

OBEDIENT PATIENCE:

ITS NATURE IN GENERAL;

AND

ITS EXERCISE IN TWENTY PARTICULAR CASES.

WITH

HELPS TO OBTAIN AND USE IT; AND TO REPRESS IMPATIENCE.

EXHIBIT A TO THE REPORT

OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

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PREFACE.

I HERE offer to others the same which I have prepared for myself, and find necessary for my daily use. All men most savour that which they find most suitable to them. When I was young and lay under the sad suspicions of my own heart, and the doubts of my sound conversion and justification, I was far more pleased with a sermon that opened the nature of saving grace, and helped me against such doubts, than with a sermon of affliction, and its use; yea, though I began to be afflicted. But now this is the subject of my daily necessary thoughts: man's implacable enmity maketh them somewhat necessary; but God's more immediate corrections on my body, incomparably more. And while every day almost fills my ears with the sad complaints of weak, melancholy, afflicted, impoverished, sick, pained or otherwise distressed persons, and the weekly newsbooks tell us of foreign wars, persecutions, ruins, implacable contentions, malignant combinations against the church, pursuing conscience and obedience to God with diabolical rage, to drive it out of the world, and of the successes of blood-thirsty men, and deluge of atheism, idolatry, Sadduceeism, infidelity, Mahometanism, hypocrisy, sensuality, ambition, worldliness, lying, perjury, malignity and gross ignorance which hath even drowned the earth, while there is little but doleful tidings, complaints and fears from kingdoms, churches, cities, families, and God in judgment permitteth mankind to be worse than serpents, toads or wolves, if not than devils, to one another; and while wit and learning, reverend error and hypocrisy, are every day as hotly at work, as any smith in his flaming forge, to blow the coals of bloody malice; and hating and destroying others, even those whom they pretend to love as themselves, seemeth to multitudes the most honourable and necessary work, and the killing of love, and of souls and bodies, is

taken for meritorious of everlasting happiness : I say, while all this is so in the world, and while all flesh must look for pain, sickness and death, and all men are yet worse to themselves, and greater burdens than all their enemies are, I cannot think a Treatise of Patience needless or unseasonable.

OBEDIENT PATIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

What true Patience is, and is not, towards God and man. How we possess our Souls in Patience. What Impatience is worst? Wherein lieth the Sinfulness of Impatience towards God.

Sect. 1. **T**O what I have said for Patience from the sufferings of Christ, in another book for my own use, my condition calleth me to add some more, especially on the consideration of these texts of Scripture: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;" Heb. v. 8, 9. "In your patience possess ye your souls;" Luke xxi. 19. Heb. xii. 1—14. Rom. v. 3, 4. xv. 4, 5. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may inherit the promise;" Heb. x. 36. "Let patience have her perfect work;" James i. 3, 4. v. 7—12. 1 Pet. ii. 19—25. iii. 9. Matt. v. 10—12. 1 Pet. iv. 12—19. "Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator;" Heb. vi. 15.

Sect. 2. What is Patience, 1. Towards God. 2. Towards man.

1. Patience considered only physically, as mere suffering, is no virtue or moral good. Devils, and malefactors, and all men must suffer whether they will or not. 2. Stupidity, or natural dulness is not patience. 3. Nor to bear the loss of any mercy because we undervalue it, as bad men can easily bear the loss of God's grace, and all the means thereto. 4. Nor is it patience, but selfishness, and want of love, in those that easily bear the loss or sufferings of friends, (yea, and of the church or commonwealth) so they be but well themselves, because they care not much for any but themselves. 5. Much less is it patience, desperately to despise and dare God's judgments, like men that are mad or drunk, and take it to be valour to defy the gallows. 6. And

it is not holy patience when men restrain their passions, only lest they thereby afflict themselves, and not in obedience to God. 7. Nor when it is but the sufficiency of the worldly prosperity which yet is left, which maketh them bear some diminution. He that hath still enough to gratify his flesh, may bear the loss of that which it can spare, yea, though it a little pinch him. 8. Yea, if a man be in greatest want, or pain and misery, and bear it quietly only because he hopeth for deliverance in this world, it is but prudent forbearance of self-afflicting, and not the obedient patience of faith. 9. Yea, a presumptuous, false hope of heaven itself, and of God's approbation of some bad cause for which men suffer, may somewhat alleviate the sufferings of ungodly men. Some poor men, and sick men think that they shall be saved from sufferings hereafter, merely because they have their sufferings in this life; as if affliction without holiness would serve. And many an erroneous person hath suffered the more easily for ill-doing, by thinking that it was martyrdom for the cause of God. Clement, Ravilliac, Guy Faux, Garnet, and many such murderers, Knipperdolling, and others at Munster, endured much by such presumption.

Sect. 3. But true patience is, when both body and mind, having a natural and due sense of the suffering, we yet restrain inordinate passion, (grief, fear and anger,) and their ill effects, especially repining thoughts or words of God, and use no sinful means for our deliverance; but still acknowledge the sovereignty, justice, wisdom and love of God, and obediently do submit our wills to God's, and approve and love his holiness and justice, though we love not suffering itself, and comfortably hope for a happy issue, even amendment and increase of holiness here, and heaven hereafter, where all our sufferings will end in everlasting joy. This is patience.

Sect. 4. Patience towards men, is not, 1. To take hurt or wrong for none.

2. Nor to be indifferent towards men's sins, as if they were a small and tolerable evil: nor to let them alone in the way to hell, and make our pretence of patience and quietness, an excuse for unbelief, and unmercifulness to souls; especially when they are public or common sins, which are defended as well as committed by men pretending to learning and piety, endangering the church or land, either by their in-

crease, or by exposing us to the plagues of God. In this case, (though sober wisdom must be used) it is sinful cruelty to pretend patience, charity, or reverence to men, for the omission of such duty as is needful to reformation and deliverance; yea, to speak easily of heinous sin, as Eli did to his sons, on pretence of gentleness or patience, is but to tempt men to impenitence and damnation.

3. Nor is it patience, but contempt of God, for magistrates, parents, or masters, to forbear necessary justice and correction, towards intolerable sin: or for pastors to forbear necessary reproof or discipline, to the corrupting or endangering of the church.

4. It is not just and moderate passion that is sinful impatience. Fear is necessary for self-preservation: Christ was heard in the thing that he feared. Anger is necessary to shew our displacency at sin, and to repel evil: Christ looked with anger on obstinate sinners; and God is said to be angry every day, and his wrath doth kindle the flames of hell. Grief, if moderate, is but the necessary sense of evil, by which we difference it from good. God made our passions for our good, and the right use of them is our duty.

5. Lawful and necessary defence of our innocency, our reputation, our lives, our liberties, our country, is not sinful impatience, any more than to defend the reputation, estates, or lives of others, whom we must love but as ourselves. Selfish malefactors, persecutors, destroyers, reprov'd sinners, are wont to call them impatient, who let them not sin, slander, destroy and domineer without contradiction; yea, that praise not the plagues of the world and their destroyers. Christ is so accused for his words, of Herod and the Pharisees.

Sect. 5. But patience towards men hath all these properties. 1. It maketh not suffering, or a wrong seem greater than indeed it is. Impatience maketh a tolerable pain or injury to seem intolerable: a toothach seems as the breaking of the bones: a man seems undone if he lose but his house, or his land, or friend: a threatening of men is a frightful thing: martyrdom is more feared than hell. To be imprisoned, or robbed, or persecuted, or falsely accused, to be accounted wicked, and guilty, where we are innocent, seem all insufferable evils to the impatient; which a patient man maketh not half so great a matter of. To be cast down from honour or preferment; yea, to miss of his aspiring hopes,

and have another set up before him, is a great and vexatious thing to the ambitious. To have a man's opinion slighted, contradicted and confuted, his understanding vilified, his worth and parts disgraced, his will opposed, yea, to be but mocked or scorned, seemeth a very troublesome injury to the proud, which patient men would easily endure. Much of the wickedness and vanities in the world, come from men's impatient, overgreat sensibility of their cross. The thief ventureth on the gallows and hell, because he cannot bear his wants. The fornicator, drunkard, and all the voluptuous, venture on everlasting misery, because they cannot bear the denying or displeasing of their fleshly appetite and lust. The great tyrants of the earth, depopulate countries, raise needless wars, and fill the world with hellish wickedness, blood and misery, and their consciences with the most heinous guilt, because they cannot bear an equal, or a seeming slight or wrong, or to see other princes greater than they, or to be confined to moderate dominion (though large enough, considering their account to God). Murders are committed by the proud and impatient, because they cannot bear an injury or affront. Yea, sacred church-tyrants rack and tear Christ's church, by their needless impositions, and stick not at the most cruel persecutions and ruinings of men better than themselves, because they cannot, bear that religion which is not subject to their wills, or to see any teach the flocks in any points, against their opinions; or worship God but in their words, or in obedience to their pleasure: much less to have any that differ from them, to be esteemed and preferred before them. As Nebuchadnezzar, by his idol, (Dan. iii.) they cannot endure any that bow not to their idol Will. A fiery furnace seems not too hot for them, they can better bear the most profane and filthy sinner, who hateth godliness and God, than the wisest and best that will not honour and obey them. The sight of Mordecai depriveth Haman of all the pleasure of his power and wealth.

2. Patience towards men doth not blind and pervert our judgment, to think that things and persons are other than indeed they are, or that the cause is worse or better than it is. It leaveth the judgment impartial, and quiet, and sedate to right considerations and conclusions. Impatience seldom useth a true balance. To a passionate man or enemy, all that their adversaries say or do, doth seem injurious or bad.

A Dissenter from the oracle of pride and dominion, seemeth a fool, or knave, or a schismatic, if not unworthy to live as a man, at liberty on the earth. All the undeniable good that appeareth in them goeth but for hypocrisy. Yea, if God say, that disobedience is to him as the sin of witchcraft, and rebellion against him as idolatry, a papal spirit dares plead it for itself, as if it were as bad as witchcraft to obey God before him, and such as he, or as bad as idolatry, not to rebel against God's laws, if such command it. Yea, if all others will not join with him in the false accusation, and defy Christian love as much as he; but will speak for the innocent, and gainsay such unjust aggravations, he is not able to endure their charity, but accuseth such as defenders of those, whom his pride and impatience hath feigned to be criminal and intolerable.

