he prayeth:* doubtless he had made many a long prayer, and done something that he called prayer before that time, being a Pharisee, and one of the strictest Sect, but yet he never prayed untill now; now there is grace in his heart, and he prayeth to purpose: that is the second thing, it is the breathing of a gracious soul.

3. It is done in the help of the Spirit of **G**race: for if a gracious soul come and speak his own words, that is not praying, it must be speaking the words of the Spirit of **G**od, the breathing out the petitions that are put into the heart by the Spirit of **G**od. *Zach. 12. 10.* a place I quoted even now, you read that it is a Spirit of Supplication; **G**ods good Spirit it helps and furthers, and forwards the soul in this great work, *Rom. 8. 26.* *We know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self helps our infirmities;* and truly souls, this is very considerable, when praying is as it should be, it is done in the help of the Spirit of grace.

4. In prayer the soul goeth to **G**od, as the Father and fountain of mercy; he goes to him, directs a prayer unto him, therefore *David* says in *Psal. 25. 1.* *To thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul;* and we are taught when **C**hrist teacheth us how to pray in *Mat. 6. 9.* to go unto **G**od, *Say, saies Christ, Our Father;* we are bid to go to him, and to go to him as to a Father.

And

And further, 5. Prayer is going to God, and a going to him in a promise; you must have a promise to encourage you to pray: mark this as a certain rule, you have no warrant to ask that of God of which you have not a promise, or something that is in the nature of a promise: and if you ask me what I mean by something in the nature of a promise, why it is the experience of the Saints of God, what he hath done for them, and wrought for them; this is in the nature of a promise, and you may plead it with God, that what he hath wrought for his servants of old, that he would do again: now by promise I mean the Word of God, to plead for something that God hath given his word to give: *Jacob in Gen. 32.* 11. he was in a streight, and he goes to God, and what hath he to plead with God? Why he had a promise, *And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, &c. vers. 12.* He urgeth God with his promise, Lord thou hast said thou wilt do me good, and make my seed as the sand of the Sea; If *Esau* come and kill my children, How shall this promise be fulfilled? Therefore *deliver me, I pray thee*

thee, &c. And in Rev 22.20. *He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly: Even so, come Lord Jesus.* Mark, here is the promise, and the pleading of it also, both in this verse; the promise, Christ saies, *Surely I come;* the pleading of the promise, *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus:* so if we come to God in prayer, we must plead a promise, or something in the nature of a promise, or else it is not praying.

6. We must go to God in the name of Christ: now that is not (you will easily grant) the bare saying we ask this in the name of Christ, and beg it for Christs sake; but the putting forth an act of faith upon Christ, as he to whom all promises are made, and who hath purchased for us an interest in the promises; that is what I mean when I say we are to come in the name of Christ, *Joh. 16. 23. Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, that you shall have;* come to God, and tell him, Lord thou hast made a great many promises to poor souls through Christ Jesus; Christ hath purchased these promises at thy hand, therefore we come to be-
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seech thee, for the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ, that thou wouldest make good those promises that thou hast made, 2 Cor. 1. 20. *In him are all the promises Yea and Amen;* in him, that is, in Christ; and in him they are Yea and Amen, that is, they are made good to the soul through Christ; first the soul believes in Christ, and hath interest in him, and then hath interest in the promises.

7. They go for suitable mercy, according as their needs and necessities are: The necessities of the Saints are not always the same, sometimes they are of one kind and sometimes of another, and the spirit of grace helps the soul to begg mercies suitable to its wants; sometimes not to be led into temptation, as Christ teacheth us to pray, and sometimes to be delivered from trouble, as *David Psal. 59. 1. Deliver me from mine enemies, O God, defend me from those that rise up against me.*

And thus I have given you an account what prayer is, and shewed you that it is the breathing of a gracious soul in the help of the spirit of grace, whereby

whereby it is enabled to go to God in a promise, in the name of Christ, to ask suitable mercy as the case requireth. That is the first thing propounded, what prayer is.

But 2. What can prayer do, what hath it done? To that I answer, Very great things.

1. Prayer hath prevailed to pull down very dreadful judgements upon a people: Thus they that mocked the Prophet and scofft at him, a little prayer of the Prophet brought very dreadful things upon those people, 2 King. 2. *And he went up from thence, &c. at vers. 23.* it is spoken concerning *Elisha*, and it is said, that *He turned back and cursed them in the name of the Lord*, that is, he prayed that God would meet with them for this; and what came of it? you read, *There came two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them*, that mocked the Prophet. *David* with a very short prayer, he brings down judgement and evil upon *Achitophel*, 2 Sam. 15. it was a very short prayer he puts up at vers. 31. *O Lord I pray thee turn thee counsel of Achitophel into foolishness.* It was, you see,

a very short prayer, and yet if you look to *Chap. 17. 23.* you shall find how it was succeeded; He went home and hanged himself, because his counsel was not followed: And thus you find in other cases, prayer hath brought down judgement upon a people: the single prayer of the Prophet *Elijah* brought down judgement upon all *Israel*, *1 King. 17. 1.* *As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my words, that is, according to my prayer; and Elias* you read in *Jam. 5. 17.* he prayed down a judgement for three years and six months, *He prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months:* And let me tell you, all the dreadful judgements that come upon the world, they come down as an answer to the prayer of the people of God: Look *Psal. 65. 5.* *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, &c.* I quote this for this purpose, to tell you that the terrible judgements that fall upon the world, they do come in answer to the prayer of the Saints: yea let me
 tell

tell you, this very judgement on foot at this day, at which our hearts do tremble, it comes in answer to the prayer of the people of God; I mean thus, the people of God have prayed that God would promote his interest, that he would advance the scepter of his Son, that he would pull down his enemies; and they leave him to do it which way he pleaseth: Now this is Gods way to advance his interest, and you will find it so; and I say moreover, the dreadful things that shall be in the world, and shall come upon the heads of the ungodly of the world, they come all in answer to the prayer of the Saints. The ninth *Psalms* is a *Psalms* concerning Antichrist the great destroyer: Well, what saies it of him? in *vers.* 11, 12. *Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Sion: when he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembreth them, he forgetteth not the cry of the humble:* There is a time, saith *David*, when he will make inquisition for blood, that is, when he will contend with Antichrist, the great destroyer, for all the slaughter that hath been made upon his people; he will come and recompence them

them for this blood; and which way shall it come to pass? *He forgetteth not the cry of the humble*; he heareth them, and that stirreth him up to make inquisition for blood; so that I say many great judgements that have been in the world, they have many times come in answer to the prayer of the Saints.

Again 2. Prayer it sometimes prevents the evil we fear. *Jacob* in the instance given but now, had a great deal of fear upon him, *Gen. 32. 6, 7, 11, 12.* he was greatly distressed, and then he goeth to prayer, and what cometh of it? in *Chap. 33. 4.* *Esau* ran to meet him, and falls on his neck and kisses him; here was the worst of their meeting: he thought verily *Esau* would have come to kill him, and therefore set himself to seek the Lord, and then God prevented his fear, for *Esau* fell on his neck and kissed him. Thus God sometimes prevents the thing that we fear; and so in *2 Chron. 20.* in the case of *Jehosaphat*, when many Nations combine to fight against him, *vers. 3.* *Jehosaphat* feared, and what then? *He set himself to seek the Lord, and*
 pro-

proclaimed a fast thorow out all Judah : And what came of it ? truly God delivered him very wonderfully : in *vers.* 17. *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle,* &c. And God makes those men that came against him to destroy one another, at *vers.* 22. I quote all this, to this end onely, to tell you what great work and mighty service sometimes prayer doth, it helps to keep off the things that we fear.

3. It helps to remove the evils we feel, as well as prevents what we fear : you know when *Israel* was in bondage, what was a means to help them out, *Exod.* 2. 23. *They cryed, and their cry came up;* they cryed, and it was not in vain, for God heard them, their praying and seeking his face it did not prove fruitless : in *Judges* 5. you have a notable expression of *Deborah*, *O my soul, thou hast troden down strength :* the people of *Israel* were greatly oppressed and dealt hardly with, and there were some stirred up to go out and oppose ; but what got the victory ? Oh, saith she, *My soul, thou hast trodden down strength !* It was her souls going to God in prayer, it was that did the work,
and

and it was instrumental for the removing that great oppression that was upon them; and therefore the Prophet in *Isa.* 10. When he foretells their deliverance from the yoke of the *Assyrian* bondage, saith he; the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing, *vers.* 27. that evil shall be removed; How! by the anointing, one part of the sense whereof is, that a part of the spirit of grace and supplication should be powered forth on the people, they should plead with God, and because of that anointing, they should be delivered, *Psal.* 40. 1, 2. *I waited patiently for the Lord and cryed unto him, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry: he prayed and God heard him, and this was the issue, He brought me up also, &c.* *vers.* 2, 3. that is a third thing, it delivers from many evils felt as well as feared.

4. It prevails for strength to stand up under, and grapple with great difficulty: when God thinks not fit to remove difficulty, then the soul prays for strength to stand up under those difficulties, *Isa.* 40. 31. *They that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength, &c.* they may have difficulty, but if they wait on the

Lord, they shall have strength as well as difficulty, *Psal. 138. 3. In the day when I cryed, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.* David was under many difficulties and streights, but yet in calling upon the Lord, the Lord gave him strength: to which add that, *Heb. 11. 34. That some out of weakness were made strong*; that is the fourth thing that Prayer doth.

5. It prevails also for preservation in common calamities; that mercy *Jeremiah* had in a way of Prayer, *Chap. 17.* he doth address himself unto God by prayer, in *vers. 17. Be not a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of evil:* And God gave him a promise of preservation, and was with him according to his promise. Thus you see what great things prayer doth.

1. It hath pulled down dreadful judgments.

2. Prevented evils feared.

3. Removed evils felt.

4. Prevailed for strength to bear up under difficulties.

And 5. Prevailed also for preservation in times of great distress.

To the third thing. Then how comes prayer

prayer to be useful for our preservation in common calamity? It comes to be useful in that, as in all other cases, these four or five wayes:

1. From a great deal of efficacy that is in it; it is a thing that hath a great deal of efficacy and power going along with it, *Mat. 7. 7. Mat. 21. 22. Jam. 5. 16.*

But, 2. It comes to be effectual, in that it sues out and pleads the Promise: the prayer of Faith it challengeth God with his word, it pleads out the Promise in the presence of God; it goes to that, and takes hold of it; and many promises I have heretofore quoted you, that God hath given for preservation in common calamity. Now it is the work of the people of God, to go to God and sue them out, to remember him of his promise, *2 Chron. 20. Jehosaphat*, when he is at prayer there, he remembers God of his promise, *vers. 8, 9, 10.* he goeth to prayer, and there he pleads the promise; *Lord*, saith he, *at the dedication of this Temple, didst thou not engage, that if we stood by this house, called by thy Name, in a time of calamity, didst thou not promise that thou wouldst be with us?* This is that

that he remembers God of; and the people of God they are called Gods remembrancers, in the Propheſie of *Iſaiah*, Chap. 62. v. 6. *You that make mention of the Lord*; it is in the margin, *You that are the Lords remembrancers*: *Prov.* 18. 10. it is ſaid, *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower, the righteous run thither and are ſaved*: this running is a running in prayer, in a prayer of faith, when the ſoul in prayer doth put the Lord in mind, that he hath ſaid, he is a *ſtrong Tower*, and will be a *Refuge*, and therefore beg of him to be according to his word; that is a ſecond thing, it prevails for preſervation, in that it pleadeth the promiſe.

3. It prevails, in that it is Gods own Ordinance and appointment, the means that he hath given us to prevail in any caſe; and he is pleaſed to put that honour upon the head of prayer, that it ſhall be a door to let in mercy to us. When he had promiſed to do a great deal for *Iſrael*, yet, ſayes he, *for all this I will be ſought of them*; it is prayer fetcheth in the mercy, *Job* 11. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and ſtretch out thine hand towards him, &c.* And in
verſ.

vers. 15. *Thou shalt bestedfast, and shalt not fear.* Mark, particular preservation is promised to be given forth in a way of prayer.

4. As it is useful to remove that that may pull on a calamity, and may make the Lord strike us with such a stroke: you know sin is that that brings all judgment; now the prayer of Faith is very instrumental and serviceable in order to the taking away of guilt, and removing of sin; and by faith in prayer we go to Christ, and take hold of him, and leave out guilt upon him, leave him to grapple with the Fathers displeasure: This we do by Prayer. *David* you know, when he would be preserved himself from the Plague, he goeth and offereth a Sacrifice; I think I have hinted to you what that was

5. Thus it comes to do us service: if it be right, and as it should be, we put up no petition but what God first puts into our hearts. Now, if prayer be right, it is God's work, and he is obliged to stand to his own act; if God put me upon pleading for preservation, it is a tye upon God to answer it, for it is his own work, and therefore he

must not disown his own work. Upon this account it is that prayer comes to be useful to our preservation; I shal now proceed to shew you a litle the great use of watchfulness, in order to preservation.