3. Patience stops the injuries of men that they go no further than man can reach. If men's scorns and slanders come to our ears, patience stops them from coming to the heart. If men take away our estates, patience hinders them from taking away our peace and comfort. If men lay us in a prison or a dungeon, patience disableth them to keep out our heavenly light and consolation. If men despise us, slight us, cross our opinions or wills, patience doth not suffer this to vex us, or cast us into malicious discontent. But impatience openeth the door of the heart to every cross, or injury, or displeasure: and when men can but touch our outside or accidents, impatience doth more, and wounds the soul. It tormenteth a man at the heart, because another hurts his flesh, or less than that, his goods, or name, or some superfluity, which even the flesh might spare.

4. Patience keepeth men from revenge, and all desires of it: it hath no tendency to do hurt. Yea, it forgiveth injuries, and desireth God (on his just terms) to forgive them. Yea, it is still joined with a true desire of the good of those that do us wrong, and with just and prudent endeavours of their welfare. Malchus's ear is healed by Christ, who prayed for his enemies, as he taught Stephen and all his followers to do. It is true, we cannot forgive the sin, as it is against God, nor the future punishment; but we may pray to God to give men repentance and forgiveness. But impatience is a hurtful and revengeful disposition; it thirsteth after it;

it delighteth in it, and rejoiceth to hear of an adversary's sufferings.

5. Patience will keep a man from seeking his own defence and right, not only by unjust means, but by means otherwise lawful, when it is like to do more hurt to others, than good to him; if it be like to hurt the soul of an enemy by hindering his conversion to a Christian life, it is not our defended outward estate that will compensate such a hurt and loss. This is the sense of Christ's command, of giving our garment to him that sueth us at law, and of turning the other cheek to him that striketh us; Matt. v. That is, patience must submit to tolerable injuries, rather than by impatience to strive by violence and self-defence, when it will but exasperate another, whose soul is precious, and whom we must love as ourselves; yea, we must not fly to the law or magistrate to defend a right which we can spare, when patience and submission will do more good to him that wrongs us, or to others, than the vindication of our right will do to us or them. But the meaning is not, that intolerable injury may not be opposed, nor the commonwealth have the preservation of the law, and that thieves or murderers be tolerated; nor that all covetous, malicious, oppressing men should be encouraged to injure others, by knowing that they will never seek their right. It is more for order and common good, than for ourselves, that wrongs must be resisted.

Sect. 6. By what hath been said, we may understand what it is in "patience to possess our souls." 1. A man loseth himself or soul, when he lets in the enemy or evil into it, that before was but without the doors. His soul must be garrisoned with patience, against sufferings, which are more grievous at the heart, than in the outward accidents or the skin. The spirit of a man, if sound, will bear his outward infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? Patience in true believers, and waiting hopefully on God, doth keep the garrison of the heart, when the outworks, our estates, our reputations, our friends, our health, are taken from us. For, 1. It keeps the soul against self-afflicting. 2. Against temptations to sin by any unlawful means. 3. Against backsliding by forsaking duty, and not continuing in the use of the appointed means. 4. Against sinful doubts, that God forsaketh us, or intends our hurt. It keeps up the peace and comfort of the afflicted, which is our strength. 5. And by

all this it helpeth to secure our salvation. 6. And so far as outward deliverance or ease, or safety is good for us, it is the likeliest way to have it; "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Patient enduring and turning the other cheek, doth shame afflictors, and sooner make them forbear us, than impatient violence and self-defence. He that resisteth, stirs up the wrath of his afflicter; when he that blesseth him, and doth him good, and really manifesteth love to him, doth heap coals of fire on his head. He that cannot bear one blow, is like to bear two: and he that cannot bear a lesser abuse, shall bear a greater. "Be patient, brethren, and establish your hearts, the Judge is at the door, and the coming of the Lord draws nigh;" James iv. 8, 9.

But this is not a rule for government, nor to whole kingdoms, as if they must forbear a necessary self-defence against destroying enemies; but for private men whose self-defence would hurt the common good.

Sect. 7. But is all impatience equally sinful? No; here the difference is very great.

1. Impatience towards men is a lesser sin, than against God. Man is a worm, and may do wrong, and deserve anger and accusation; but against God there is no pretence for this.

2. Impatience towards men that deserve anger, and which doth exceed only in degree, is not so bad, as to be angry without just cause. Anger is oftentimes a duty, as it is a displeasement at any evil, and a just repelling of it.

3. Anger, which desireth not another's pain, further than just correction is necessary to his or other's good, is not so bad as that which tendeth to hurtfulness and revenge.

4. Anger which is short (though too much) and is laid by when it hath done its duty against evil, is not so bad as that which continueth, and is turned into malice, and cannot forgive. "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath."

5. Impatience, which breaks forth into sinful words, (as cursing, swearing, railing, &c.) is far worse than that which doth not.

6. Impatience, which is but such necessitated sense or passion, as is the effect of natural bodily infirmity, is no sin at all, farther than sin did bring that infirmity; as some children cannot choose but cry; some women cannot choose but be afraid at sudden frightening occasions. One may

make the stoutest man sometimes to start. Sick people, and aged, feeble persons are naturally less patient with matters about them, than strong and healthful men. Some constitutions, especially women, can no more avoid some hurtful fear, grief, trouble of mind and anger, than a man in an ague can forbear to shake: especially melancholy and hysterical persons. And God condemns not persons for being sick or weak, infants or aged. The will hath but a political and not a despotic power over many passions, as it hath over the tongue and hand.

7. Impatience which infecteth not the judgment and will, but only consists in troublesome passion, is far less sinful than that which doth. When it blindeth and perverteth a man's judgment, especially in great points, to think ill of godliness or duty, or to accuse God, or distrust his promises, or when it corrupteth the will, and love, and desire, and turneth it from God or any good, this is the damning sort of passion. So that passion of lust and pleasure, in sensual youths, in drunkards, fornicators, gamesters, turneth their hearts to sin from the love of holiness. It becomes deadly wickedness when it captivateth the judgment and the will: and so when it vitiateth a man's conversation, and carrieth him against conscience and reason to iniquity. When hypocrites cannot suffer for righteousness, nor endure contempt and poverty in the world, they will force their judgments to believe that such suffering is not necessary, and that it is lawful to do that which will deliver them, much more if it tend to their wealth, honour and preferment. When sensual men cannot bear a holy, sober, temperate life, they can make themselves believe that it is unnecessary. This is the damnable sort of impatience.

8. Some excess of impatience in the cause of God, is more excusable than when it is in our own cause. Zeal is a passion, but a great duty. Phinehas seemed to have been irregular in his zeal, but his justice was imputed to him for righteousness, and on it God staid the plague. Had not Jehu's zeal been so much for himself, though it seemed cruel, God would have excused it. Christ scourged the merchants out of the temple, and the disciples remembered, "the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." God speweth the lukewarm Laodiceans out of his mouth. Indeed it is an aggravation of the sin, to father on God a censorious, persecuting, en-

vious, dividing, hurtful zeal ; but when it is but some excess of passion or impatience with sin, and maketh a man but too eager in doing good, and not to hurt or injure any, the fault is small.

9. There is some passion that may be too much, and yet doth but drive a man to God and to his duty. Some excess of fear and sorrow may make a man pray harder, and fly from temptation and from sin the more, and live more watchfully, and value the mercy of God more thankfully ; but there is impatience which quite unfitteth men for their duty to God and man. When an impatient, froward heart maketh one unmeet for prayer, or meditation, or any holy and comfortable thought of God, and unable to rule their sinful thoughts, and unfit to converse with their families and relations with any kindness, fruitfulness or peace, this is a very sinful passion. When an impatient heart doth live in discontent with God's provision and disposal, and falleth melancholy by that discontent, and giveth satan advantage thereby to delude their imaginations, and hurry them into desperate temptations, and sometimes to go mad, and sometimes to make away themselves, or at least to be unthankful for all God's mercies, this is a very bad impatience.

10. A passion towards men about small matters, which is but a sudden displacency (as anger at a provoking word or accident, which soon passeth away), is a small matter if it should be causeless, in comparison of a profane impatience with men's duty. When men cannot bear a plain reproof, nor a searching book or sermon, nor holy discourse, nor a godly life ; when they think all too much, or prayer, or preaching still too long, and can endure many hours more easily at a play, or in a tavern, or common and vain talk, or worldly business, than one hour in spiritual employment ; when they bear more easily with a swearer, a jester, an ignorant, carnal, worldly companion, than with one that seriously discourseth of death and judgment, and the world to come, this is a malignant sort of impatience.

In a word, bad men are incompetent judges of patience and impatience. They take that man for a peevish, impatient person, who is angry with their sin, and giveth them necessary reproof, or is not as cold as Eli to sinful children or servants, or is of a quick and eager temper, or sheweth but half that zeal and fervency in holy things, which the na-

ture and weight of the matter doth require: and they will praise that man as a mild and patient person, who is senseless of the greatest things which should affect him, and will quietly let men sin and perish, and suffer them to be as bad as they will, and never speak sharply or disgracefully of their sin, nor cross and contradict them in the most dangerous error, much less correct inferiors for doing evil, but be indifferent in every cause of God, and live like a man asleep, or dead, when sin should be resisted, or duty done.

11. That impatience is worst which sets men upon unlawful means of deliverance: as lying, stealing, defrauding, unlawful ways and trades of getting, pleasing men by sin; yea, miserable witches make compacts with the devil, and some go to real or feigned conjurers to obtain their wills, in their impatience. But that is a less sin which ventureth on no forbidden remedy.

12. That impatience is the worst, which is justified, and not repented of; when men say, as Jonah did, "I do well to be angry;" and that deliberately, when the passion should be over. And that is less, (and more pardonable,) which is confessed and lamented, and which we sincerely pray and watch against, and fain would be delivered from.