1. In that it helps to prayer; prayer is a great means to our preservation, and watchfulness is a hand-maid to prayer; there is no praying well without it: It is a furtherance and help to us, 1. In that it finds out the most apt and fit season for prayer: there are certainly fit, and apt, and proper seasons in which the soul may do much more in prayer then it can do at other times; and it is the part of watchfulness to spie and finde out those opportunities; and therefore you have a notable expression in 1 Pet. 4. 7. *The end of all things is at hand, be ye sober therefore, and watch unto prayer*; that is, let your watch serve you to find out the best, fittest and aptest seasons, and the greatest advantages to further you in prayer: doubtless there are seasons in which the heart is best framed for the duty, and seasons in which God seems to give some secret inclinations to the soul, that he will please to be besought:

Now

Now when the soul hath any great suit to go forward with, and any great request to present at the Throne of grace, the soul then watches to find out such a season; and this doth further the duty of prayer exceedingly.

2. It furthers prayer, in that it keeps up the heart when it is engaged in that work; and therefore you find them coupled together, in *Mat. 26. 41. Watch and pray*, saith he. Souls, let me tell you, if you pray, and do not watch, you will hardly get the heart to pray; but if you do get the heart there, you will hardly keep it there, unless you stand upon your watch. It is a truth much experienced, that a soul is no longer kept to duty, then a watchful eye is born over it: consider it, it may help you many times, if it be remembered, that watchfulness considers how the heart is, how the Tempter deals with the soul, what pains he takes to distract, and get the soul out of a duty in which it is engaged; sometimes you are dead, it is watchfulness finds it out; and therefore *David* being upon his watch, as well as in the way of his duty, he prays often in *Psal. 119.*

Quicken thou me ; sometimes the heart is distracted, wandering and getting aside from the work that is before it, it is watchfulness that makes this discovery; it observes how Satan moves, & how the soul moves in a duty, whether to God or no ; I may allude to that you have, *Gen. 15.9.* when God comes to confirm the Covenant unto *Abraham*, and bid him sacrifice and divide the Heifer, and the Turtle-doves, and young Pigeons, in *vers. 11.* *When the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abraham drove them away.* I may allude to it thus : When you come to sacrifice, fowls come down upon the sacrifice, oft-times temptations, divisions, distractions, attend you ; they are fowls upon the sacrifice that do spoyl it, and it is watchfulness that must help you to keep off the fowls from the sacrifice, and it is that that must observe how the case stands with you. Now this is that which watchfulness doth in prayer ; it keeps the heart unto God.

3. It helps to take in, and improve answers of prayer ; the soul when it hath prayed, hath not done all its work, but it is to look after answers of prayers,

ers, and that is the part of watchfulness; watchfulness looks after the petitions put up, and observes how they speed, and what comes of them: sayes *Habakkuk*, *I will stand upon my watch-tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me*: you must watch unto prayer, watch in prayer, and watch when you have prayed; watch to see what comes of the petitions you have put up, and what answer you have received, and how God comes into your souls in a way of return to the requests you have lodged with him, *Mich. 7. 7.* *Therefore I will look, &c.* I will look unto God by Faith and Prayer; and when I have done, I will watch to see what the God of my salvation saith to me. *Psal. 40. 1.* *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he heard me.* I cryed, and when I had done, I waited to see what would come of it, *Psal. 5. 3.* *I will direct my prayer unto thee, and I will look after it*; I will see how it will succeed. Well, you will say, what if watchfulness do help to look after answers of prayer, how doth this farther preservation? Why, these two wayes it's helping you to see what answer God makes to prayer,

prayer, furthers your preservation two ways.

1. If you have no answer, it puts you upon praying again, untill God doth give you a word to hope in for your safety in days of evil.

Or secondly, If when you have prayed, and are upon your watch, so that you have found an answer, it helps you to improve it for your preservation; it helps you to plead the answer that God hath given you: if you find he hath answered you in the desire of your hearts, it helps you to hang upon God, and plead it with God as did *David, Psalm. 119. 49. Remember thy word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused him to hope: God may give answer; and if thou art not upon thy watch, thou mayest not see it.*

3. It is serviceable to preservation as it helps to keep you from the sin and provocations, that might, if lived in, provoke God to cut you off among the number that fall. I tell you souls, there are many provocations; when a soul is found under them, they do wonderfully stir up the Spirit of God against him,

him, and provoke God to cut them off in the time of his anger; and it is the part of watchfulness to keep you from them, *Rev. 16. Blessed is he that watches and keepeth his garments*; you cannot keep your garments if you do not watch; such are the corruptions of your hearts, and the subtilty of the tempter, that he will quickly make you defile your garments, *1 Thes. 5. 6. Let not us sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.* All kind of sin it is an intemperance, if you are not upon your watch you will be wanting in your sobriety, you will quickly run into ways of sin, if you are not found upon the duty of Watchfulness. Watchfulness doth especially keep you from the sins, which if you are not kept from, will lay you open to the judgements of God; consider *Luk. 21. 34, 35.* compared with my text, *Mark: Christ my brethren, a day of dreadful judgements is coming, it will come upon the world, when they little think of it, when they are not well aware of it; and there are many sins that provoke God to pull down these judgements on you, surfeiting and drunkenness,*

ness, and the cares of this life; but, say they, how may we be preserved? Oh, saith he, watch, that will keep you from the sin, from sutfeiting and from drunkenness, and whatever other sins may be a provocation to the Divine Majesty.

There are four or five sins that it is very bad to be found under, against all which watchfulness is an excellent preservative.

1. The sins of the times, the very sins for which God doth primarily contend, and at which he directs his judgments; *Come out of her my people, and be not partakers of her sins, lest you partake of her plagues*: It will be bad being found in *Babylons* sins, they do provoke God mightily, *Therefore partake not of her sins*: Murmuring was the sin of *Israel* of old, a special sin that God contends for; you find that *Moses* sinned but once into that sin in *Numb. 27.* and for it he must dye in the wilderness, in *vers. 14.* Whatsoever sin it is that God especially contends for in any day of common calamity, Oh souls as you love tender and regard your own preservation,
come

come not nigh it : But of this before.

2. Leaning unto your own wisdom, that is a very bad thing; we are to trust the wisdom of God, and lean upon him for all our preservation. The people of *Israel*, some of them when there was a great part carryed captive by the King of *Babylon* in *Jer. 42. 15, 16.* Hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of *Judah*, &c. I quote it to this purpose, to shew you that when a man sets up his wisdom in direct opposition to Gods wisdom, he thereby forfeits his preservation; but when a soul comes and says, Lord I will be what thou wouldest have me, and do what thou requirest of me; this is a good frame: but I say to lean unto our own understanding, and not to ask counsel of God, not to walk as he directs, it is the direct way to forfeit our preservation.

3. Not considering the judgements of God, is another sin that watchfulness will keep the heart from; you know how ill God takes it at the hand of a people to be insensible under his judgements, *Isa. 5. 11, 12.* Wo unto them,

them, &c. they are a sottish people, a people that are not affected with Gods judgements; and therefore what then? at *vers.* 14. The Lord will destroy them, *Therefore*, saies he, *hell hath enlarged her borders*, &c. Now I tell you souls, a watchful spirit will not easily run into this evil; no, no, it looks out, it spies the hand of God; watchfulness keeps the eye of faith open, it keeps the soul from slumbering and keeping, and inables the soul to see that mercy that shines forth in the dispensations of God.

4. Unthankfulness for daily preservation, this is a great evil, and that that watchfulness will excellently preserve you from; God usually walks by this rule, he that prizeth and improveth a little, to him he gives more; so he that prizes and improves, and thankfully owns, the daily preservation and protection of God, such a one is in the way to receive more at the hand of God; but when the daily goodness of God is slighted and past over, without consideration, and being carefully heeded and regarded by any soul; such a soul is like to be left to fall under the
stroke

stroke of Gods indignation ; it was the care of the Church in the *Lamentations* to give God his glory, *Chap.* 3. 22, 23. *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, &c.* his mercy every morning should be prized and improved by us.

And lastly, A proud unhumbl'd frame of soul, is that that watchfulness will help us against : souls, wherever that is found, it is a grievous provocation ; God he delights to do good unto his poor broken humble souls, *He resists the proud, but he gives grace unto the humble* ; and therefore watchfulness being an excellent means to keep us from these and other such like sins, which lay a people exceedingly open to the stroke of Gods indignation ; it so becomes very useful and serviceable to our preservation.

And thus I have dispatched the doctrinal part. Give me leave to conclude this Doctrine in a little Application, and to inforce these duties of watchfulness and prayer. Let me hence, first, take up a few things for information.

And

And if so be that watchfulness and prayer are means that have so great a tendency to preservation, it may inform us of two things.

1. How ill it is like to fare with poor sinners, that can neither watch nor pray : if the infinite over-flowing goodness of God prevent not, they must perish, they cannot make use of the means of preservation : **What can we expect but that they should perish ?** Oh that we could put on bowels of pity for such souls ! the sacrifice of the wicked, what is it, but an abomination unto the Lord : sinners in the day of their prosperity they will not look after God, nor his counsel, neither will they mind his dealings ; if they do come in a day of distress, and cry and howl, and make much ado, they may do so, but yet God hath told them it shall be little to their comfort, for *Prov. 1. 26.* he hath told them, that *he will laugh at their calamities, and mock when their fear cometh.*

2. We may infer also that here is room for the fall of Saints : whatever promise of preservation is made, upright souls may fall ; and why so ? Why

we may neglect the being found in our duty; we may not watch, and pray, as we should and ought; we may pray, but it may be coldly, and without any fervour of spirit; we may not follow closely our duty with God; and therefore missing in the means, we may miss in the end also: and that is my first Use, a Use of *Inference*.

2. It should stir us up to commune with our hearts a little: what do we? do we watch and pray? are we in the Use of the Means? whatever other means we use, we should not let this be neglected; it is not preservatives and removing from place to place, that can do you that service, that watchfulness and prayer can. You will say, you do pray; let me ask you again, do you watch unto prayer? I hope you can say you do.

And if you should ask me how you may know watchful prayer, I shall give you a few Characters of it.

1. If it be watchful prayer, there is an exciting, stirring and calling up the heart unto the Duty, *Judges 5.12. Awake Deborah awake; she calls up her self, and stirs up her self to this*

Duty, as you finde the Servants of God have done, they stirred up all the faculties of their souls, *Psal. 57. 8. Awake up my glory*, saith David; It is the Soul he calls his glory: And *Daniel* in the ninth chapter, he saith, *I set my face to the Lord God*, at the third verse; the setting a mans self, is the provoking and calling a mans self unto the Duty. Now do you stir up and call up your hearts to the work of God? If you be in a watchful frame you will do so.

Again, if it be watchful prayer, it is accompanied with much fervency; if you watch at prayer, it is not a cold lifeless Duty; it is a Duty hath heat, and vigor, and life in it, if you watch unto it: the Rule is, *Not slothful in business: but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, as it is in the *Rom. 12. 11*. And if there be a watchfulness in the Duty, there will be fervency going along with it. It is said of *Elias*, *James 5. 17*. that *He prayed earnestly*; you read also of an effectual prayer, and if it be watchful, it must be a fervent prayer.

3. If it be a watchful prayer, it is attended with much importunity, you
press

press God and wrestle with him: *Jacob* watched all night at it, and it was an importunate prayer; *I will not let thee go unless thou bless me*: The poor woman of *Canaan*, hers was an importunate prayer, she followed and pursued her request although she had some repulses, *Mat. 15. 22, 23, 26, 27.*

Now consider how it is with you, for hereupon much of your safety may depend for ought I know; If you would be preserved in this day of calamity, as you pray for it, so you must watch in prayer, and see that there be that watchful frame of soul that is suitable unto this Rule and Counsel of *Jesus*: that is the second Use.

Thirdly and lastly, should we watch and pray always in every season?

I would then first say, Make seasons for prayer; spare them out of some other things, rather than want them.

2. I would say, Take seasons for prayer when you may best attend the Work, and hope most to prevail with God. If you ask me what are the seasons? a word or two of that, and I shall come to the fifth Proposition from the words.

1. I say your leisure-seasons, when you are not engaged in business.

2. The seasons when your spirits are most serious, and least distracted; it is not good to set to duty in a croud, if you can help it.