Sect. 8. Quest. Wherein lieth the sinfulness of impatience towards God, or under his hand, when men are his instruments, or permitted by him to afflict us, or in any other trial which is of God?

If we see not the evil of it, we shall not be diligent to avoid it. Too many take it rather for a suffering than a sin.

Answ. 1. Impatience towards God doth signify answerable unbelief: Did we believe his promises, that "all shall work together for our good," and of all the benefit that we may get by patient suffering, it would do much to pacify the soul. But we are discontented at his usage, because we cannot trust him.

2. Yea, this sort of impatience implieth some degree of atheism or blasphemy: for it implieth some murmuring against God's providence, and that implieth some accusation of God; and all accusation of God implieth an answerable degree of blasphemy, and consequently denieth God to be God. For if he be blameworthy in any thing, he is not absolutely perfect: and if he be not perfect, he is not God.

3. Impatience signifieth strong self-willedness; when

self-will is men's idol, it usurpeth God's prerogative; and when it should follow his will by obedient submission, it sets up itself, and must needs be fulfilled, and cannot endure to be crossed: as if we were gods, that must have the disposal of all that shall befall us, and nothing must be otherwise than we would have it. Self-will is the great idol of the world.

4 Impatience signifieth an answerable degree of over-loving the flesh and world, which also is a kind of idolatry: were it predominant, it were mortal; "For to be carnally minded is death, and if any man (so) love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Follow any impatience up to the spring, and you will find that it all cometh from this carnal, worldly-creature, love. If we did not over-love our ease, our lives, our reputation, our provision and estates, our children or friends, or any earthly thing, we could patiently bear all our losses of them.

5. Impatience sheweth that we are answerably wanting in our esteem of Christ, and grace, and glory, and that we live not as we ought on the hopes of heaven. If we did, God and our Saviour would be enough for us. Our heavenly treasure being safe, would more satisfy us. Great men can bear easily the loss of a penny or a pin: the things of the flesh are less in comparison of Christ and heaven, than a pin is to a lordship. Sense would do less to trouble us, if we lived by faith.

6. Impatience sheweth that we are too unthankful to God for all his mercies. A true Christian never loseth the tenth part so much as he possesseth. When he loseth health, and wealth, and friends, he loseth not his God or Saviour, nor his right to everlasting life. Yea, when God taketh away one or two of his temporal gifts, he leaveth us more than he taketh away. And what unthankfulness is it to forget all that we have received, and possess and hope for, because that something is taken from us? Yea, if God take away our health or wealth at last, should all the years that we unworthily possessed them, be unthankfully forgotten?

7. Impatience sheweth that we are too much unhumbled for our sins, and too insensible how ill we deserve of God. He that deserveth the gallows and is pardoned, should not be impatient of a short imprisonment, and to pay the jailor's fees. Can we believe that our sins are so many as we customarily confess them, and that we deserve hell-fire, and yet

impatiently repine at disgrace or injuries from men, or at the loss of goods, or health, or friends? This betrayeth an unhumbled and unmortified soul (in such a degree), how humble soever men's words and confessions are.

8. Impatience sheweth that we do not well understand ourselves, or the providence of God. We neither understand well our disease, nor the meaning of our physician. Did we know what a worldly heart is, or a hard heart, or a heart that hath not by repentance got out the core of sin, and how useful affliction is to heal all these diseases, we should not be impatient of the sharpest cure.

9. Impatience sheweth that we have not such a love of holiness as we ought to have: else we should think no afflictions too dear a means to procure the increase of it. When God telleth us that he chasteneth us to make us partakers of holiness, and that it may bring forth the quiet fruit of righteousness; and that it may be good for us that we are afflicted, by reducing us by repentance from our wandering folly, and worldly vanity and deceit. - A due esteem of so great a benefit would make us take affliction for a gain. At our true conversion we do in heart, resolution and vow, sell all for the precious pearl, forsake all for Christ, and grace, and glory. And should we not forsake that which affliction takes from us, for the same use, if we be really of the mind that we profess? A little grace is better than all that is taken from us.

10. Impatience, when it is great and tormenting, is a degree of likeness to hell itself. Hell is a state of sin tormenting the sinner (God justly deserting and afflicting such). Their own wickedness continually teareth and vexeth them, and depriveth them of all sense of God's love and mercy, which might ease them. And what a resemblance of this hath the impatient soul; which continually vexeth itself with its own self-will, and fleshly mind, and worldly desires, which are all unsatisfied, and hath no mortification, obedient submission, faith, or hope to relieve and ease it, but is night and day a self-tormenter!

Such use to say, 'We cannot help it: our thoughts and passions are not in our power: we cannot choose but be continually troubled with discontent, and anger, and grief, and fear.'

11. *Answer.* This sheweth a further evil in your passion,

viz. That you are over-brutish, and that reason itself is dethroned, and hath lost its due government of sense and passion. When a man can give you great and undeniable reasons enough, against all your discontents, and yet they are impotent and cannot prevail. God gave you reason to bear rule over passion, and he hath furnished you with arguments which should easily suffice. If your reason be enslaved, and faith turned out of doors, and passion rule, whence came this but by your own wilful sin? You say, 'You are not able to bear what you complain of.' Why, then you shall bear more, God will make you able to bear more, whether you will or not, if you cannot obediently bear his trials.

CHAPTER II.

Arguments and Helps for Patient and Obedient Sufferings in particular Instances.

HAVING thus far considered patience and impatience in the general, it will be useful to apply some special remedies to many particular cases: And first, I will name the several cases, which I mean to speak to: and they are

- I. God's afflicting hand upon our flesh, in pains and sickness.
- II. The sentence of death.
- III. Loss of goods and estate, and suffering poverty and want.
- IV. The sickness and death of friends.
- V. Unfaithfulness of friends.
- VI. Persecution by wicked men and enemies.
- VII. Dishonour and loss of reputation, even to scorn.
- VIII. The unrighteousness of rulers, and the wrath of powerful men.
- IX. The treachery and abuse of servants, and hearers, and other inferiors.
- X. Great and strong temptations of satan, &c.
- XI. Trouble of conscience, and doubts of pardon and salvation.
- XII. To lose the preaching of the Gospel, and other ordinary means of grace.

XIII. When God seemeth to deny our prayers, and not to bless his word and mercies to us.

XIV. When all our duties and lawful endeavours seem frustrated by God.

XV. The great weakness of our faith, hope, love, and other graces.

XVI. The misery of the unconverted world, which lieth in ignorance and wickedness.

XVII. The great weakness, scandals, and divisions of Christians: the great and manifold troubles of the church.

XVIII. The triumphs of sin and wickedness.

XIX. Public and national sins, plagues and miseries, especially by war.

XX. The uncertainty of deliverance here, and the fewness of those that shall be saved at last, and the delay of our salvation. Each of these require some special helps for patience, besides the common helps.

CASE I.

In Pain and Sicknesses of Body: Particular Helps.

Of the first of these I have spoken already in the "Meditations on Christ's Sufferings," and oft elsewhere. I shall now briefly add,

1. Sinful souls! Look back upon the folly, which was the cause of all thy pains. As Adam and Eve's sin brought sufferings into the world, upon our natures, so my own sin is the cause of my own particular suffering. A sinful pleasing of my appetite with raw apples, pears, and plums, when I was young, did lay the foundation of all my incurable diseases: and my many offences have since deserved God's chastisements! While conscience so justly accuseth thyself, dare not to mutter discontents and accusations against God. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." My pain is to me as the distress of Joseph's brethren was to them: "We were verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us;" Gen. xlii. 21. "What shall we say unto my Lord! What shall we speak, or how shall we clear ourselves! God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." Gen. xliv. 16. So may I say: How oft hath God checked my vain and wandering imagina-

tions, and carnal thoughts, and I did not sufficiently regard him; and if God find out my sin, and my sin find out me, why should I blame any but myself and sin?

2. I can see the necessity of justice towards others; and why should I not see it towards myself? What is a kingdom without it, but a wilderness of wild beasts, or a land of Tories? What is a school without it, but a masterless house of rebellious folly? What is a family without it, but a pernicious equalling good and bad. If God made no laws to rule mankind, he were not their moral governor, but only a cause of physical motion: if he made no laws, then there are no laws in the world but man's; and then there is no sin against God, and law-makers themselves are lawless, and can do nothing for which they need to fear the displeasure of God. But if God have made laws, and will not by execution correct disobedience, his laws are contemptible, and no laws, because no rules of judgment. And should I alone expect to be free from Fatherly justice, and that my sin should have no correction and rebukes?

3. It is but the same vile flesh that suffers, which must shortly rot and turn to earth, and if I can submit to that, why should I not submit to present pain?

4. As sin made its entrance by the senses into the soul, God wisely driveth it out the same way, and maketh the same passage the entrance of repentance. It is pleasure that tempteth and destroyeth the sinner. It is smart and sorrow which contradicteth that deceitful pleasure, and powerfully undeceiveth brutish sinners. And when repentance is necessary to pardon and salvation, and if it be not deep, and true, and effectual, it will not serve: why should I be impatient with so suitable a remedy and help, as my bodily pains and weakness are. Had I been in this pain when I was tempted to any youthful folly, how easily should I have resisted the temptations which overcame me.

5. The great benefit that I have found in former afflictions, assureth me that they came from Fatherly love; yea, have been so merciful a work of Providence, as I can never be sufficiently thankful for: What have they done but keep me awake, and call me to repentance, and to improve my short and precious time, and to bid me work while it is day? What have they done but keep me from covetousness, pride, and idleness, and tell me where I must place all my

hope, and how little the world, and all its vanities do signify? And shall I think that the same God, who intended me good by all the rest of the afflictions of my life, doth now intend my hurt at last? Experience condemneth my impatience.

6. As deliverances have eased many a pain already, and turned all into thankfulness to God, so heaven will quickly end the rest, and turn all into greater thanks and joy. And can I be impatient if I firmly believe so good an end of all?

7. What! did Christ suffer for my sin, and shall not I patiently bear a gentle rod?

8. What do the brutes that never sinned, endure by man, and for his sins? They labour, they are beaten, and hurt, and killed for us, and eaten by us. What then do sinners deserve of God?