3. When the Spirit of God provokes you to come into the presence of God; you that are experienced Christians, can say, that you have found sometimes your souls longing to be in his Presence; You have hungred after Communion with God in Duty; Oh, take that time! that is a fit season.

4. When God hath warmed and refreshed thy heart in a Duty, under any Ordinance with any tokens of love, it is I say a fit season for thee to improve with the Lord: God doth sometimes give the soul a look of love to encourage it to wait upon him; Now take that season: it is a great part of Wisdom to know a season; and if you shall finde a season offering it self to you, apt, and fit, and proper for your going to God, take it and bless God for it, and improve it with all your soul and might; it is much Mercy, and a great deal of goodness may come in to you at that door. And

And thus now I have dispatched the fourth Observation, namely, that watchfulness and prayer are the best means and have the greatest tendency to preservation in times of common calamity.

I come now to the fifth and last Note from the words, namely this, That the escaping common calamities, is not the only thing, nor the chief thing that we are to be careful about, but especially, and above other things, how we shall stand before the Son of man.

Alas! to stand in a day of calamity is one thing, but to stand before the Son of man is another, and a far more weighty thing, as I purpose to shew anon.

This is that the Lord saies in this Scripture, Do what you may, watch and pray, and use the best means you can, to escape in a day of calamity; but remember, when that is done, all is not done, nor is the great thing done; remember after all, whether you stand or fall in a calamity, you must stand before the Son of man: If you fall in a calamity, that will not end all. It is appointed to all men once to dye, and

after that the judgement : if you do escape a calamity, there will be a time when you must stand before the Son of man ; so that whether you stand or fall, that is not the main thing, nor especially considerable business, but the great and main thing about which you are to be especially careful, is how you may do to look Christ in the face at last, how you may do to hold up your head before the Son of man. Standing before the Son of man is taken three ways in Scripture.

1. Meerly for appearing before him, for appearing at his Tribunal ; so it is taken sometimes in the Scripture, for instance, that in the *Rom. 14. 10.* *We shall all appear before his Judgement-seat.* So, *2 Corinth. 5. 10.* *For we must all appear before the Judgement-seat of Christ, &c.* *Revel. 20 12. vers.* *And I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God, &c.* That is the first sense it is taken in in Scripture, meerly for appearing before the Son of man.

2. To stand before him, it is taken for an estate of honour and promotion, as to stand before a Prince, we reckon
such

such a person is preferred and highly honoured, as it was said of *Solomon's* servants, *Happy are thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy Wisdom,* as you have it, *2 Chron. 9. 7.*

And thirdly, it is taken for standing with joy, and comfort, and boldness; and it is upon that account, that you have that expression, *Psal. 1. 5. The ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous;* They shall stand in one sense, though not in another; they shall all stand in it, so as to come to it; but they shall not stand with comfort, so as to hold up their heads: standing here is opposed to adjection of spirit, of falling before the dreadful Majesty of God, and our Saviour: They shall not stand; that is, such dread shall seize upon their souls, that they shall not be able to lift up their heads, they shall be so filled with confusion and shame, that they shall not be able to hold up their heads in that day. So standing before the Son of man is taken in this sense in my Text, especially; that you may be able to stand before the Son of man, is, that you may be

able to stand before him with comfort, that you may lift up your head with joy, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear.

In the prosecution of this great truth, I shall propound the consideration of several things to you; and I would do it so, as I may best keep to the design of the text, as the Lord shall enable me.

1. I would endeavor to shew you that the standing before Christ is a much more serious and weighty thing, then any calamity in this world can be; whatever dread there is upon the heart at the thoughts of a calamity, we may have much more fear, and many more thoughts of heart upon the account of standing before the Son of man at his appearance and Kingdom.

2. I shall endeavour to shew you that they that will not tremble at a judgement, that they that are like to laugh a calamity in the face, will yet tremble when the Son of man shall appear, that will put such out of countenance as are not abashed by any calamity they meet with in the world.

3. Shall

3. I shall shew you who they are that shall never be able to stand before the S n of man.

4. Who they are, and what they must be that shall stand before him.

And fifthly, What is the best frame a soul can be in, in order to a meeting with Christ, with the greatest confidence and boldness.

And sixthly and lastly, conclude all in a little Application.

But first of the first, namely to shew you that the standing before Christ is a much more serious and weighty thing, and ought to be more seriously thought of, and more solemnly provided for, than any common calamity whatsoever: Many gracious hearts do tremble at the thoughts of a common calamity; and truly there is reason why they should do so; *David* himself did thus, *Psal.* 119. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments:* but you shall find that sometimes sinners themselves do tremble more, and are much more affected with the thoughts of enduring the presence of Christ, than the bearing up under any common calamity that can be

befall them, *Isa. 33. 13.* saies the Spirit of God there, *Hear ye that are afar off what I have done, and ye that are neer acknowledge my might*, that is in my judgements which I execute; saies he, consider them, see what weight and force there is in them: But mark, how is it with sinners? in *vers. 14.* *The sinners in Sion are afraid.* Afraid of what? *Fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrite*, What is he afraid of? *Who shall stand before the devouring fire? who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* as if they should have said, There is a might, and there is a power and majesty of God appearing, and shining forth in all his judgements; but if you would have us speak our hearts, and tell what we dread most, it is standing before him in that great day, when he shall appear as a devouring fire; it is the being able to hold up the head at that season, that doth distress us most, and fill us with dread and fear: I say, the standing in the day of Christ is a much more difficult thing, then the standing in a common calamity; and I shall shew you in several particulars how that day will out-do every thing
that

that can be in a common calamity: I shall shew it you in eleven or twelve particulars.

1. The day of Christ is more dreadful than a calamity in this respect, that every calamity in this world is a call to repentance, but the day of Christs appearance is onely a call unto judgement: I say calamities in this world, they are calls to repentance, to a sinful people to return; the voice of the word is the first call, and sinners are deaf and will not hear that call, and therefore God sounds an alarm by his judgements, and by them he calls unto poor sinners to repent and turn unto him; but now I say in the day of Christ there is no call unto repentance, nor place for repentance, he onely then calls to judgement: you shall find calamities are calls to repentance, and that is the fruit that God expects from them, that they should work upon a rebellious people, and turn them to himself: look *Amos 4.* in divers verses of that Chapter, you have God setting down the calamities he exercised the people with, and what he expected from them, *Amos 4. 6.* Here was a
famine,

famine, a dreadful calamity that is, upon whomsoever it lights; what doth he expect from thence? *Yet have you not returned unto me*; as if he should have said, this calamity I have exercised you with, but it hath not brought forth its desired fruit, it hath not answered my design upon you; I expected you should have been a broken people, but *yet have you not turned unto me*: he goes on in *vers. 7, 8. Also I have withholden rain, &c. yet have you not returned unto me*; and still God intends the same thing, to call in, and bring over a rebellious people unto himself: In *vers. 9. I have smitten you with blasting, &c.* Here was another judgement, God finites them in the fruits of the earth, and took away the creatures of the earth from them, and what was Gods expectation from them? *yet have you not returned unto me*: In *vers. 10. I have sent among you the pestilence*, and what doth he expect that should do? *your young men have I slain with the sword*; and what work did this do? *yet have ye not returned unto me*, I gather from all this, that the design of God in publike calamities, is to make a re-
belli-

bellious people turn unto him; calamities are loud calls to repentance, 2 *Joel* 11. 12, 13. It was a day of calamity, a day of outward distress, that is here spoken of, and a dreadful day, therefore saies the Lord in *vers.* 12. *Turn you unto me with all your hearts, &c.* You see here there was a dreadful judgement of God upon the backs of this people, and Gods call was, *return unto me*: Gods expectation from this people incompassed about with these judgements, was that they should be a repenting, relenting, returning, broken-hearted people, that they should come in unto God, and that their uncircumcised hearts might be turned. *Rev.* 9. dreadful Plagues the Lord sent forth, and for ought we know, we may be at this season, in this time (and many holy men are of that persuasion) God was sending forth rattling judgements under the second wo: there are many things in the *Revelations*, that point out the periods of time, the knowing of which tells us what times we are in, and what God is doing: now this text relates to the second wo, which the judicious do suppose relates to those that we are under;

der; and now what it is God expects, you may judge by the complaint is made, *They repented not of the works of their hands*, vers. 20, 21. God expects that his people should be a repenting, relenting people: to which add that *Rev. 19. 9, 10, 11. Men were scorched with great heat, &c.* in the pouring out of the vials, that are the last judgements that God will execute; they are the greatest: and mark now, even from the greatest and last calamities that shall come upon the world, what is it God expects? it is a relenting, repenting, reforming, he still calls to it; the greatest calamities that he brings upon the world, that is the effect that he looks they should have. But the coming of Christ will be another thing, when he comes it will not be a call to repentance, but a call to judgement; not a call to reform what thou hast done amiss, but to receive a doom for thy miss-doing. Therefore when mention is made of appearing before the Son of man, it is called appearing before his judgement-seat; not to get thee an interest in Christ, but to be judged by Christ, *2 Cor. 5. 10. For we must all appear*

appear

appear before the judgement-seat, &c. That is the first thing, the day of Christ will be a much more serious thing than any judgement in the world, because judgements are calls unto repentance, but when we come to stand before Christ, it is a call unto judgement.

2. Standing before Christ is a thing of much more seriousness and weight, than the standing under a common calamity, upon a second accompt.

In outward calamities we deal with God remotely, and at a distance; but in the day of Christ, we must deal with Christ immediately. Oh that we could consider this thing seriously! it is a weighty thing indeed to have to do with God immediately.

Beloved, let me tell you, you would not be able to bear the presence of Christ, if he should but speak to you immediately, you would not be able to bear his presence; it would be so full of Glory and Majesty, that you would not possibly stand up under it; much less shall we be able to bear the immediate presence of Christ, when he comes to judgement. You cannot, I say, bear

bear the immediate presence of Christ, if he were only to speak to you. *Exodus 20. 19.* *Speak thou unto us, and we will hear: but let not God speak to us, lest we dye:* Mark the request they make; *Let not God speak to us,* they were not able to hear a word immediately from God, *Speak thou to us, but let not God speak to us, lest we dye.* And therefore it is that God hath graciously so ordered it, that we should have the Gospel delivered to us by Creatures like our selves, because we are not able to bear the immediate presence of God: And therefore saith the Apostle, *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, 2 Corinth. 4. 7.* VVe are not able to bear the communication of it otherwise, but onely by poor Creatures like our selves; you are not able to bear the immediate presence of Angels, who are infinitely less in glory then the God of Glory, and his Son Jesus Christ, *1 Chron. 21. 20.* *And Ornan turned back and saw the Angel, and his four sons that were with him hid themselves;* they were not able to endure the presence of the Angel, they run away from him, as a sight too glorious for them to bear.

But

But my Brethren, in the day of Christ you must have to do immediately with Christ himself; you must have to do with him immediately, nothing standing between Christ and you. Alas! in a common calamity it is not so; God deals with you remotely, and at a distance: you do not see him in his Glory and Majesty; but in that day you must have to do with him immediately: and therefore it is said, *We must stand before His Judgement-seat.* God executes his judgements now in secret and hidden ways, but then he will himself execute it immediately.

3. The day of Christ will be much more dreadful than any calamity, upon this account, because in any calamity the Majesty of God is veiled and hid; but in the day of Christ, God and Christ will appear in all their Majesty, Beauty and Glory, in all their Excellence: I say, in a day of calamity the Majesty and Glory of Christ is veiled and hid; it cannot be seen, they that see most of it, see but little: but in the day of Christ he will appear in all his Royalty and Glory. **Wicked men will not see what of the Glory and Majesty of God may**

be seen in a judgement, *Isai. 26. 11.*
Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they
will not see; that is, in a judgement, they
 will not see: Why, what will they not
 see? they will not behold the Majesty
 of the Lord, as it is in the 10. vers.
 What of God may be seen, and what
 of his Majesty doth shine forth in a
 day of common calamity, they will
 not see, that they will not consider:
 and Saints see but very little of God in
 a judgement neither, *Micah 6. 9.* *The*
Lords voice cryeth to the City, the man
of wisdom shall see thy Name. A Saint
 doth see something of the Name and
 Glory, something of the greatness and
 Majesty of God that doth shine forth
 in a calamity: but of that that they
 do see, as was spoken in another Case,
Job 4. 12. *Now a thing was secretly*
brought unto me, and mine ear received
a little thereof. So must I say, as to the
 Majesty of God in a judgement, we
 Receive a little thereof: it is a small
 part of the Majesty of God, that we
 are able to conceive of, and to take in;
 as it is said in *Job 26.* speaking about
 the Works of God, *Lo, these are parts of*
his ways; but how little a portion is heard
 of

of him? In the last *verse*. So I may say of the judgments of God, *Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is seen of him?* When we consider Gods creating Works, his work of Providence, and his works of Judgement; How little a Portion can we take in of God? but Christ when we shall come to stand before the Judgement-seat, he will then appear in all his Royalty and Glory, his Majesty and Beauty shall then discover it self eminently: Therefore in *Revelations 20. 12.* it is said, *I saw the dead both small and great standing before God:* Christ shall then appear in his Royalty, as he is God, and equal with the Father; he shall appear not onely clad with his humanity, but with his God-head in that day. It is true, we are said to appear before the Son of man; He shall sit as the Son of man, but yet he shall also sit as God; which how shall it staffle every Christless soul, that shall stand before the glory of that day! *Matt. 25. 31, 32.* *When the Son of man shall come in his Glory, &c.* Jesus Christ he is King in the world, and he governs the Providences in the world, and sends a-

bout the judgements that are abroad : but who sees the Majesty and Glory of Christ, that is now hid ? but in the day of Christ that shall appear ; then his Glory shall shine forth eminently, *Matt. 24. 30. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man, &c.* They shall see the Son of man coming in Power and great Glory. Now that is another difference : in a calamity, the Majesty of Christ is veiled ; but in the day of Christ, Christ will then appear in his Glory.

4. In the forest calamity that ever was, or shall be in the world, the Lord doth not deal in strictness of justice, nor doth he come forth with all his wrath ; but in the day of Christ he will then sit upon the Throne, judging with exactness of Justice, and rendering to every one according to the utmost extent of all that they have done : There is much of the wrath of God is kept in, in the most wrathful providence that cometh upon the world ; what *Ezra* speaks in the 9th. chap. and 13. v. thou *Hast punished us less then our iniquities deserved, &c.* So it may be said with respect unto any judgement that ever was, is, or may be upon earth, the

Lord

Lord punisheth less then iniquity deserves; the most dreadful calamity hath not that tetrour in it, that iniquity calls for, and deserves at the hand of God : And therefore the people of God in the *Lament.* 3. 22. do acknowledge, *It is the Lords mercies they are not consumed.* Any thing on this side being consumed, and cut off from the presence of God, is Mercy.

Ah my Friends ! however severe the Lord may seem in any of his providences, he is not so severe as he might be, if he did stir up all his wrath, and deal in strictness and exactness of severity ; but when Christ comes to judgement, every man shall have according to his work : Poor sinners shall then receive the utmost peny, *2 Cor.* 5. 10. *We must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether good or bad.* Upon earth men do not receive according to what is done, according to the sinfulness of sin, but God in wrath remembers mercy; but at that day all men shall receive according to what they have done; there shall

be a retribution according to the strictness of Justice, *Rom. 2. 5, 6.* But after thy hardness, treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath, &c. and so, *Matt. 16. 27.* For the Son of man shall come in the Glory of his Father with his Angels: and then he shall reward every man according to his works: That is another thing in which the greatest day of common calamity, and the day of Christ differ exceedingly.

5. There is this Difference: Calamities in this world they mainly light upon the outward man; but when Jesus Christ shall sit in judgement, he will judge both inward and outward man together; he will reach the soul as well as the body, and have to do with that. Present calamity lights upon the outward man, it is the body at the utmost, is the seat of that. There be many sore calamities that do not reach the body, as the first distresses that fell on *Job*, which were sore distresses, yet at first they did not so much as reach his body, *Job 1. 14, 16.* There came a messenger that told him his Cattle were taken, &c. these were sore distresses, sharp calamities; but yet all this while the

the

the body of *Job* was not so much as touched. And also sometimes calamities do reach the body; the hand of God was upon *Job* himself in the conclusion; and sometimes it reaches the life; the poor carcase is carryed to earth. Thus it was with the first-born of *Egypt*; in the days of *David*, when many souls fell by that judgement, by the Plague; and if it do so, yet the dread of this is not like that that shall attend the coming of Christ: He shall sit in judgement upon inward and outward man at once: He shall reach the body as well as the soul at once. And therefore is that prayer of *Paul*, *1 Thess. 5.23.* And I pray God sanctifie you wholly, and the Lord keep you in soul, body and spirit, &c. as if he would have said, The Lord look after the inward and outward man, and keep them to the day of Christ, for Christ in his day will have to do with both: It will not be as it is in outward calamity, in which the body falls onely, but Christ will sit in judgement upon the inward man also: And therefore it is said in *Mat. 23.* *Fear not him that can kill the body onely, but him that can cast both*

body and soul into hell: Christ is able to reach souls as well as bodies, and he will make it known that he is able to do it in the day of Christ.

6. Common calamity and the day of Christ differ upon this account: if in outward calamities upon the body, any sin be brought to remembrance, it is not such a bringing sin to remembrance as shall be in the day of Christ; I confess in days of outward calamity, there is a bringing of sin to remembrance, but not such as shall be in the day of Christ: God did bring sin to *Jobs* remembrance in the time of his calamity, *Job* 13.26. *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth*: This was the case of poor *Job*, he was under outward afflictions, and God also did set home some sin upon his soul, and brought that to remembrance. And this was also the case of *David*, Look upon my pain, saies he, and forgive me my sin; and therefore he prays in another verse, *Forgive me the sins of my youth*: In his affliction God made him remember the sins of his youth: but in the day of Christ there will be another kind

kind of bringing sin to our remembrance, then there is in any calamity whatsoever: All the sinners sins shall then be presented to him at once, with all their aggravations, with every circumstance attending it; and what dread, what confusion will it bring upon the heart, when it shall be at this pass? *Psal. 50. 21. These things thou hast done, and I kept silence, and thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self: but I will set them in order before thee.* Now the great day of setting them in order, it will be the day of Christ, that will be the special season when the Lord will set them in order before the soul.

7. Farther, there is this difference: In outward calamities, God deals secretly with men, but in the day of Christ he will deal with them in the sight of the whole world: In a calamity God deals secretly, and cuts off a sinner now and then, and there is no great noise about it; but in the day of Christ he will deal with them in the sight of all: now the publikeness or solemnity of an action makes it the more eminent and terrible: It puts a great deal more of dread and terror in-

to the malefactor, to be tryed and executed in the face of the Country ; the solemnity increaseth the terror. Oh my friends , when you come to stand before the Son of man , you shall stand also before men and Angels ; the work of that day shall not be done in a corner , but whole heaven and earth shall be spectators , and witnesses of what is done , and what passes in that day ; and therefore it is said in that forementioned place, *Rev. 20. 12. I saw the dead both small and great standing before the Lord ; they were all standing before God, Mat. 25. 31, 32. The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy Angels with him : the whole host of Angels shall be present : And what more ? And before him shall be gathered all nations : This shall be a great appearance, and in the sight of God, Angels and men , all shall be done at that day : and in that respect there is a great deal of difference.*

8 There is a great deal of difference upon this account ; as for common calamities it is possible they may be escaped , you may live in the midst of Gods judgements and yet be preserved ;
yea

yea possibly a sinner for the sake of some that fear the Lord, may be preserved in a common calamity, as was *Noahs* case, he and his wife, and his sons and their wives, all escaped the flood; but it was *Noah* was the righteous person, the rest were given in for his sake: it may be a righteous soul begs preservation for some poor sinners or other, and for their sakes God gives them a preservation; but none can be indulged in the day of Christ, every one must then fall under the sentence that shall be pronounced by Christ, whatever it be: There is no way to prevail for indulgence for thy absence at that day, *Heb. 9. 27.* *It is appointed for all men once to dye, and after that the judgement;* good and bad, all must pass through the gate of death, and must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ: and as the wise man speaks of death, so may I speak of succeeding judgement, *Eccl. 8. 8.* *No man hath power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war;* so may I say, *No man hath power in the day of Christ, and there is no discharge from that war:* Thou must ride out that storm

storm, and see and bear the worst of it, for thou must appear before the judgement-seat of Christ.

9. There is yet this difference: some that fall under a common calamity, suppose this of the Plague, God takes away their reason, so that they do not feel the dread of it; it is no more to them, nor are they sensible of any more pain than those that are in health and strength; but in the day of Christ we shall all stand before him in our senses, we shall then know, and understand and feel, what the weight, and dread, and majesty of Christ is in that day, and at that time, *Rev. 1. 5. He comes in the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him*; they that would be most willing not to see and behold Christ, they must see, their senses shall all be set at work, to understand what the dread, glory, and majesty of that day is.

10. There is this difference also: in a common calamity, it may be if it lights upon thee, some friend, some indulgent relation will stand by thee, to help, support thee, and bear thee up; but in the day of Christ thou must stand single:

single. My friends, though these be plain things, they may do our souls a great deal of good, if God will bless them; it is a great relief in a calamity, when the hand of God is upon you, when you are sick, and weak, and full of pain, if some friend will stand by to help thee, to bear thee up, and endeavour to relieve the outward man; but in the day of Christ all will stand at a distance, the knots of all relations (except those onely that are spiritual) must be at an end when life ends; and when thou comest to stand before Christ, thou must stand singly, nakedly, and alone, none to stand by thee, thou wilt have none to befriend thee at that hour, unless Christ be thy friend; it is well for them that have a Christ to befriend them at that day.

I shall only make a little allusion to that Text that you have, *Matt. 22.30.* When the question was put to Christ concerning the woman that had seven Husbands, in the Resurrection, whose wife should she be? Answer is made, *In the Resurrection they neither marry, nor give in marriage; all Relation then ceaseth: the friend that was unto thee*
as

as thy own soul, and thou as dear unto him, in the day of Christ, (unless there be any spiritual tye, unless you and he have union with God in Christ) he will have no pitty, no tenderneſs for you, but you muſt ſtand alone to receive a ſentence from the Lord.

11. There is this farther difference: any outward calamity, though never ſo ſharp, may be of ſhort continuance; the hand of God may light upon thee in ſuch a diſpenſation as is now abroad, and in a few days it may ſend thee to another world, or the extremity of it may be paſſed over in a little time: but when thou comelt to ſtand before the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt, the iſſue of that day will laſt to all eternity, *Mat. 25.32. Before him ſhall be gathered all Nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as the ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats: and what ſhall the iſſue of this ſeparation be? In verſ. 46. Theſe ſhall go away into ever-laſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal: eternity will be the reſult and product of thy ſtanding before the judgement-ſeat of Chriſt: calamity, outward diſtreſs, may ſoon come to a*
 period

period, but standing before Christ will reach thy everlasting condition.

And 12. This difference there is also between common calamity, and standing before Christ; in that the utmost dread and worst part of outward calamity is this, that it lets thee in unto the dreadful tribunal of Christ; wherefore do you fear, or any that are in fear of a judgement, but onely because possibly you consider that that may let the soul in to the judgement-seat of Christ? but now the dread of the judgement-seat of Christ, is this, in that it determines thy estate for ever: I say, the dread of any calamity lyeth in this, that possibly it may bring thee to death, and so let thee in to judgement; but this is the dread of standing before the judgement-seat of Christ; it lets thee into an everlasting state, to the passing of a sentence not to be revoked for ever: God many times threatens in outward calamities, and afterwards repeals it, *Hos. 11. 8.* *How shall I give thee up, Oh Ephraim, &c.* God was determining to make *Ephraim* as *Admah*, and to set him as *Zeboim*, that is, to cut him off in a judgement,

ment, and by destruction; But how shall I do it, saies God? His bowells were turned in him, he repented him of the evil, and he was troubled for what he had done: so in *Jonah 9.* the people repented, and the Lord repented of the evil, and was pleased to revoke the sentence he had passed upon that City of *Niniveh*: So in *Amos 4.* you have mention made of the Lords repenting, that is, some judgement or other he was thinking to send upon a people, and yet he revokes the sentence, and resolves it should not come upon them: but when you come to stand before the judgement-seat of Christ, you shall receive a sentence there that shall stand for ever, it shall stand without any recalling.