9. How much sorer punishment in hell hath God forgiven me, through Christ? and how much sorer must the unpardoned endure for ever? And cannot I bear these rebukes for pardoned sin, when they are intended to prevent far worse?

10. How do I forsake all, and how could I suffer martyrdom for Christ, if I cannot bear his own chastisement? Are these sharper than the flames?

11. God hath from my youth been training me up in the school of affliction, and calling on me, and teaching me to prepare for suffering, and am I yet unprepared?

12. Impatience is no remedy, but a great addition to my suffering; both by adding to my sin, and by a foolish vexation of myself. If God afflict my body, shall I therefore foolishly vex my soul?

Lord! all these reasons do convince me of my interest and duty: I am fully satisfied of thy dominion, wisdom, and perfect goodness, and that all that thou doest is well done, and should not be accused. I am fully satisfied, that I ought with an obedient will to accept of this chastisement, and not to murmur against thy hand. But the grace and strength to do this must come all from thee. O strengthen thy servant that he faint not, nor lay by his faith and hope, or sin against thee.

Quest. 'But is there no means but such reasoning with ourselves to be used, to help us to be obedient in our sicknesses and pains?'

Answ. What means but intellectual can be fit to quiet souls? Opiate medicines, that quiet the body, cannot cause the submission of the mind. But 1. Preparatorily, it is of great advantage not to use the body too tenderly in our health: pamper it not, and use it not with too great indulgence, as to its appetite, ease and pleasure. Be as careful of its health as you can, but not of its sensual desires. As they that fondly indulge their children, and let them have what they will in health, cannot rule them in sickness; so it is with our bodies; use them to temperance and seasonable fasting, and daily labour, and a diet and garb not over-pleasant: as Paul teacheth Timothy, "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;" 2 Tim. ii. 3. They that live in sensual pleasure, are dead while they live. They that must have sport, and meat, and drink, and ease, because the flesh desireth it, and must take nothing that appetite, or sloth, or fancy is against, do cherish the flesh in such a state of self-pleasing, as will hardly be brought to patient suffering.

2. Read the sufferings of Christ with due consideration.

3. Read oft the histories of the martyrs' sufferings.

4. Go oft to the hospitals, or sick that lie in pain, that you may see what is to be expected.

5. Look on the graves, and bones, and dust, and you will perceive, that it is no wonder if such an end must have a painful way.

6. Get deep repentance for sin, and holy self-displeasure and revenge will make you consent to God's correction.

7. Get but a sense of the danger of prosperity and bodily delights, and ease, and how many millions are tempted by it, into the broad way of damnation, and what those poor souls must suffer for ever, and you will the easier bear your pains; and choose to be Lazarus, rather than Dives, and a Job rather than a Nero.

6. But there is no effectual cure till faith and hope, have such fast apprehensions of the glory, where all your pains will end, as may teach you to take them but as physic for your everlasting health. Therefore prayer for grace, depending on Christ, obedience to the Spirit, and a fruitful heavenly life, are the true preparations for patient sufferings.

CASE II.

Under the Sentence of Death, against inordinate Fears.

The next case that requireth obedient patience is the sentence of death.

Of this I have also spoken so oft, that I shall now use but these short remembrances.

1. He that would not die (when he knoweth that there is no other way to Paradise) would have no more than he shall possess on earth: which he may easily know is transitory vanity, mixed with so much vexation more than most of the brutes themselves have, as would make man as unhappy a wight as they, if not much more; and man's nature, which abhorreth death, doth abhor the ending of its being, activity and delights; and will any man's reason then direct him to choose such an end of all? And to despair of ever having any life, activity or pleasure after this? Doubtless nothing but hell is more contrary to our interest; and our interest, if known, will be our desire and choice. Who would willingly die as brutes?

2. If it be such brutish unbelief and desperation which maketh death frightful, as if there were no better to be had, reason should make such inquiry and search, whether there be no hopes; and if this be but faithfully done, the light of nature and the Gospel will confute such desperation, and give man the joyful prospect of happy immortality. It is the darkness of ignorance, error, and unbelief, that makes us fear that, which should be our joyful hope.

3. But if it be the fear of hell or future punishment that make us afraid of death, (as, alas, to most there is greater cause than they will believe,) such fears should drive men presently to the remedy. We are not in hell, where there is no hope, but on earth where mercy is ready to save us, and seeking to us, and beggeth our acceptance. If you fear death and hell, fly presently to Christ for grace; repent unfeignedly of all the sin which is your danger: give up your souls to be saved by Christ on his own reasonable terms, and then you may boldly and joyfully hope that he will save them. All your fears, if you will truly repent and trust in Christ, may be turned into assurance of salvation, and glad desires to be with him!

4. Did we not all our lifetime know that we must die?

And should a man therefore live in continual terror? If not, how little doth the case and reason differ at the last, from that which he was all his life in?

5. All that have been born into this world since it was made, have quickly passed out again. Death is as common as birth. And hath God made all mankind to live in continual terror, so much more miserable than the brutes, that know not that they must die? Shall I wish alone to be exempted from the case of all mankind?

6. Yea, all the saints, that ever were on earth (save Enoch and Elias) died. All that are in heaven have gone this way before me. Faith can see beyond the gulf or stream, which they are safely wafted over, and see them stand safe and joyful on the shore of glory. And should I not long to be with so desirable company? But of this I have spoken elsewhere.

7. Do we believe in Christ, that he hath done and suffered all that he did, to purchase heaven for us, and his intercession and grace is to bring us to it, and when all is done, would we not come there, and had we rather stay in a sinful, malignant, vexatious earth?

8. Are we in good earnest when we pray, and labour, and suffer for heaven, and make it the end of all our religion and obedience, and make that the business of our lives, and yet would we not go to that which we spend our lives in seeking?

9. If our fears be unreasonable, necessitated by nature, against the convictions of faith, even those fears should make us desire death, as that which faith tells us will end them all, and be our only full deliverance.

10. Is it not unnatural, and contrary to the very interest and tendency of all our faculties, to fear and flee from that which is our felicity and joy? Doth our heavenly state differ from the best on earth, more than a kingdom from a prison; and shall we fear it, as if it were evil, and fly from the only hope and happiness of souls?

Quest. 'These reasons to godly men are undeniable; but the fears of death will not yield to reason: Have you no other way or remedy against it?'

Ans. Souls are wrought upon by soul-operations and remedies. But further,

1. When fear cometh from natural averseness to die, and

strangeness to the state of separated souls, and to some unrevealed things of the unseen world, it is wisdom to cast those dark and unknown frightful things quite out of our thoughts, and quietly to shut our eyes against them. When I was young, I was wont to go up the Wrekin-Hill with great pleasure (being near my dwelling), and to look down on the country below me, and see the villages as little things; but when I was weak with age and sickness, the last time I went up, if I did but cast my eye downwards, my spirits failed, and I was ready to fall down in sudden death. Were I chained fast to the top of a high spire-steeple, I am sure that I could not fall, and yet I am confident that one look down would suddenly kill me. What then should I do? As on the hill I fixed my eyes on the earth at my feet, till I came down; so I would in such a height, either look only upward, or shut my eyes, and take heed of looking down to the earth: so do here. If faith and reason tell you, that death is not to be so feared, and that all your hope and comfort must be beyond it, and that you are safe in God's promise, and in the hand of Christ; but yet the thoughts of a grave, and the separation from the body, and of all that is unknown to us in the next world, is frightful to you, shut your eyes, and think not on those things; wink, and say, they belong not to my thoughts.

But then join the other remedies. 2. Look upwards, and dwell on the delightful thoughts of all that revealed joy and glory, which is ready to receive us, and of the company that is there, that hope and desire may conquer fear.

3. And especially trust Jesus Christ with your departing souls, and trust him quietly and boldly, as to all that he hath revealed, and you know; and as to all that is unrevealed and unknown, he is fully able, wise, and willing. Trust him, for he commandeth it. Trust him, for he never deceived any. He hath saved all departed souls, that ever truly and obediently trusted him. Cast away all distrustful, caring, fearing thoughts, that would take his work out of his hand: against all such even wink, and trust him: it is his part and not yours to know fully what he will do with you, and to receive you into his prepared mansions, and to justify you against the accusations of satan, and the guilt of pardoned sin; and to bring you into the Jerusalem

above, and present you spotless to his Father. Cast therefore all these cares on him, who hath promised to care for you. Commit yourselves to him, and trust him with his own, which he hath wonderfully purchased: suspect not his power, skill, or will: and beg his grace to increase your faith, that you may not fear nor faint, through self-caring and unbelief.

CASE III.

Under Poverty and Want, through Losses, or any other Causes.

Another case that needeth obedient patience is poverty and want; either through losses, which come by the afflicting providence of God, or by robbery, or by oppression of unjust men, by violence or injurious suits at law, or by the failing of our trade or calling, or by multitudes of children, or by sickness, lameness, and disability to work, or by the unhappiness or miscarriages and debts of parents, or by rash suretyship, or any other way.

Poverty hath its temptations, and they may and will be felt, but must not be over-felt. It is some trial to want food and necessary clothing and habitation; it is more to be put to beg it of others, or to be holden to them, especially who give it grudgingly: but yet to a single man these are comparatively small. Hard fare and scant, with patched or ragged garments, may be consistent with health, when fulness causeth mortal diseases to the rich. But it is far harder to bear the wants of an impatient wife, and crying of children; to have many to provide for, and to have nothing for them: and it is yet harder to be in debt, and bear the importunity, frowns, and threatenings of creditors. What should the poor do in this distressed case, and how should it be patiently endured?

I will first premise this counsel, for prevention of such necessity and distress, and then tell you how to bear it patiently.

1. Let not your own sin bring you into poverty, and then if it be by the trying providence of God without your guilt, it is the more easily borne. Some run themselves into want by idleness, refusing diligent labour in their calling; some come to poverty by base and brutish sensuality, by pampering the flesh in meats and drinks; their appetites must be pleased till necessity displease them: some by

covetous gaming losing their own, while they gaped after another's; some by foolish pride, living above their estates, in worldly pomp, in houses, furniture, apparel, and retinue: some by rash bargains, and covetous venturousness: some by rash, imprudent marriage: some by filthy, beastly lusts; and many by unadvised suretyship: wilfulness and guilt are the sting and shame of poverty.

2. If you have little, live accordingly, and suit your diet and garb according to your condition, with a contented mind: nature is content with little; but pride and appetite are hardly satisfied: coarse diet and usage are as sweet and safe to a contented mind, as daily feasting to the voluptuous and rich.

3. If your labour will not get you necessaries for life and health, beg rather than borrow, when you know you are unable and unlike to pay. It is far easier begging before you are in debt than after: two such burdens are heavier than one. Such borrowing, if you conceal your disability to pay, is one of the worst sorts of thievery, and a great addition to your misery.

4. Draw not others by suretyship or partnership, or unfaithful trading, into suffering with you. Be not guilty of the sufferings of others: it is more innocent, and more easy to suffer alone.

5. Therefore marry not till you have a rational probability that you may maintain a wife and children: the case of absolute necessity to the lustful, is commonly excepted; and so it ought when it is but harder living, that a woman is by such a man put upon, and she knowingly consenteth to the suffering; but I know not how any such man's necessity can warrant him to make wife and children miserable, and that by fraud, and without her knowing consent? Nor do I think, that any man can be under such necessity, which may not be cured by lawful means: it is a shame that any should need such a remedy; but I think Christ intimateth a better than such a wrong to others, if no less would serve, Matt. xix. 20. xviii. 9.

II. 'But what is to be done for obedient patience when poverty (however) is upon us.'

Answ. 1. Find out all your sin that caused it, and repent of that, and see that you are much more grieved for that than your poverty: and presently fly to Christ by

faith, till your conscience have the peace and comfort of forgiveness.

2. Remember that whatever were the means or second causes, God's will and providence is the overruling cause, and hath chosen this condition for you, whether it be by way of trial (as to Job and the apostles), or by way of punishing correction. Therefore consider whose hand you are in, and with whom it is you have to do; and apply yourselves first and principally to God, for reconciliation, and pardon of the punishment, and for grace to stand in all your trials. Behave yourselves in all your wants, as a child to a father, as if you heard God say, It is I that do it: it is I that corrects thee, or that tries thee, or that chooses thy diet and medicine according to thy need, and for thy good.

3. Think of all those texts of Scripture, from the mouth of Christ and his apostles, which speak of the temptation and dangerousness of riches, and the difficulty of the salvation of the rich, and how few such are found Christians, or saved; and how commonly they prove worldly, sensual brutes, and enemies, and persecutors of the faithful; Matt. xix. 23, 24. James iv. v.

And then think of all those texts that tell you, that Christ himself was poor, that he might make many rich, and that the apostles were poor, and that Christ tried the rich man, whether he was sound, by bidding him "Sell all, and give to the poor, and follow him," and trieth all his disciples by taking up the cross and forsaking all. He sheweth what the spirit of Christianity is, when he caused all the first believers to sell all, and to live in common: and he blesseth his poor, that are poor in spirit, because, that "their's is the kingdom of heaven;" Matt. v.

4. Study well the great advantages of poverty, and the particular danger of riches. The damnation of souls cometh from the love of this world, and fleshly prosperity and pleasures, better than God, and holiness, and heaven. And what stronger temptation to this can there be, than to have all fulness and pleasure, which the flesh desireth? Though it was not for being rich that Dives (Luke xvi.) was damned, nor for being poor that Lazarus was saved; yet it was riches which furnished Dives with that pomp and pleasure, which drew his heart from God and heaven; and poverty kept Lazarus from those temptations. Doth not reason and

experience tell you, That it is very much harder for a man to be weaned from the love of this world, and to seek first a better, who liveth in all plenty and delight, than a man that is in continual affliction, and hath nothing in the world to allure him to over-love it? O! what a help is it to drive us to look homeward for a better habitation, and to save us from the deceitful flatteries of the world, and the lusts of brutish flesh, to be still wearied with one cross or other, and pinched with wants, that even the flesh itself may consent to die, or not be importunate with the soul to serve it any longer. A man in miserable poverty is most inexcusable if his heart be not in heaven.

5. To be overmuch troubled at poverty is a sin of dangerous signification. It sheweth that you over-love the flesh and the world, and do not sufficiently take God and heavenly felicity for your portion. No man is much troubled for the want of any thing but that which he loveth: and to over-love the world is a sin, which, if it prevail against the greater love of God and glory, it is certainly damning. And he that taketh not God's kingdom and righteousness as better than the world, and seeketh it not first, cannot obtain it. If God and heaven seem not enough for you, unless you be free from bodily want, you trust not God aright.

6. Doth it not properly belong to God, to diet his family, and to give every one what he seeth best? If he had made you worms, or dogs, or serpents, you could find no fault with him. May he not diversify his creatures as he please? Shall every fly and vermin murmur that he is not a man? And may he not as freely diversify the provision of his creatures, as their natures? Must all be masters, and yet none be servants? Must the rich be bound to relieve the poor, and must there be no poor to be relieved? "The poor you have always with you," saith Christ. How shall men be rewarded at last, as they clothed them, fed them, visited them, &c. if there were none that stood in need thereof? Is not God wiser than we, to know what is best for us? and can he not give us all that we desire if he saw it best? And do you think, that he wanteth so much love to his children as to feed and clothe them? Were it for want of love; he would not give them the far greater gifts, even his Son, and Spirit, and life everlasting: if this were the trial of his love, you might say that he most loveth the

worst of men, who more abound in riches than the most cruel and persecuting tyrants, the most wicked, sensual, profligate monsters? Were riches any special treasure, God would not give them to such flagitious enemies, and deny them to humble, faithful persons. It is no small sin to murmur at God for maintaining and governing his family according to his wisdom and will, and for not being ruled by the desires of our flesh.

7. Do you not see that riches bring more trouble to them that have them, than poverty doth to contented persons? They that have much, have much to do with it, and many to deal with, many tenants, servants, and others, that will all put them to some degree of trouble: they have more law-suits, losses, crosses and frustrations than the poor. Their food and rest is not so sweet to them, as to poor labouring men: their bodies are usually fuller of diseases: thieves rob them, when he is fearless that hath nothing which other men desire: he that hath little hath a light burden to carry, and little to care for.

8. And do you think that a man will die ever the more willingly or comfortably for being rich? No; the more they love the world, the more it teareth their hearts to leave it! O what a horror it is for a guilty, miserable soul, to be forced to quit for ever all that he flattered his soul in as his felicity, and all that for which he neglected and sold his God and his salvation! No man till it come can fully conceive the dismal case of a dying worldling.

CASE IV.

Under the Sufferings and Death of Friends. 1. *Of Children.*
2. *Of Ungodly Kindred.* 3. *Some dear Friend, who died in Pain or Misery.* 4. *Some Pillars in Church or State.*

Another case which requireth obedient patience is the sufferings and death of friends, whether near us, as wife, husband, children; or more remote, as those that have been most kind to us, most faithful to God, or most useful to the church.

It is not only lawful, but a duty, to be duly sensible of such a loss: to be void of natural affection, and to bear all men's sufferings too easily, saving their own, is the odious quality of the basely selfish.

And alas! many good Christians are yet with greater

reason grieved, for the death of wicked children or relatives, lest they be in helpless misery : and some parents mourn for their dead infants, as doubting of their salvation.

Somewhat should be said against impatience in every one of these several cases.

As to the last.

I. Faithful parents have no just cause to be impatient at the death of infants.

1. For my part, I think that God hath promised their salvation : I speak not of the infants of heathens or infidels, or of hypocrites, but of sincere Christians, (one at least) or such pro-parents as take them for their own. I believe that it is not another but the same covenant, which baptism sealeth to the child and parent, and that as true faith is the condition to the adult, so to be the child of a true Christian is all the condition to an infant, to be dedicated to God, and accepted by him ; and I believe that it is the parent's duty to dedicate him, and enter him into covenant with Christ ; and that all that so come to Christ are received by him, and none cast out. And that this covenant on God's part pardoneth their original sin, and puts them into an infant right to salvation ; and that all such, so dying, are saved by promise. And if any thing hinder actual baptizing, as long as a believer is justly supposed to devote himself and his child to God, as far as in him lieth, it is not the bare want of water, or the outward ceremony, that depriveth such of part in God's covenant.

All this I have elsewhere opened and confirmed. But if this should prove an error, yet all grant that there is more probability of God's special mercy to the children of the faithful, than to others ; but I think there is more.

2. And they are taken out of a dangerous and troublesome world. What abundance of sad thoughts must they have undergone, and what abundance of temptations, and what abundance of sufferings of many kinds, if they had lived till old age ? Had it been but the fear of dying, to escape it is no contemptible mercy. To be at the harbour so easily and quickly, while others must be tossed many score years on so tempestuous and dangerous a sea, is matter of rejoicing. And though confirmed grace be never lost, such as I, who incline to think that the grace given to the infants of believers as such, is as losable as Adam's, or the angels that

fell was, must with Augustine take it for a mercy, that their possible apostacy is by death prevented. For my own part when I see how many children of excellent men prove wicked, and scourges to the church, and what a miserable world it is that we are in, even sunk into darkness, wickedness, and self-destruction; like the suburbs of hell, I have many times rejoiced, but never grieved, that I never had a child. And why then should I mourn if I had one, and God had quickly taken him away?

II. I confess the death of ungodly kindred is a humbling case: to think where they are, as God's word tells us of all the unconverted and unholy, and to think that they are past all help and hope, remediless for ever. But yet we have all this to command our patient submission to God.

1. God, who is absolute Lord of his creatures, is wiser and more merciful than we, and doeth all well, and to his glory. And his will is still fulfilled, which is the end of all. And if we knew what he knoweth, we should rest satisfied in his works, as better than our will and way would have been.

2. When we come to heaven we shall be fully reconciled to all the severest providences of God: for our mind and will shall be conformed to God's.