And thus I have briefly dispatched the first thing propounded, to shew you, that to stand before the Son of Man, is a much more weighty and serious thing, then standing under any temporal calamity. I do not speak thus to make you slight any temporal or common stroke, but onely to raise up your hearts to a much more serious thoughtfulness about the standing before

fore the Son of man, and to shew you that that is a thing much more weighty; which leads me to the second thing propounded for the prosecution of this Point; namely, that secure sinners that are so confident that they can laugh the most dreadful calamity in the face, they shall be made serious, and brought to tremble in the day of Christ: They shall finde it to be no laughing matter. Indeed, the Servants of God sometimes are said to laugh at calamity, but it is in a good sense, *Job 5. 20, 21, 22. In famine he shall redeem thee, &c. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh:* but you must know, the sense of that expression here is this, they shall not make light of a calamity, they shall consider the dread and Majesty of God that shines forth in it; but when they consider their security, through the goodness of God, they shall look upon calamity as that that is not able to touch them: Such may be the safety and security of the Saints and Servants of God, through his kindness, that they may laugh at a calamity, as a thing that shall not be able to come nigh them. Such is the wretchedness and the hard-

ness of the hearts of sinners, that the most startling judgements do not awaken them; let God threaten, they are not moved: And therefore you shall finde what the Lord by the Prophet complains of as a great evil; *Wo unto them that draw iniquity with the cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope, Isaiah 5.19, 20* Mark what it is, *They say, Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it:* It was a taunting and deriding speech, wherewith this people mocked the Prophet: he tells them that judgement would come; *Come, say they, let us see what he will do;* It was a daring and insulting speech. And by the way, let me tell you what the reason is of the desperate sinfulness of sinners, in time of Gods judgement; *They draw, saith he, iniquity with the cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope;* that is, they sin as fast as they can, they do not minde the judgements of God, if they did, they would put a check upon them; they fear not, come what will, they think it will be well enough with them. That this is the guise of sinners, you shall see, *2 Chron. 36. 16. But they mocked*

mocked the Messengers of God, &c. Let the Lord threaten what he will, they for their parts were not concerned with it; they mocked the Messengers, despised the Prophets, and all the judgements of God were light in their accounts. And it is no wonder that sinners fear not judgement, for they fear not sin, which is a thing that is much more dreadful then judgement, if rightly considered, *Prov. 14. 9. Fools make a mock at sin*: And the very appearance of Christ himself, (the most dreadful of all dispensations) before it comes, sinners will but mock and scoff at it, as you have it, *2 Pet. 3.* saies he, They will scoff at the coming of Christ, at the great Day of the Lord; they will but make a mock of it, and say, Where is the Christ you talk of? we see no preparation to it: *For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were*: When Christ comes in earnest, he will make them fear in earnest; and then the most daring & confident of sinners shall tremble: it is evident from five or six things I would go over very briefly.

1. From hence, in the day of Christ, the conscience of every sinner shall be

effectually awakened: There shall be no secure conscience in the day of Christs appearing. Now, though a sinner with a sleepy conscience may not consider, may not be affected with and moved by the present judgements of God; yet when Christ shall appear, and conscience shall be awakened with it, it will set him into a fit of trembling: For present, under word and works, it is possible hardness of heart may remain upon sinners. Scripture makes mention of a very desperate hardness of heart upon some: it was said of some, they were past feeling, conscience was so stupified, that they had no kind of sense, no kind of tenderness at all, *1 Tim. 4. 2. Speaking lies in hypocrisie; having their consciences seared as with a hot Iron:* You know, that that which is seared with a hot Iron, if it be the flesh, it becomes senseless, and benumbed; so it is with the conscience, there are *consciences seared as with hot Irons;* the sense, and vigor, and activity of it is taken away: but in the day of Christ this sleepy dead conscience shall be quickned: that Scripture in the *9th. chap. of Mark,* is usually applyed to
this

this purpose, *v. 44, 45*. You read of a Worm that never dyeth, which is granted on all hands to be the conscience; and this receives a quickning when it comes to stand before the Seat of Christ, and shall remain so for ever, with a quickned conscience shall they be cast into Hell: So the *Acts 3. 20*. The time of Christs coming, is called, *The time of the restitution of all things*; There shall be a *restitution of all things*, with respect to the comfort of the Saints; Therefore it is called, A time of refreshing to them, *19. vers.* When Christ shall come, there will be a *restitution of all things*, to the refreshing of the Saints: but mark, It will tend to the misery of sinners; and among other things, upon this account, because then the conscience of sinners shall be returned unto them. Man at first Creation had a lively active conscience, that could quickly feel the least stirring from God; but that man by sin hath lost in a great measure: and at that day I am speaking of, conscience shall be restored to its activity, life and strength: and what a dread will an awakened guilty conscience put the sin-

ner into? A wakened guilty conscience, of all things, dreads the presence of God most; it cannot away with that, above any thing. Methinks that expression should help a little this way, that you have concerning *Cain, Gen. 4. 16.* *And Cain went out from the presence of God:* He was full of guilt, the blood of *Abel* was upon him; he had guilt upon him, and he gat him out of the presence of God: and so *Adam* before him, and his Wife; what did they? *Gen. 3. 10.* *I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid:* He had a guilty awakened conscience, and therefore he could not bear the presence of the Lord. A poor sinner! What will he do in the day of Christ, when his conscience shall be awakened, and it shall be guilty enough, and yet he must endure the presence of Christ; there shall be no refuge for him to run to, nor place where he shall be able to hide himself. Now upon this account that sinners will be awakened, they will be filled with trembling.

2. When Christ shall come, all the Atheism in their hearts will be effectually confuted: You cannot conceive what

what a deal of Atheism there is in the heart of man by Nature, unless you have observed it in your own hearts, and that will tell you there is this Atheism in the heart of man by Nature, they think there is no God, or at least, wish there were none; and they are ready to say, All this preaching is but to keep us in awe, and to hinder us from living merrily; and with such kind of Atheism as this is, the heart of man is fraught by nature, *Psal. 14. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:* and *Psal. 10. 4. The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts;* or as it may be rendred, All his thoughts are, There is no God: it may be he will not say so openly, but he doth it in his heart, and he thinks so: Few will speak it openly, though they have secret thoughts that there is no God, nor Christ, nor judgement to come. But now, how will they tremble when they shall come to see all their Atheism confuted, when they shall see Christ in his Glory, and sitting upon his Throne, and there sitting to execute judgement according to a Scri-

pture-Rule, according to what they have often heard? Oh, what a plunge will they be in at such a season? what a damp will this strike upon their spirits, when all their Atheism shall be confuted? 2 *Thef.* 1. 7. it is said, *Christ shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire. Revealed from Heaven!* Why is he not revealed in the Scripture? Do we not know there is a God, and Christ, and judgement, by the Scripture? Yes, but that will not convince some stupid sinners: There be many will not believe there is a God, a Christ, and a Judgement, for all this; but he must be *Revealed from Heaven*, before the sinners Atheism will be wholly confuted. Christ in the Gospel is *Revealed from Heaven*: this word it is not of mens making, it is of Divine Authority; but yet this will not dispel the Atheism, he must *Be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire*, before this work will be done. That is the second thing, to shew that some will tremble at Christs judgement, that would not tremble at any previous judgement.

3. They will then be filled with trembling, because they will then be convinced

convinced of the sinfulness of sin : There is not a sinner upon the face of the earth, that doth see sin to be as sinful as it is ; VVhy, what do they think of sin ? *Fools they make a mock of sin ;* or as the VVise man saith, *It is a sport to a wicked man to do mischief ;* that is, to commit sin : this is but to the sinner a pretty kind of diversion, that helps him to pass away his time merrily. Some sinners there are that have tenderness enough to tremble at the thoughts of judgement, though not to tremble at sin, *Job 36.21. Take heed, regard not iniquity ; for this hast thou chosen rather then affliction.* This is the sinners choice, they do see a dread in judgement, but none in sin ; therefore they rather chuse to sin then suffer, or fall under outward troubles. Sinners have mighty slight thoughts of sin, as appears by that, *Malach. 2.17.* VVhy, say they, what great matter have we done to weary God ? VVhy, saies God, you have sinned, and thereby you have wearied me ; and yet ye cry, VVherein have we wearied thee ? we can tell no great hurt we have done thee : This is the guise of sinners ; but
the

the time will come when Christ shall appear, and then sinners shall be convinced of sins, in the 15 *vers.* of *Jude*, *To execute judgement, &c.* V What will Christ do, when he comes? he will come to convince them of their sins, of all their ungodly deeds, and to shew them what sinfulness there is in their sin. And now, I say, when sinners shall see and be convinced of the sinfulness of sin, that will make them tremble, that will awaken them, and that will be done when Christ comes.

4. Because then they shall have all their misconceivings and false apprehensions of God removed. It is true, it may be sinners think there is a God, but yet such a God as an Idol would make; they have such misconceptions of him, which will then be effectually removed: if they think that he is a God, yet a God that doth not see and observe all that they do, *Psal. 94. 6, 7.* *They say, &c. Yet they say, He shall not see:* he is a God, but such an one as an Idol might make; a God, but a God at a distance, that doth not trouble himself with our concernment: So

Psal.

Psal. 10. 10, 11. He croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones: This is that that sinners say, Suppose we grant he be God, and doth see what we do, yet he will not trouble himself to call us to an account for every thing that we do: so you have it in the 13. *vers.* He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it: These are the misconceptions that sinners have of God, either he will not see, or if he do, he will not regard, he will not call to account: but now how will sinners be startled when they shall finde there is a God, and all their misapprehensions of him are confuted? *Revel. 6.* the later end, They shall call unto the *Rocks* to fall on them, and to the *Mountains* to cover them from the presence of the *Lamb*, who shall appear as a *Lyon*, and he that sits upon the *Throne*; and *Psal. 58.* last *vers.* So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth: Once it may be they said, There is no God; or if there be a God, he seeth not, and will not judge: but now they shall say, Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. This

is that that will make them tremble exceedingly.

5. This shall fill them with trembling, that they shall find they are not able to bear up against the glory and majesty of that day: so *Rev. 6.* latter end, *Hide us from the wrath of the Lamb, and him that sitteth upon the throne*; they shall see that infinite dread in the wrath of the Lamb, that they shall not be able to stand up under: so *Isa. 3. 14.* *Who shall stand before a devouring fire? who shall dwell with everlasting burning?*

6. And sixthly and lastly, Sinners that did not dread judgement, shall dread the appearance and coming of Christ, for then they will be overcome and stricken down with desperate despairing thoughts, they will find their condition then incurable for ever; they make light of their estate for present, but they will then find it past remedy for ever: now I would say this, If there be any sinners so stupid that present judgements do not affect them, I would say, let them alone until Christ comes.

The third thing propounded, to shew who they are that shall never be able to stand before the Son of man.

Doubtless my friends it is a very great honor to be accounted worthy to stand before Jesus Christ: If the Queen of *Sheba* could say, and that upon some ground, to *Solomon*, *Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee to hear thy wisdom*: How much more may we say, *Happy are thy men, and happy are thy servants, O Lord Jesus, who shall stand before thee to hear thy wisdom, to share with thee in thy glory, and to behold thy face to all eternity!* surely that is a far greater honour: therefore in *Psal. 15. 1.* *David* puts the question, *Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?* the tabernacle of God, and the holy hill of God, is both the place where his worship was of old, and it is also put for heaven sometimes in Scripture; and in both there is the presence of God and of his Christ, he is met withall in his worship, and most of all and most eminently in glory; but

but now, says the *Psalmist*, *Who shall stand in thy holy place? who shall stand in thy presence?* Where shall there be any found that shall be dignified with this honor? What sort of people must they be that thou wilt thus promote? Doubtless there are very many that shall never be able to stand before Christ, *Luk. 13. 23.* the question was put, *Are there few that shall be saved?* Christ answers, *Strive to enter in at the streight gate, for many I say unto you shall seek and shall not be able to enter:* and hence it is that it is said, *Mat. 7. 22, 23.* *Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c.*

Now in treating on the fourth, who they are that shall not stand; I shall shew you that there are ten sorts of persons that will never be able to stand before the Son of man: The Lord grant we may not be of that number.

I. Ungodly finners, openly profane, who spend their days without any awe of God upon them, they are persons never like to be honored by Christ in his day, and at his appearance and coming, *Psal. 1. 5.* *The ungodly shall*

shall not stand in the judgement, &c. the ungodly, such as live in a neglect of Duty; the sinners, such as live in the acting of all impiety, saith he, these shall not stand in the judgement, *1 Pet. 4. 18.* *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?* If they find some difficulty in ascending the mount of glory, what then shall sinners do? doubtless they will never be able to stand in the presence of Christ.

2. Such as promote and encourage sin in others, they are not like to be owned, and honored, and promoted by Christ in his day: some there are that are such and so good factors for the Devil, that they wonderfully promote his trade in the world, and as a recompence of all their trouble they shall receive the salary of eternal misery; whatever souls they are that are so in love with sin, and the ways and works thereof, that they help it on, and further it by what means they can, must never expect to be owned and honored by Christ when they shall stand before him at his judgement-seat: there are such in the world as the Prophet complains of, *Ezek.*

13. 22. *Who strengthen the hands of the wicked*; many ways there are to do it, but it is miserable work, whoever is found in it: we promote and encourage sin, either when we provoke and intice unto it, as *Solomon* warns his son, *Prov. 1. 10. When sinners intice thee, consent not to them*; there are such sinners that intice unto sin, as the *whorish woman*, *Prov. 7. 21. With many fair speeches she caused him to yeild*, that is a promoting of sin; and much more do they promote it, that by what means they can do constrain others to it.

Thus do the wicked great men of the earth, that compell others unto their idolatry, and to share in their abominations, as *Jeroboam* did in *2 King. 17. 21, &c.* They also promote sin in others, who do labour to extenuate and lessen sin, and make people believe it is not what it is, to the end they may less fear and dread it, and go on in it with the more confidence; such a kind of people as the Lord by the Prophet meets with in *Mal. 2. 17. Ye have wearied me, &c.* when you tell people sin is not such a thing as some
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would have you believe, and he will love you for all that, this is an enticing unto evil: I but what will become of them? that will you see in *Rom. 1.32.* *Who knowing the judgement, &c.* in which words you have both the sin and punishment that shall follow upon the sinner: the sin is expressed, that they sin, and love to have others do so; the punishment is implied, they that so sin are worthy of death, and that they shall have, they shall have their demerit, not life from Christ, nor shall they live with Christ, but everlasting death is their demerit, and that they shall have, that shall be their portion; and so that *Mat. 5. 19.* *Whosoever shall break any of these little commandments, and teach men so to do, &c.* whoever shall sin, and encourage others in it, what shall become of him? he shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven: the words are a figurative speech, where less is spoken then intended: *least*, that is, he shall be so little, that he shall not be at all in the Kingdom of heaven: That is the second sort that shall not stand before the Son of man. Onely I would put in a caution, That it is possible

good souls, even the Lords own people, may sometimes prove a means of encouraging sin in others, and that either by some ill example, as such a case is intimated, *1 Cor. 8. 10. If any man, &c.* The example of a stronger Christian may encourage a weak one to do things against his conscience, things he is not satisfied in, and so it may be a sin unto that weak one, he may sin being led to it by the example of another; or we may further sin in others, when we do not restrain it according as we may and ought: Thus did *Eli*, who was a very good man, but yet he did further the sin of his sons, in that he did not restrain them, he did onely give them a gentle and mild reproof, when he should have put a restraint upon them, as you may read, *1 Sam. 2. 22.* and forward, *Now Eli was very old, &c.* in a mild way he reproveth them, when as he was a Magistrate he should have put a restraint upon them: and see how God punishes this upon him in *Chap. 3. 13.* It is not enough to reprove a sin, but where we can we ought to restrain it, as Masters, Parents, Magistrates, and the like, that is their duty, and they

they that are not faithful in the discharge of it, may be thereby an encourager of sin in others: only this note, that though sinners may encourage sin, and Saints may encourage sin too, yet it is greatly different; Saints may encourage sin eventually and accidentally, but not intentionally; it is not their design: sinners do it designedly, and Saints accidentally, and that is a wide difference.

To proceed, thirdly, They may not expect to stand in the day of Christ, that rush on upon ways of sin, contrary to light and convictions received, *Rom. 1. 21.* *Because that when they knew God,* &c. in a due proportion to the light we have received, such should our walkings and acting be, and he that sins against his light, sins greatly: Many make dreadful havock of their light, and great inroads upon their conscience: You read in *Prov. 20. 27.* The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord; the conscience of a man it is the candle of the Lord, and we often sin against it, untill we sin it out, although this cannot be done at a cheap rate, and yet how often do we do it! *Psal. 125. 5.* *As for such as turn aside, the Lord shall*

lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; in which is implied, not only that God will leave them to sin as the wicked do, but to the same punishment that doth attend and betide the workers of iniquity; and also to this purpose take that text again, *Rom. 1. 32. Who knowing the just judgements of God*; there is a great emphasis, in that they that know that he that sinneth so and so what he doth deserve, they are like to fall under his just judgement, *Luk. 12. 47. The servant that knows his Lords will, &c.* What, shall he be rewarded? No, *But he shall be beaten with many stripes.*

A fourth sort of persons that shall never stand before Christ, are they that turn the grace of God and Christ into wantonness; they that from the kindness of God in the Gospel, take occasion to strengthen their hands in ways of rebellion against God and Christ: I tell you such souls will have a sad account to make in the day of Christ, and will stand with much paleness of face, and dejection of spirit; in *vers. 4. of Judes Epistle*, we are pointed to such a people, who turned the grace of
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God into lasciviousness ; that is, Make use of the grace of God in the Gospel, as an occasion to lasciviousness : Oh it is sad indeed to make the greatest mercy a prop and fartherer of the greatest iniquity ! *Paul* tells us in *Rom. 7. 11.* That sin took occasion by the Commandment ; that is, there is such an enmity and contrariety in the heart of man naturally against God , and the minde of God, that the very command to holiness is a spur and furtherance unto wickedness ; such is the enmity that is in the heart unto God. Now it is a very great sin, that the Law that is intended to keep from sin, should be an occasion of sin ; it is a great aggravation : but it is much more a great sin, when the Mercy and Grace of God that should be the greatest hindrance, and let , in the way of sin , if that should become an occasion of sin, and a means to further it : The Rule is , *1 John 2. 1.* *My little Children, these things I write, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate, &c. We have an Advocate ; we have a Christ, to the end that it should keep us in from sin , and not that it should*

be an occasion to sin ; and in *Rom.6.1.* saies Paul, *What shall we say then ? shall we sin that grace may abound ? God forbid, God forbid that the kindness of God in the Gospel should be a means to further us in any provocation, that were a dreadful evil. And yet this is the guise of some poor Creatures ; because God hath found out a way for Pardon and Reconciliation, therefore some poor souls venture upon sin the more boldly : And what will be the issue of this ? Oh such shall smart and suffer dearly for it : they shall be punished after the Example of Sodom, in the seventh verse of Judes Epistle.*

5. Such as neglect and slight the Gospel of Christ, and the Grace of Christ in the Gospel : They do not much minde it, God he offers us fairly, he offers us a great deal of kindness and mercy in the Gospel ; but we do not minde it, and what will the result of it be ? *Rom.2.4.5.* *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness ? &c.* It hath been the Lot of the Gospel to meet with very course and rough usage, *Mat. 22. 4,5.* And *Again, he sent forth other ser-*

servants, &c. They slighted the offer as a thing not worth the considering, not worth the giving heed to; let thy preparation and dinner go as it will, they made light of it: But what will the issue of this be? what will this come to? This is not the way to stand before Christ; look to the *Heb. 2:3.* *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

6. Secret Hypocrites and Apostates will never be able to stand in the day of Christ. Secret Hypocrites that profess to be for Christ, but are inwardly against him, their hearts are not with him; such souls will come off with shame in the day of Christ: Therefore you finde what is said, *Job 36.13.* *The hypocrite in heart heaps up wrath, &c.* and *Mat. 24.51.* intimates to us that the portion of hypocrites shall be of all the most sad and dismal portion. And also for Apostates that have begun in the spirit, but do end in the flesh; that have professed a love to Christ, but really have their hearts at a distance from Christ; such as *Paul* wishes the *Galathians* might never prove, *Gal. 3. 3.* *Are ye so foolish? ha-*

ving begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Such souls as shall do thus, they will finde their case sad at last; such as *Paul* speaks of, *1 Tim. 1. 19.* that make *Shipwrack of faith and a good conscience*: That have professed the Faith, and have had some light and tenderness of Conscience, but have thrown off all: how will it be with such? *Heb. 10. 23.* Hold fast the profession of your Faith without wavering, &c. and *25. vers.* Forsake not the assembling your selves together, as the manner of some is: For if you sin after the receiving the knowledge of the Truth, it will be sad: For, saies he, it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

7. Carnal and Formal professors that set out and keep up in a Profession, but are without spirit and life, that have nothing but a form and outside of godliness, without the power: Such souls there are in the world: But alas, such souls will sit down short of a comfortable enjoyment of Christ. How many are there in days in which profession is crowned, that attend diligently upon opportunity? But how little is that

that considered, in *John 1.24.* *God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth?* How many poor creatures are there that onely minde a little lifeless, heartless worshiping of God? *Though the number of the Children of Israel be as the sand of the Sea, a Remnant shall be saved.* Though Professors be as the sand of the Sea, a great many; yet but a remnant shall be saved: And why but a remnant? it is because though they were *Israel*, yet they were but formal, they are spiritually Sapless professors: And therefore because they are but so, but a remnant shall escape.

8. I might also add those moral men, that carry things right between man and man; yet that is not enough to bear up the soul in the presence of Christ.

9. Faint seekers, that have some faint desires, and a half-broken kind of willingness: what will that come to? *Luke 13.24.* *Strive to enter, &c.* He intimates that there should be some should put forth some few cold desires and endeavours, but should not set to the work in earnest; they should seek

to enter, but the Issue of such a seeking should be this ; They should not be able : So, *Mat. 11.12. The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, &c.* The preaching of *John* had put another spirit into the people, that they were even pressing into the Kingdom of Heaven ; *The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence* : Many were pressing into the Kingdom of God, and the violent they would take no denial ; they would take the Kingdom of Heaven by force. These hot-metled souls , they were hot upon the Kingdom of Heaven, and there was no satisfying them without it : but the Faint seekers will be denyed.

10. It may be they that have some raised confidence, though upon bad grounds, and think to challenge Heaven with as much boldness as any, among them there may be such that shall fall short, *Mat. 7. 22, 23.* They shall come unto him, and say, *Lord, Lord, &c.* They shall come and challenge an entrance, with a great deal of boldness and confidence, as if they doubted not of their reception and entertainment ; but yet he shall say unto them,

them, *Verily I know you not, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity,* Job 8. 13. 14. *The hypocrites hope shall perish :* And thus, I say, these several sorts of persons are like to fall short of standing before the Son of man with comfort. But then if these shall not stand, who are they, and what must they be, that shall stand before him with joy? That is the fourth thing.

There are souls that shall stand. Christ hath not dyed in vain, he shall see of the travel of his soul ; there are them that shall lift up their heads when the Son of man shall appear ; and that shall be the time of their redemption, the time of their refreshing : and who are they ? I shall give you this description of him that shall stand before the Son of man : He is such a one, who having denied and renounced his own righteousness, hath put on Christs Righteousness ; is renewed in the Inner man, and bound in spirit for God ; desirous to be found in the whole Will of God, both in doing and in suffering : Of such an one I shall say, as the *Psalmist* speaks, in the *Psal.* 24. 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,*
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and righteousness from the God of his salvation. I shall take this description in parts, and clear up every part of it, and shall beg of you to put the question unto your own hearts, How far you can experience such a VVork of God upon your own spirits?

1. He that shall be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man, is one that hath denyed and renounced his own righteousness; he is one that is brought to see he hath no righteousness of his own; and therefore desires to give up all the thoughts of hanging upon any righteousness of his own whatever: He is one, I say, that seeth he hath no righteousness of his own; and that sight ariseth from the sight of his Original pollution, and of his actual departure from the Lord: he sees his Original pollution, and that makes him cry out as Job, Job 14.4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one:* It makes him cry out as David, Psal. 51.5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* And the soul also seeth its own actual departure from the Lord, and that makes it cry out as they in Isai. 64.6.

We are all as an unclean thing, and also all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. This you shall finde is the spirit that the people of God have been found in; they have put off their own righteousness, turned their backs upon it. Paul once thought he had as much as others, and as we use to say, Thought his peny was as good silver as anothers: He thought he was in as good a condition as the best; but you have him crying out in Phil. 3. 7. What things I counted gain, those I count loss for Christ. Outward priviledges, gifts, duties, whatever he thought would stand him in stead in times past, he laies it down, and calls it but dung and dross. And souls, this frame we must be in, or we are not like else to stand before Christ with comfort. If any man will come after me, he must deny himself: That is it that Christ calls for, that is Christs Rule, He must deny himself, Mat. 16. 24. If any man will come after Christ, and end where he did, that, is in Glory,

The first thing is, *He must deny himself*; and nothing can be more properly called our selves, then our
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own righteousness; and this you must abjure, this you must resolve not to own: And that Text is commonly quoted to this purpose, *Mat. 25. 22. &c.*

Now my Friends, consider what have been the dealings of God with your spirits, what have you experienced of such workings upon your soul? Have you been brought to see your own natural pollution, the defilement of your souls with guilt and filth by nature? and have you been brought to see your turnings from God in your whole course? and hath it wrought this upon you, to see that you have nothing of your own to commend you to God? that all in you, and all without you, is but what may be a provocation to the Divine Majesty, and that you do renounce it all as dung and dross?