3. We should rejoice with the blessed, as well as be sorrowful with the miserable. And, Oh! what worlds of glorious angels and spirits are there for us to rejoice with, which in proportion should quite overbalance our sorrow for the damned.

4. The destruction of the wicked should call us to think how unspeakably we are beholden to God for ourselves, and so many of our friends, and all the faithful, that he did not forsake us, and cut us off in our impenitent state.

5. What are your kindred, that they should be more lamented than all the rest of the ungodly world? How incongruous had it been for you to cry and mourn inordinately for the death of some one person, when the plague lately took away in the city a hundred thousand? And when the world lieth in heathenism, infidelity, Mahometanism, Popery, ignorance and ungodliness, is it congruous for you to be overtroubled for one, because he is akin to you?

III. But suppose the case be the death of some dear friend of ours? When we think of the great pain in which

they died, or of the grave where now they lie corrupting, or of our former familiarity, our present losses, we are apt to over-grieve. But,

1. We always knew that they must die. Do not as many die as are born?

2. We had a long time to prepare each other for our parting, and doth it now come as an unexpected thing? What else did we live together for, but to help each other to prepare for death?

3. Should we not be thankful to God for the use and comfort of them so long?

4. Is it not matter of greater joy, than our loss should cloud, that they have ended all their work and suffering, and have safely escaped all their enemies and dangers, and are past all fears and sorrows, and are everlastingly delivered from all the guilt and power of sin, and have the end of all their faith and patience, their work and hope, and are triumphing with Christ and all the blessed in heavenly endless joy and glory? Do we believe this, and yet do we not rejoice with them, but mourn as those that have no such faith or hope?

5. And as to their late pains, it is none when it is past: I would not now wish myself that I had never felt the pain that is past: much less do they wish it that are with Christ! And yet we are more apt to keep imprinted on our minds, the groans and dying sorrows of our friends, than all the former comforts of their lives, or all the joy that they have now with Christ, and shall have for ever.

6. Though natural affection be laudable, usually much faultiness sheweth itself in our overmuch sorrow: 1. It sheweth that we prepared not for it as we ought to do. 2. It sheweth that we have too great a love still for this world and present life. 3. And that our belief of heaven and the blessedness of the spirits of the just with Christ, is very weak, and too little effectual. 4. And it sheweth that we expect a longer life on earth ourselves, than we have just cause to do. If we knew we should die the next day or week, it would be folly to mourn for our parting from a friend that died but the day before. Would we not have their company? And where can we have it but where we are to be ourselves? And are we so sottish as to forget how quickly we must follow them and be gone? If we love their company, we should

rejoice that we shall quickly meet them, and live with Christ and them for ever. I have often thought (and mentioned it) how like it was to this our folly, when I have seen a man fetch his beasts home out of a pasture, and when one hath gone through the gate, another hath looked and mourned after him, not knowing that he was presently to follow. Alas ! it is want of conversing by faith with the saints above, which maketh us over-grieve for the miss of them here below.

And as to the loathsomeness of the grave and rottenness, it is the fruit of sin, and we always knew that flesh was corruptible. It is made of that which lately stood on our tables, the flesh of sheep, and beasts, and swine, and birds, &c. turned into the flesh of man : and before that, it was grass growing for the food of cattle in the fields. But the soul corrupteth not ; and if it change the rags of flesh, for a building in the heavens, why should we repine at this ? The soul is the man ; and God will change these vile bodies, and make them incorruptible, and spiritual, and immortal, like to the glorious body of Christ. Phil. iii. 19, 20.

IV. But our sorrows seem to be more justifiable, when we mourn for the loss of the pillars, or useful servants of the church. Their death is the loss of souls, yea, of many, and a sign of God's displeasure to a land. But as to this also ;

1. Magistrates, and ministers, and all, are mortal : they have their work and time, and then they must go home. They came not to abide on earth, but to do their message and be gone. When they have faithfully finished their course, they must go to their Master's joy, that he that soweth, and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

2. Thank God for the good he hath done by them, and pray for a succession of more. God will not serve himself here by one generation only : as the same rose or other flowers, which you get this year, will not serve you for the next ; nor the same fruit or crop of corn, but every year must bring forth its own fruit ; so must it be with serviceable men. Elisha must have his time and part, as Elias had ; and a David, Solomon, Hezekiah or Josiah, live not here always. Every generation must have its proper servants, work and honour. If some have till evening borne the burden and heat of the day, allow them their rest, and let others work the following day.

3. And God hath the fulness of the Spirit in Christ, to

send forth our successors : and he is the Lord of the church, and knoweth what is best, and what the people are fit to receive. Christ lived on earth to no great age, and he tells his apostles, "That it was expedient for them, that he go away, that the Comforter might come." God will choose his own servants, and their times, and we must submit to his disposal.

4. Paul was permitted at Rome to dwell two whole years in his own hired house, and receive all that came to him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. But I have been permitted above fifty years to preach the same Gospel, though long a law, and bishops; and justices did forbid me (save that for nine or ten years, they confined my vocal preaching to my house). James was cut off near the beginning of his apostleship: Stephen was sooner cut off than he. Some excellent ministers hath God taken away young.

5. Christ is more worthy of their company than we are. Heaven is more worthy of them than earth, than those that hate them and abuse them; "Of whom the world was not worthy;" Heb. xi. 28. The world knoweth not the worth of a saint, or how to use him, or what use to make of him.

6. We know not from what approaching evil, God in mercy taketh them away. We have lately lamented the death of many excellent persons, magistrates and ministers; but the storms that are now assaulting us, tell us, that it was a seasonable and merciful change to them. Christ saith, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father;" John xiv. 28. They mourn not for their own removal: would you wish them here again from heaven? You do not mourn, that Christ, and Abraham, and David, and the apostles are gone to heaven; nor that Lazarus changed his beggary for Abraham's bosom; nor that the martyrs are gone thither. The ancient churches were wont with thankfulness to recite the names of their departed pastors in their liturgies, and to keep days of thanksgiving (which we call holidays) in memorial of their martyrs. They may say as Christ, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children:" for those that must endure the storms that are coming upon us, and must be sifted by satan and his ministers, to try whether their faith and constancy will fail. Christ purchased

them for heaven, and he will have them there. It is his will and prayer, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may see the glory which thou hast given me; John xvii. 24. (a better sight than we see here, when we are laid among malefactors in gaols, or scorned for preaching). "If our hopes were in this life only, we were of all men most miserable:" and do we love them so little as to wish them with us is so miserable a life? Is vanity and vexation, and the portion of the wicked, better than the Jerusalem above? Our cows, and sheep, and hens, &c. when they have bred up their young ones at great pains and love, must part with them for us to kill and eat, yea, and with their own lives also: and shall we grudge that our friends and we must die to go where God will have us? If God should not take our friends or us, till our wills consented, I doubt we should stay here too long, unless pain constrained us to consent; but God is fittest to choose the time. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of all his saints;" Psal. cxvi. "Even the hairs of their head are numbered." It is not then for want of love to them that they are taken away by death. "They rest from their labour and their works follow them." Were we not fools and slow of heart to believe what the Gospel saith of blessed souls, we should know that they ought to suffer with Christ, and then to reign with him, as he suffered, and then entered into his glory.

And, as David said of his child, we shall come to them, but they shall not return to us.

CASE V.

Unkindness and Injury of Friends and Relations.

Another case that calls for patience is the unkindness of friends, and their injurious dealing with us. Husband and wife often prove burdens and continual griefs to one another. Parents and children prove worse than strangers. Those that we have obliged by our benefits are ungrateful, and those untrusty whom we have trusted.

1. It must be so; man will be man, uncertain and untrusty. David and Paul say that all men are liars; that is, such as will deceive those that too much trust them. They are all sinful, ignorant, erroneous, mutable and selfish: if interest, change or temptations come, there is no hold of

them, if God do not hold them up. Did you not know man till now?

2. It is God's just rebuke for your too much trust in man, and for your erroneous, overvaluing man: and it is his merciful remedy to drive you home from man to God. This deceit and failing of your friends is part of the curse pronounced, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert," &c. But "blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters," &c.

3. The failing of man doth but tell us what we are ourselves, even untrusty and mutable as other men. It should help to humble us for the badness of our nature, and drive us to seek to Christ for his confirming grace, and not to trust ourselves too far.

4. And it should call us to examine whether we never wronged and deceived others. Have we not put the best side outward, and seemed better to our friends than we are? Have we not been less helpful, friendly and comfortable to them, than we promised, or than we should have been, and deceived their expectations? Have we not by our failings or provoking harshness been their grief? Or worse, have we not pleased them in their sin, and been temptations and snares to their souls?

5. Is there any friend that is nearer to you than yourselves? And is there any that hath hurt you half so much as you have done yourselves? Alas! how little suffer we by friends or foes, in comparison of what we suffer by ourselves!

6. Christ went before us in this kind of suffering, to teach us what to expect from men. Peter denied him with cursing and swearing, and that after warning and contrary protestations; and all his disciples forsook him and fled. And yet he forsook not them, but died for them, and as soon as he was risen, kindly comforteth them, "Go tell my brethren, and tell Peter (saith he), I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

7. Were your friends so much obliged to you, as you were to God and to your Saviour? or did they ever promise and vow more to you, than you did in your baptism to Christ? And have you faithfully performed all your vows,

and answered all your obligations? Did you ever oblige any by such benefits as God hath bestowed upon you? No, not by the thousandth, thousandth part. And have not you more unthankfully injured God, than ever any friend did injure you? Let this then provoke you to repentance.

If it be an unkind husband or wife; first see that you be innocent, and give no provocation. If you have deceived them by seeming better than you are, or if you be a burden to them, no wonder if they deceive you, and be a burden to you. And next, remember that you had your choice, and that after time of deliberation. If you have by blind love, or passion, or covetousness, or causeless haste deceived yourselves, repent, and make the best of it for the future that you can. Sin will not be without its sting.

9. If you love God and them, why are you not more grieved that they wrong God, and that they hurt themselves, than that they wrong you and deal unkindly by you. They do a thousandfold more wrong to Christ, and more hurt to their own souls, than they can do to you.