2. You must put on Christs Righteousness, for the putting off your own will not do it; you must have a righteousness, the putting off your own must be followed with the putting on of Christs; and with that you may be able to stand before the Lord in the
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great day: This you finde is our Duty, and that to which we are called, *Mat. 11.28. Come unto me*: Coming unto Christ, it is believing, taking hold of his Righteousness: It is not enough that you know there is a Righteousness held forth, a Righteousness offered; but it must be taken, you must put on Christ, as the phrase of Scripture is: *Paul* you finde did thus, in that *Phil. 3. 7. I count all dung for Christ*; and in the *8. vers.* *Yea doubtless I count all loss, &c. All loss for Christ!* and in the *9. vers.* you have the reason, that *I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, &c.* Mark, he made it his business not only to put off his own, but to put on Christs Righteousness; that was his care, And this, I say, will do the work: the soul standing clad with the Robes of Christs Righteousness, will stand with comfort in the day of Christ. I will recommend to your consideration, that *Revel. 7 9.* you read of *A great multitude, which no man could number, that stood before the Throne, and stood before the Lamb, clothed with white, and palms in their hands.* And who are they that are thus

thus before the Throne? In the 13, 14. verses, he tells you, *They were they that had washed their Robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*; and in the next vers. he adds, *Therefore are they before the Throne; they had washed their Robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*: That is, they had the Robes of Righteousness, that were purchased by the Blood of Christ; and the Righteousness of Christ was found upon them, and upon this account they stood before the Lamb: and hence in *Mat. 22. 11, 12.* *When the feast was made, and the King comes to view his guests, he saith unto one of them, How comest thou in hither, not having on a Wedding-garment?* He wanted the Righteousness of Christ, that was the Wedding-garment; that not being found upon him, he must be cast out to be a companion of them that knew not God. Now this is the question; Have you put off your own Righteousness, and put on Christs, without which there is no standing, with which you may and will stand before the Son of man? What is the answer of your hearts in this case? You will say, It is

a hard matter to determine whether I have put on Christs Righteousness or no. I answer, Whether it be hard or easie to determine whether you have done it or no, yet this is concluded on that it must be done, if we would stand before Christ: but a little to help you, before I leave it, consider these two things.

1. Consider that the putting on the Righteousness of Christ, it is but one act. The soul seeth a Beauty and Excellency in Christ, and likes him.

2. It is a consenting act, a Marriage-act: when the soul as it likes Christ, so is willing to receive him according to the terms of the Gospel, at that time it doth put on Christ, and his Righteousness. Now this is the question you are to ask your selves; Have you found such a consenting unto Christ, such a giving up your selves unto Christ, upon the terms of the Gospel? You like him, and approve him, and liking of him, you willingly take him upon the terms he hath offered himself unto you: If you can say, You have found such an act pass between
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Christ and your souls ; it is well, and it may assure you, that you will stand among them that shall stand before Christ.

But then thirdly, in the Description I told you the soul is renewed: Old things must pass away, Christ must be sanctification, as well as Righteousness, *John 3.3. Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* There must be a new Birth, a new work of God must pass upon the soul ; that renewing work it is in all the powers and faculties of the soul : The old Nature it is in some measure weakened in all the faculties of the soul, though not wholly driven out of any of them : There is something of God spread over the whole soul ; but yet not so, but that there is room for the soul, to complain as *Paul* did, *Rom. 7.3. Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* The soul it is brought to thoughts of God that once it had not, and thoughts of sin that once it had not ; it is a real, though but an imperfect work ; it is a work really begun upon the soul, really wrought upon the heart, though not presently perfected :

It is an earnest and pledge of that that shall be wrought out and compleated in the season thereof. Now here is the question you are to put to your hearts: What beginnings of this Work have you upon your souls? Have you thoughts of God you had not, and thoughts of sin you had not, and thoughts of holiness that you were once utter strangers unto?

4. This is in the description, the soul is made to be for Christ, *Titus 2. 13, 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might purifie to himself a peculiar people, &c.* Christ did purchase a people to himself: Time was thou wert all for sin, and Sathan, but now thou art for Christ; thy Vote is on his side, though sometimes sin and Sathan may carry it against thee.

5. The bent of the heart is for God; the ship that is bound for the *Indies* (a long voyage) it meets with many cross winds, and is often driven back; but yet being bound for the same place, it still sets out with the first fair wind, and makes forward as much as it can: It is thus with the soul that shall stand with Christ, it is bound for God, for hea-

ven; it meets with many cross winds; the winds makes the waves of the sea boisterous, and the soul is brought back again to as bad, or it may be, to its own apprehension, a worse condition then at first, when it set out for God, yet bound for God it is, and therefore it improves all its opportunities for God; that is the bent and frame of such a soul, *Isa. 26. 8. The desires of our soul are toward thee, &c.*

6. It is desirous to be found in the whole will of God; not that it is always found in the will of God, but yet the desires are after it, that is the inclination of the heart, & to be found in the whole will of God, in one part as well as another: *Caleb* was a type of them that shall stand before Christ, *Num. 14. 24. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit, and had followed the Lord fully, &c.* He was to go to *Canaan*, and he was a type of all that shall inhabit the heavenly *Canaan*, that shall sit down in the land of rest; they are persons of such spirits, that they are willing to follow the Lord fully, to be found in the whole will of God, in the duties of the first Table, in the worship

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ship of God with his people in their family, *Pfal. 4. 3.* Therefore called the godly man: They are for the second Table-duties, to do the duty of their places and relations towards God and all men, therefore *Tit. 2. 11.*

The grace of God teacheth to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, &c. Now see, how is it with thee? thou hast corruptions remaining, sin dwelling in thee, and thou art found but little in the way and work of God; but which way is the bent of thy heart? which way do the strongest desires of thy heart run?

7. It is willing not onely to do but to suffer for God, to be true to his name, his honor and glory, whatever it may cost him; to submit his life, liberty, estate, honor, or whatever he hath, to the will of Christ: if the Lord wills me to suffer, I will undergo it, if I may but any way further and promote his glory; that is the requirement of Christ in *Mark. 8. 38.* *Whoever shall be ashamed of me, &c.* he that will not own Christ, and his way and work in the face of the utmost hazard that he can run, he shall not be owned of

Christ when he shall come: so *Rev. 2. Fear none of those things, be faithful to death, &c.* So consider and commune with your spirits in this matter; are you willing to do his will, and suffer his will? is it the design of your spirits, to stand perfect in the whole will of God? It is good if so, and such as I have here described shall be sure to stand before Christ, whoever be rejected in that day.

And this brings me to the fifth thing, to shew you what is the best frame that the soul should be most ambitious of, and that will best fit it to stand before the Son of man: What is the best frame to stand before Christ in the day of Christ? There are these five things necessary, if you would be able to meet Christ without any consternation of spirit, if you would be able to meet him with settled confidence & boldness, besides what I have already laid down.

Five things are needful, 1. To have the love of God in Christ witnessed and sealed up to the soul: It is a great mercy to have an interest in Christ, to have taken hold on his righteousness; but it is a further and greater mercy, to have the love of God in Christ witnessed,

nessed, and manifested, and sealed up to the soul by the Spirit of Christ; souls, this is that mercy which the Saints have been breathing after, *Psal. 4. 6. Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us*; this is that mercy which the Saints have prized above the dearest and best of all the mercies of this life, *Psal. 163. 3. Because thy loving kindness is better then life, &c.* life is better then any other thing in this world, but the love of God manifested to the soul that is better then life; this is that that the Saints of God have travelled for, and for which they are travelling, for which they are waiting upon the Lord from time to time, and from duty to duty; this is that that their souls are set upon, *Psal. 77. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord to behold his face, &c. Psal. 63. 1. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, &c.* This is that the soul of the *Psalmist* was seeking after; this is that that carries the soul couragiously and comfortably through the most rugged and unpleasing paths and passages it meets with in this world, *Rom. 5. 3. We*

glory in tribulations ; and what is it that makes the soul glory in tribulation ? says he, Because the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit of God , that is the instrument to do that work upon the soul , that is it that makes the soul rejoyce in, and go chearfully through , whatever irksome providence it may possibly meet with in the world : it hath the light of Gods countenance ; a sence of his love and favour ; it hath the good will of God sealed up to it by the Spirit of Christ , and this is that that will give the soul the greatest boldness in the day of Christ, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10, 11. Give all diligence that you may be found of him in peace, &c. by this means you shall be carryed with the greatest chearfulness and comfort unto the day and coming of our Lord Jesus.

2. This is needful, that the soul be weaned from this world, and disengaged to all the intanglements and incumbrances of it ; that it sit loose from the cares and comforts of this world ; this is requisite to be the frame of those that would meet with Christ with comfort and boldness : You shall find

find the things of this world are of a very hurtful tendency to the souls of the Saints, they do a wonderful deal of harm; they are often a means to carry off the heart from God, if it be not exceedingly careful: therefore Christ gives this counsel, *Mat. 6. 25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, &c.* be not much taken up with the things and concernments of this life: Why what is the hazard? why, saies he, in *vers. 4. No man can serve two masters, &c.* Let not the heart run out too much after the world, for fear the world take the heart away from God; a man cannot have his heart too much let out to this world, but it will draw the soul too much from Christ, *2 Tim. 2. 3, 4. Thou therefore indure hardness: No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life:* If you are for Christ, and ever mean to do Christ any service, make this your care, that the heart be not taken up with the concerns of this life: if you let it out to things below, Christ will have little of your love, and little of your service by this means; so that I say is an excellent frame in order to
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the meeting with Christ with the greatest comfort and boldness, *Luk. 21. 34.* *Take heed to your selves, lest at any time, &c.* take heed your hearts are not swallowed up with things below, and so that day come upon you unawares: whosoever hath his heart too much engaged in the things of this life, the day of Christ will take him at a disadvantage, he will not be able to meet Christ with so much boldness as otherwise he might: Christ in *Luk. 12.* gives his disciples this counsel, *vers. 35.* *Let your loyns be girded about, &c.* What must we be if we would be found in the greatest posture of fitness for the Lord? Why, *let your loyns be girded about*: The loyns here, is that that is called elsewhere the loyns of the mind, *1 Pet. 1. 13.* Now these are the affections and workings of the heart, which must be girt up, and not suffered to hang loose to the things of this world, not suffered to wander after the concernments of this world: that will not do well; but you must have them settled upon and kept close to due and proper objects: Affections

tions set on things above, is a spirit fit to meet with Christ in.

3. This is needful, that grace be in its act and exercise. I tell you the soul may have grace in the heart, but yet if you would meet with Christ with that boldness and comfort that it is fit we should aim at, it is necessary moreover that the habit be drawn forth into exercise. Grace in the heart of a Saint, it is not there to be useless, but it is there seated, that it may from thence shine forth, *Mat. 5. 16.* *Let your light so shine before men, &c.* The exercise of Grace is a very grateful and pleasing thing to our Lord Jesus: he takes very much delight in it, *Cant. 2. 14.* *Come, saies he, let me see thy countenance, &c.* The exercise of Grace, in a Saint, is pleasing and delightful to our Lord Jesus Christ; and then is it that Grace is in its excellency, then the sweetness of it is manifested, when it is exercised, *Cant. 1. 12.* saies the Spouse, *When the King sits at his table, my spicknard sends forth the smell thereof:* That Spicknard and other precious Oyntments, represent the Graces of the Spirit of God in the heart of a Saint: and when she
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did attend upon God in ways of Duty, saies she, *My Grace is at work, and then it sends forth its smells.* The sweetness of Grace is not found but in its exercise; and it is then when Grace is in exercise, that a soul is fit to meet Christ. It was not the commendation, nor the mercy of the wise Virgins, that *They slumbred and slept, Mat. 25.5.* And they knew it was not: therefore it is said, they arose, and trimmed their Lamps, they rouzed up themselves, and stirred up the Grace of God that was in them: This is that that Christ calls for, *Luke 12.35. Let your loins be girt about, and your Lamps burning:* The burning of the Lamps, is the exercise of Grace: it may be thou hast thy Lamp; but Oh! labour that it may be a burning and shining Lamp, to have thy Grace acting and displaying it self, that is your Duty, and you will meet with Christ with much the more comfort. If God should come, how little of this would he finde in us! our pride is working, our covetousness, our enmity and animosity, and such like? But who of us can say that Grace is in exercise? Well, that is the third thing

thing requisite in order to the meeting Christ with comfort and boldness.