10. I fear most of us too little consider that friends over-kind; and so over-loved, are oft more dangerous than the unkind, yea, than enemies. To be crossed by them may many ways do us good, but to over-love them, hath more danger and hurt than I will now digress to mention. Corrupted love is the most sinful and worst affection.

11. And why do you not consider the benefit and comfort, which you have had by your friends, as well as the injuries? What if they now deal unkindly by you? Have they not many years been kind and useful to you? And should that be forgotten? And if you compare them, was not the kindness longer and greater than the unkindness? If Job say, "shall we receive good at the hands of God and not evil," we may much more say so of men.

12: Perhaps God permitteth it, that you may be the less grieved to part with them at death. I have noted it in some of my nearest acquaintance, that have lived in the greatest endearedness; that a little before death some unkindness hath fallen out between them, perhaps else death would have torn their hearts more grievously than that unkindness did. When God would separate Paul and Barnabas for his work, a little dissension became the cause. And when Paul was

to be offered up, almost all his old companions forsook him, 2 Tim. iv. 16. Who would have thought that David should ever have dealt so unkindly with Mephibosheth; but his prosperity was less sweet and ensnaring by it.

13. It is purposely to keep us from heart idolatry, and drive us to God our surest friend, that he permitteth friends to fail us. It is not them, but God that we live upon, and that we must trust to, if we would not be deceived: it is not they but Christ that is our treasure. God never dealt unkindly with us: he hath promised that he will never fail us nor forsake us; 2 Tim. iv. 16. When Paul had said, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me, (he addeth) yet the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me," &c. David's lovers and friends stood aloof from him, when God was his hope. "I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion," &c.: Psal. xxxviii. 11. 15. xiv. 4, 5.

14. I confess that the case of a bad or unsuitable and unkind husband or wife, is a very sharp trial. They are near you, even in your bosom, bed and heart: they are still with you, and a contentious woman is as a continual dropping, saith Solomon. To have a discontented, displeasing, angry, provoking person always with one to the death, is a greater affliction than any that ordinarily cometh from enemies. But yet let such consider, 1. That it is a just chastisement for their sins, and may help to a more deep repentance. 2. As it is a great and constant trial, so it calleth for great and constant patience, and exercise of grace: and what is more like to increase grace, than great and constant exercise? 3. It is a great and constant preservative against the flatteries of this world, or building a palace or fool's paradise on earth; it is a daily voice to such, saying, 'This is not your rest; look and long for better company and friends.' 4. And as near as wife or husband is, God is much nearer to us, even within us; and should make us rejoicingly forget all other joys or sorrows, in comparison of him.

15. The same I say of wicked children: the affliction is grievous; but, 1. It calleth men to examine how they have discharged their duty to them; have you lovingly, familiarly, and unweariedly instructed them, exhorted and admonished

them? Have you not thrust them into company, callings, or places of temptations, for a little worldly wealth, or learning or reputation? Yea, have you kept them from temptations by prudent watchfulness and convincing dissuasions? Have you taught them as is required, Deut. v. 11.? Or have you not slubbered over so great a duty; and looked God should save them merely for being yours? 2. But remember, that all the children of God in glory will be dear and comfortable to you; as if they had been all your own.

CASE VI.

Injuries from Malicious Enemies. 1. Personal. 2. Persecuting.

Another trial, which requireth patience, is injuries from malicious enemies. Either personal enemies, or such as hate and persecute us for our duty. As to the former sort, consider,

1. We have the greater reason to be patient, when we consider what poor and worthless worms we are; and that enmity and injury against such low and little creatures is a smaller fault than if it were against nobler or more excellent beings. We make no great matter of beating a horse or dog. Though this must not diminish their repentance, it must diminish our impatience.

2. And we are so bad that we give occasion of hatred and hard thoughts of us to our enemies; and though this justify not their mistakes, who take us to be worse than we are, yet it commandeth us who tempt them to it, the more patiently to bear it. They mistake us mostly by thinking that the same sins that are in us are predominant, and in a greater measure than they are. They call us erroneous, proud, hypocrites, covetous, unpeaceable, &c. And when we know there is in us some error, some pride, hypocrisy, and the rest, the conscience of this must make us the easier bear with, and forgive the false accusers, that charge us with more than we are guilty of.

3. And when we consider we were enemies to God, and have far more wronged him by sin than any can wrong us, and yet he forgiveth us; it must teach us to forgive the wrongs and enmity of others. Yea, God hath made our forgiving others, a condition of his full forgiving us; and we cannot pray to him for forgiveness, and consequently not expect it, on any lower terms; yea, we must learn of God to

love our enemies, and pray for them, and do them good, and not seek revenge and satisfaction.

4. Which of us hath done no wrong to others? Have we unjustly censured none, nor spoken evil of them, or been angry, or reviled them without just cause? Have we never tempted any to sin, nor encouraged them in it, nor omitted any duty which we owed them? If we have, we may see God's justice permitting injuries against us, as an equal castigation.

5. However, conscience tells us that we have deserved a thousandfold worse from God: and he useth to make the sins of men, the instruments of his punishments on earth. God punished David by the permitted sins of Absalom and Shimei (though he caused not the sin). And David the more patiently endured it, as acknowledging the providence of a correcting God.

6. It is your own fault if all your enemies' wrongs do you not much more good than hurt. God hath told you how so to improve them; and if you do, you may well be patient with that which is your benefit and advantage; yea, and thankful too, which is more than patient. But if you do not so improve them, you have more to be grieved for than your injuries, even your own sin and omission, which loseth so gainful an advantage.

7. If they repent, God will forgive them all their greater wrong against him; (O what a deal doth he forgive at once to a converted sinner!) and then surely you will easily forgive your mite. But if they repent not, instead of impatience and revenge, pity them, and lament their case; for they will suffer more than you can now desire: would you have them suffer more than hell?

8. Your happiness and all your great concerns are out of the power of all your enemies: it is but matters of little moment that they can touch you in. They cannot take away your God, your Saviour, your Comforter, your glory; no, nor the least of your graces. They cannot deprive you of your knowledge, or of love to God, of faith, or hope, or peace of conscience, or joy in the Holy Ghost. They cannot bring back the guilt of any pardoned sin, nor cast you into hell.

9. And if impatience open the door of your heart, which your enemies could bring no nearer you than your estate, your ears, or your flesh at most, it is not they but yourselves

that are your chief tormenter. And will you torment your selves because another wrongeth you?

10. Do you not observe how sin hath set all the world in a state of enmity to God, and all that is holy, and to the way of their own salvation? And that all the unsanctified world is in a war against God and goodness, under the unknown conduct of the devil? And do you make a great matter then of some petty injury or enmity to you? This is more foolishly selfish, than if you should complain of a soldier for taking a pin off your sleeve, when an army is plundering all the town, and setting all the country on fire, and murdering your neighbours before your face.

So much for patience in case of personal enmity and injury.

II. But if it be in the case of persecution for your duty to God, impatience then is far more culpable. In this case I premise this advice.

1. Search diligently lest some personal crimes of your own be in the cause, as well as your religion. Sometimes the sinful miscarriages of Christians doth provoke the adversaries to think the worse of their way of religion for their sakes, and so to persecute them for truth and duty, but provoked to it by former sin. In this case your first duty is to repent of the sin which first provoked them, and openly confess it and lament it: for while you remain impenitent, and hide or justify your gross iniquity, you harden them that afflict you, and you provoke God to let them loose. Especially when you can aggravate all the miscarriages of your persecutors, and cannot bear so much as the naming of your own sin, but take it for enmity or injury to be called to repent.

If it be any sin of ours that hath made us stink in the nostrils of our persecutors, we cannot comfortably suffer or expect deliverance, till we repent.

2. Let us search with the severest suspicion and impartiality, that it be indeed truth and duty, and not error and sin, for which we suffer. I doubt not but men may be persecutors and injurious, who do but afflict men for sin and error, when it is done for such as are but those tolerable infirmities, which all Christians in one kind or other are liable to: or when the punishment is greater than the fault deserveth; and when it is done in malice against the piety of the persons, or tendeth to the hindrance of piety, and injury of

the church of God. But yet the guilt of his persecutors is no justification of any one that suffereth for his sin or error, nor should abate, but increase his repentance, in that he occasions by his scandal the sin and misery of his persecutors. Peter justly calleth us to make sure, that none of us suffer as evil-doers; much less as impenitent persons that cannot endure to hear of it. I am one that have been first in all the storms that have befallen the ministry these twenty years past, (to look no further back); and yet my conscience commandeth me to say, as I have oft done, that many through mistake, I am persuaded, now suffer as evil-doers for a cause that is not good and justifiable. For the great difference among sufferers, proveth that some must needs be mistaken.

3. If we be sure that our cause is good, let us also make sure that we use it well. A good cause may be abused. Let us see, 1. That we mix no error with it. 2. That we do not manage it partially and uncharitably: that we make not the contrary worse than it is. 3. That we delight not to represent our adversaries more odiously than there is cause. 4. That we deny no just honour or obedience to our governors. 5. That we shew not the same spirit of persecution which we exclaim against, by differing from them only in the manner of expression. If they unjustly say, that 'men are so bad as to be unworthy of Christian communion,' you agree in unjust condemning others, and only wrong them several ways. 6. Let us see that while we are restrained from some part of our work, we neglect not that which none forbiddeth us. Are we not shamefully guilty in this? None forbideth ministers to catechise those that are under sixteen years of age, or to teach them by preaching, or to pray with them, and yet that is commonly neglected. None forbid us to confer daily with our ignorant or vicious neighbours, to try if we can convert them: nor to win them by kindness, as Christ went to publicans and sinners. None forbid religious people to catechise and teach their families, and read good books to them, and pray with them, and openly sing the praises of God, as Daniel openly prayed in his house, to be examples to ungodly families about them. And yet how much is this neglected! And a dumb and negligent father, and master of a family will condemn himself by speaking against dumb and negligent ministers, and against those that restrain him from some public duties. Some think that if

a law were made (which God prevent) against all catechising and teaching men's families, and against praying and singing the praises of God, it would by opposition stir up some to do it better, that now neglect it, so prone are they to that which is forbidden. And since it is come into the heads of some clergymen, to preach openly, that it is unlawful to receive dissenters to their communion, and they intend to forbid them, and excommunicate them, that they may be incapable of public trust, or votes; I hear that some intend to communicate, who before condemned it as unlawful, and sharply censured those that did it.