4. Communion with God, and a holy conversation maintained and kept up, is very necessary, if we would meet with Christ with comfort and boldness. Communion with God, which are those sweet interchanges of love between God and the soul, the preserving and maintaining as well as getting whereof, is much the duty, and much the excellency and glory of a Christian, to carry it so, that you may not give Christ occasion to stand as a stranger unto the soul; to preserve the Unity and Amity between Christ and the soul, is much the Duty of a poor Creature: it was the misery and unhappiness of the Spouse, that she was wanting in that work, *Cant. 5.2.* When Christ invites her unto opportunities of Communion with himself, she saies, *I have put off my coat, &c.* She trifles away that opportunity, and out of a slothful spirit neglects it; and this occasioned a strangeness between him and her for some time after: The avoiding of this is much our wisdom, and will
much

much advantage in the day of Christ; the preserving also a very holy conversation, *Phil. 3. 20.* saies the Apostle, *Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour:* And if thou art looking for a Saviour in earnest, keep thy conversation in heaven: Now our conversations being in heaven, it implies both the maintaining communion, and friendship, and concord between God and us; and also a holy and upright conversation: He that lives in heaven, keeps his peace with God; and he that lives in heaven, walks closely with God: such a frame as that, becomes one that looks for Christ, and waits for his appearance, that is most certain, *Titus 2. 14.* The Apostle there is telling what is the Expectation of the Saints, *13. vers.* *Looking for,* saies he, *that blessed hope, &c.* How did they carry it in this time of their hope and expectation? Why? they were taught to *Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;* and in such a posture they did *Look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God.* *1 Pet. 13. 14.* *Gird up the loyns of your mindes, be sober and*
hope

hope unto the end, &c. He wishes them to look for the appearance and coming of Christ; but what posture must they be in while they are thus looking? Why, as obedient Children, &c.

5. And longing of soul for his appearance and coming, is also necessary; that is it, that is in Scripture called, *A waiting for*; it is a waiting with desire and longing: last of *Canticles* and the last *vers.* *Make hast, my Beloved, and be as a Roe or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices.* The soul thinks the coming of Christ long, *Revel.* 22.21. *He that saith these things testifieth, Behold, I come quickly: even so, come Lord Jesus.* That is the frame the soul should be in, to be still crying, *Come Lord Jesus.*

And thus I have given you what I intended in answer to the fifth thing: What is the best frame the soul can be in, in order to its meeting with Christ, with the greatest comfort and boldness?

As first, to have the love of Christ witnessed and sealed up unto the soul, by the Spirit of God.

2. To be disingaged from this world
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and all the intanglements and incumbrances thereof.

3. To have Grace in its exercise.

4. Communion with God, and a holy conversation maintained and kept up.

5. Raised desires, and longing of soul for his appearance.

The Application of the Point onely remains: And I shall be brief in what I add more.

1. If it be a truth, as I have endeavoured to make it good, that standing before Christ is so serious and weighty a thing: The Use of the Point will be in three or four things, some of which will concern us all.

The first Use would be, to put us a little upon inquiry; Where are you? what posture are you in? what preparation have we made for that solemn day? what have we done that may fit us to stand before the Son of man? It will be a day of great solemnity; great will be the Majesty of that Day; and how fares it with us? Can we say that Christ is become our Friend, that we have made peace with God through him,

him, that all controversies between God and our souls are taken up and compounded? The counsel that is given, *Mat. 25. 25. Agree with thy adversary quickly, while he is in the way with him;* is very good. There is enmity between God and man by nature: the counsel given, is to compound and make up the breach; and that is to be done while we are in the way with him: If we let it alone until the coming of Christ, we shall be delivered unto the Officer, and by him be hurried to prison, from whence we shall not be delivered for ever: And therefore it is a very serious question which you had all need to put to your souls, whether you have received Christ and made sure of him, that so all differences between God and you be compounded and made up, that you may be able to hold up your heads in the great and notable day of the Lord; for such it will be, and so it is called in the Word of Truth.

I have already shewed you what kind of persons they must be that shall stand before Christ, that it must be one that hath renounced his own righteousness,

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and

and put on Christs Righteousness, and is renewed in the inner man, and bound in spirit for God, desirous to be found in his Will both by doing and suffering: you may reflect upon what hath been said, and consult your spirits thereby. But here you will say, Whether have I received Christ or no, that is that that sticks with me, and I cannot answer that to my own satisfaction. Why? consider, Oh soul, thou mayst know it, by the precious thoughts, and high esteem thou hast of Christ! *1 Pet. 2.7.* *To you therefore which believe he is precious:* and you may turn it thus; You to whom Christ is precious, you believe in him: You say, He is precious and worth a world, but whether he be yours, that is the question. Why souls, I tell you, if your hearts be in love with him, it is because he first loved you; and thou canst not have a true love unto Christ without the work of his Spirit.

2. You may know it by those holy breathings you have after more of likeness and conformity to him; this is certain, the soul of this Saint is not
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what it should be, but is longing to be what it is not ; pressing after more of Christ, and the Image of God. There was a time when *Paul* thought that he had enough, and was in an excellent good condition, but God taught him to see it was no such matter, *Rom.7.9.* *I was (saies Paul) alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, &c.* When the Law came in its understanding, and in its Application ; when he was able to understand the Law in its extent and spirituality, and apply it to himself ; then he found he had a great deal of sin, and little of God in him : then he comes to see his wretchedness, to groan under his burthen : and this cannot be but where the soul hath received life from Christ. How is it with thee ? dost thou see thy filthiness, and groan under thy burthen ? It is a great sign, if so, and a token for good, that there is a principle of new Life, of new and spiritual life communicated to thee, and that thou hast received life from Christ, who is the Fountain of Life ; and of it thou mayst assure thy self.

3. From that holy awe and dread that is upon thy heart, lest thou shouldest be left to sin against and dishonour God. Where there is a closing with Christ in earnest, there is an awe of God arising from a sense of duty, and from a sense of goodness, *Hosea 3.5.* where it is spoken concerning the Jewish people, at the time of their Conversion, that they *Shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter day.* When they shall in the latter days be brought near unto God, there shall be a holy awe of God upon their hearts, that shall keep them and preserve them, and lay a restraint upon them, that they shall not be left to do the things that are grievous in his sight. Now it is good to inquire whether you finde such an awe upon your souls, that you can look upon what he hath done, and thereby find a kind of restraint laid upon you, to keep close to him, to attend his work, and minde the things that are pleasing in his sight.

A second Use is this: Is standing before Christ such a serious thing? it may help a little for the support of
them

them that tremble at the thoughts of standing before him: There are some souls that do conclude, or at least are very apt to conclude, they shall never stand before Christ with comfort, that they shall never be able to bear his presence; that that day will be a day of such dread and terrour to them, that they shall fall before his great and glorious Majesty. I would say, Is there any that have such workings of heart? Why, what is the ground of it? what is it that fills you with this fear? Why, saies the soul, I am full of fear, that his appearance and coming will have so much dread in it, that I shall not be able to bear it. Unto such I would say, It is true, the appearance of Christ will be dreadful; but unto whom? *2 Thes. 2.8. It is the wicked that the Lord will consume with the brightness of his coming.* The dread of the day will not light upon his people, but his enemies; it will be upon them that know not God: And therefore soul, thou needest not tremble; though it will be dreadful unto them that are his enemies, thou mayst notwithstanding hold up

thy head. I but, saies the soul, this is my case, I have a rebellious heart, a hard heart, that will not stoop and subject it self to Christ; and therefore his coming will be terrible unto me. To that I answer, *Paul* after he was converted had rebellion in his heart, lusts in his heart, rising up against God, as well as thou hast, *Rom. 7. 19. I finde a law in my members warring against the law of my mind.* Christs coming into the soul, doth not dispossess sin all at once; it doth begin the work, but it doth not turn sin wholly out of doors, no, that it doth not; but it doth give an earnest of what shall be done, that he will at length subdue thy corruptions throughly: But consider this, though thou hast a rebellious heart, is it not that that thou mournest over? is it not that that is thy burthen, that that is grievous unto thy soul? if it be, fear not, Christ will come and refine thee, not destroy thee; he will take away thy dross, he will destroy thy corruption, but not thee, *Malach. 3. 2, 3. But who may abide the day of his coming? He will sit as a Refiner of silver, &c.* So

I may say unto such a soul as I am now speaking to; he will sit as a refiners fire, he will purifie, but he will not destroy; he will take away thy dross, he will conquer thy corruption, but thee he will save. I but, saies the soul, I dread the thoughts of his coming; and therefore sure it will not be to be born by me. To that I answer, Thy present apprehension is no ground from whence thou mayst make a certain conclusion; for wicked men (observe it) they do not dread the coming of Christ, they make a light matter of it, and yet it shall be dreadful unto them: So thou dost dread his coming, and the thoughts of it are irksome to thee, but it may be, it may not be dreadful when it doth come: we have other thoughts of God then we should have, many times; and therefore the Prophet in *Jer. 17. 17.* he prayes, *Be not thou a terrour unto me*: He did mistake God; God he intended to deliver him, and not to be a terrour to him: and so we are apt to think that Christ will be a terrour unto us, when it is no such matter, when he comes only

to take us unto himself, to set us with himself in glory. And that is the second.

3. Will the day of Christs appearing be so dreadful? How should it quicken and stir up our hearts then, to get into some readiness for that day? Motives I might give you many; but let this suffice, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh; not according to that expression, *A thousand years is as one day*, and so God may say it is nigh; but really, and in truth, the Judge stands at the door; and surely there is but a little time between us, and that notable day of the Lord. Oh the signs that we have of the Son of man! Immediately before the tribulation of that day, *The Sun shall be darkned, and the Moon shall not give her light, &c. Luke 21.25.* Truly, this hath been abundantly of late, in a more then ordinary manner.

2. Distress of Nations, which is added: God seems to sound an Alarm to the world, by that distress that he brings upon Nations: And (if the report at least be true) a spirit stirring among the Ancient Jewish people, is

as eminent a sign of Christs coming, as any that we have met with before. This I am satisfied about, that things do look as if the day of the Son of man did hasten greatly, as if it were even at the door; and I am sure it doth call loudly unto us to pack up for Eternity, and make ready for that solemn day: There are preparations in heaven towards it; all things are setting in order against that great Assize, and let not us be behind-hand. Oh, saies the soul, what shall I do! I a rebel against Christ, is there any hope for me, that I may yet make peace? my heart is full of fear, what I shall do when Christ shall sit upon the Throne. I will give thee answer, soul, in allusion to that case between *Adonijah* and *Solomon*: *Adonijah* rises up in rebellion, scrambles for the Crown, but *Solomon* was crown'd before him, and in the *1 King. 1. 51, 52.* It was told Solomon, saying, *Adonijah saith, Let King Solomon swear I shall not dye, &c.* I allude to it, and I think it doth point to what I am speaking of. Thou hast been a rebel against Christ; thou hearest the
Father

Father will set the Crown upon his head, that he shall be inthroned: And now thy heart trembles, and thou cryest, Oh that *King Solomon would swear unto me, that I shall not dye*: Oh that Christ would assure me that I should finde Grace and Favour with him. It may be, that is thy language: take the answer of Christ the true *Solomon*, *If thou shew thy self a worthy man, there shall not a hair of thine head fall to the earth*; that is, if thou wilt lay down thy arms, and come and submit unto Christ heartily, and sincerely; if thou wilt come and bow before him, and acknowledge him for thine Head, Lord and Law-giver, the Lord Jesus gives his royal Word, *Not a hair of thy head shall fall to the ground*: But if thou wilt continue in thy rebellion, and iniquity be found in you, you shall dye. Now soul, what is the answer of thy heart? art thou purposed in the strength of the Lord, to come and submit to Jesus? If so, thou shewest thy self a worthy man, and things shall then go well with thee, and thou mayst meet

meet him with comfort, and stand before him with joy.

And one Use more : If standing before Christ will be so serious a work, then to you that are able to say, Through Grace, things are at that pass, that you have ground to think you can and shall stand before him with comfort ; What thankfulness doth this call you up unto ? What a day will that be to you ? a wonderful day, a day filled with Wonder ; a day rich and glorious in a way of mercy to you ; the wonders of that day unto you will be many : These two or three among others.

1. A wonderful freedom from all your burthens, both of sin and suffering.

2. Wonderful meeting with all your friends ; the Saints of all ages shall be gathered together before the throne : if the sight of one friend be so refreshing, what will it be when all the Saints of all ages shall meet together ?

3. A wonderful enjoyment of Christ
and

and God, and this to all eternity: never more complaining of absence, and distance, of hiding and withdrawing; but you shall be caught up to the Lord, to be for ever with him: therefore do as is the exhortation of the Apostle, *1 Thess. 4. 18. Comfort one another with these words*: you may have your burthens of sin and outward trouble for a while, there may be breakings and scatterings of Saints from one another for a time, and some hidings of Gods face; but in the end these things will end, and God and you, and the Saints and you, shall sit down together to rejoyce in one another to all eternity.

Soli Deo gloria.

F I N I S.