But when you have made sure, that you suffer not as evil-doers, upon mistake, but for your duty, and for righteousness, consider these following reasons for your patience.

1. If you believe not that anything is done against you by man, but what falls under the overruling, disposing will and providence of God, you deny his government, and are unfit to do or suffer. Though God caused none of the malice, and sin of the murderers of Christ, yet as to the effect of their free, sinful volitions, there was nothing done but what God's counsel fore-determined for the redemption of the world: and if you believe this, dare you impatiently grudge at the providence of God?

2. Though you are innocent towards your persecutors, and you suffer for well-doing, you are not innocent towards God, who may use bad men for just chastisement.

3. It is an unspeakable mercy to have unavoidable, deserved sufferings, to be made the sanctified means of your salvation, and to be for ever rewarded for bearing that which else would have been but the foretaste of hell. Sin brought unavoidable pain and death on all mankind. No power, or policy, or price can save you from it. If you deny Christ, and sell heaven to save your lives, you shall die for all that; and he that so saveth his life shall lose it, and lose his soul also by such self-saving. "It is appointed to all men once to die, and after that the judgment." A martyr doth but die, and so doth his persecutor; and death to the ungodly is the door of hell. And is it not a marvellous mercy, that suffering but the same death, in faith, and hope, and obedience for Christ, and for your duty, shall procure you a crown of glory? Even as the same outward blessings, which to the wicked are but the fuel of sin and hell, are by believers im-

proved for grace and glory; so is it also with the case of suffering. And what a terror is it to conscience, when the sentence of death shall be passed upon you, to think, 'Now that life is at an end, which I sold my soul to save! O that I had rather chosen to die for my duty, than by my sin: this death would then have been the entrance into heaven, which is now the entrance into misery.' This made many dying Christians in Cyprian's charge to be hardly comforted, because they had not died martyrs, that death might have been a double gain to them. Is it not better have a glorious reward for dying, than die for nothing?

4. It is no small benefit to be called out to the exercise of that, which every one must resolve on, and be prepared for, that will be saved: that we may not be deceived, but know by experience; whether we are sincere or not. Whatever worldly hypocrites think, Christ was in good earnest when he said, "He that forsaketh not all that he hath, even life itself, cannot be my (sincere) disciple;" Luke xiv. 26. 30. 33. Holiness here and heaven hereafter, is that which Christ came to procure for his own, and that which all must choose and trust to as their hope and portion, that will be his. Worldlings never make this choice, but being doubtful of the life to come, prefer the present prosperity of the flesh, and will be religious only in subordination thereto, and hope for heaven (if there be any life to come) but as a reserve and second good, because they cannot keep the world; which they will not lose for the hope of heaven, as long as they can keep it, but will rather venture their souls than bodies. This being the true difference between the faithful and the worldly hypocrite, all that will be saved must be such as would let go life, and all the world, rather than by wilful sin to forfeit their salvation, if they were called to it: though all be not actually put upon the trial, and seeing it is so easy for a prosperous man to profess Christianity with a worldly mind, and say that he would rather die than wilfully sin, being in hope that he shall never be put to it; it is a great advantage to our assurance of salvation, to find that we can suffer in a time of trial, and so that our resolution was not false; for so far as any man loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The heat of persecution withereth the corn that groweth on the rocks. They are offended and gossorowing away, because they cannot make sure both of earth

and heaven. And as the faithful have the fullest proof of their sincerity in the greatest sufferings, no wonder if they have the greatest comfort. No reasoning will so fully answer all their fears and doubts, whether they are sincere, and should not forsake Christ in suffering.

5. Believers should much more pity their persecutors than themselves. If a madman in Bedlam should spit in your face, would you have your action against him, or would you be sorry for him? They are preparing fuel for themselves in hell, while they make a purgatory for you on earth. O think who it is that ruleth them, and how he will reward them, and how dear they will pay for this for ever, without conversion; and pray God to have mercy on them in time. If the righteous be scarcely saved, and must suffer before they reign, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear? "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled, rest with Christ;" 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. Do but believe that dreadful reckoning of their day that is coming, when in vain they will wish the hills to cover them, and shall receive according to their works, and then you will rather weep over their foreseen misery, than make too great a matter of your suffering by them. They know nothing but present things, like beasts; but you foreknow things to come. God beareth with them, because he knoweth that their day is coming.

6. And remember, that if you suffer for Christ and righteousness, the wrong is much more to him than to you: and he will judge them that do but neglect his servants, much more that persecute them, as doing it all against himself: and the cause and interest being much more his than yours, cast it upon him; and trust him with his own cause. Who is to be trusted if he be not? And when is he to be trusted, if not when we suffer for him? An honest master would bear out his servant who suffereth for obeying him, and will not Christ? Do you think that Christ will be too slow, or deal too gently in his revenge? Sure you would wish no greater punishment to persecutors than he hath threatened. It were better a milstone were hanged about their neck, and they cast into the sea, who offend but his little ones. On whom this stone falls, it will grind him to powder.

7. The promises made to them that patiently suffer for well-doing, are so many and great, I will not recite them,

supposing you cannot be ignorant of them. And do you not believe the word of Christ? He hath bound himself to save you harmless, and to be with you in your sufferings, and never to fail you nor forsake you; and to give you for all that you lose for him a hundredfold (in value) in this world, and in the world to come, eternal life. If we trust these promises, undoubtedly our patience and choice will shew it. He that is offered a lordship in a foreign land, if he will leave his native land and friends where he liveth in poverty or prison, if he trust the promiser, will leave all and go with him; but if he dare not venture, he doth not trust him.

8. Do you suffer any thing but what Christ foretold you of? Did he not tell you, that you must sit down and count what it will cost you to be a Christian, before you undertook it? Did he not tell you, that you shall be hated of the world, because you are not of the world? yea, hated of all (worldly) men for his name's sake? And did you not profess to take him and his salvation on these terms? and to consent to his conditions? If you thought them too hard, you might have refused them. What hypocrites are they that silence Christ's ministers for scrupling to engage them in covenant to Christ at their baptism, by the symbolical, transient image of a cross, as obliging them to be the soldiers of a crucified Christ, and when they have done, abhor all that in Christianity which will bring the cross, and will rather venture on hell than bear it! Yea, will lay the cross by persecution upon others. It is true, that it was in your infancy that this covenant was made by others for you; but did not you own it at age, when you called yourselves Christians? Alas! hypocrisy undoes the visible church: men mean nothing less than what they vow. They think that resolution for suffering, or martyrdom, is proper to some rare, extraordinary saints, and will not believe that none is a true Christian nor can be saved without it; that is, without preferring heaven before earth, and the soul before the body. Take any of these worldly hypocrites aside, and seriously ask him, (in France or Flanders) how dare you persecute the servants of Christ? and they will say, 'It is not long of us, we cannot help it; the law and magistrates command us: we shall suffer ourselves if we do not obey them.' Would you think that these men did stand to their baptism? As if they plainly said, 'Whatever Christ saith, we will do any

thing against him and his servants that man's law bids us, rather than we will suffer ourselves.' How far are these men from being ready for martyrdom, yea, or being Christians, or the servants of God. If you are Christians you have bound yourselves by covenant to take up the cross and follow Christ, though to the death, and to choose rather to suffer than wilfully to sin.

9. And did not you as Christians, list yourselves as soldiers under Christ, against the devil, flesh and world. And is he a soldier indeed that expecteth no enemies? And that murmureth because he must come in danger, and see any war? Did you not know that there is a war throughout all the world, between Christ and satan, between the woman's and serpent's seed, and is hurting and killing any wonder in a war? Or that he that is born after the flesh should persecute him that is born after the Spirit?

10. What hath a Christian to do in this life, but to prepare for a safe and happy death? And if you had done this, you had prepared for persecution and martyrdom itself. If you are ready to die by sickness, why not by fire or sword, by axe or halter, if God will have it so? Do you not know that most sicknesses do by their length put the body to more pain than ordinary martyrdom before they kill them? How easy a death is hanging, in comparison of dying by the stone in the bladder, or by the cholic, or many other sicknesses? Yea, the painful death of burning being soon dispatched, is little to these. And sure a fine, or prison, or poverty, is yet less than any of these. O slothful men! unfaithful to yourselves, that have lived so long unprepared for death, when you had nothing else to do in the world. Your flying from suffering by sin, doth shew that you have neglected the great work of life, or that that which you lived for is yet undone. You would have been ready to suffer, if you had been ready to die. And doth this seem strange to you, after all your warnings and professions?

11. Have you a due estimate of worldly things? Are you crucified to the world, and it to you by the cross of Christ? Do you account them as loss and dung for him? Do you use them as if you used them not, and possess them as if you possessed them not? Do you judge of them as death will teach you to do? If you do, sure you will not count that

persecution that taketh them from you an insufferable thing ; nor be impatient to be deprived of them.

12. Had you rather be in the case of the prosperous persecutor, or the persecuted believer ? If the former, you are no true Christians : if the latter murmur not when you have that which you prefer. Sure a true martyr at the stake, or with Daniel in the lion's den, would be loath to change states with Nebuchadnezzar or Darius.

13. Do you think Christ loved Stephen the first martyr, or James the first martyred apostle, or Peter and Paul that died for the Gospel, less than he loved those that overlived them and suffered no such thing ? Is not the crown of martyrdom the most glorious ? Why are they said to live before the rest a thousand years ? Had you not now rather have Stephen's place in heaven, than theirs that suffered nothing for Christ ? And if it be best at last, is it not most eligible now ?

14. Are you afraid of men ? You have a greater than man to fear, and greater hurt than man can do you : " Fear not them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but fear him that can destroy soul and body in hell ! Yea, I say unto you, fear him ;" Luke xii. 4. Are you afraid of a prison, or death, or fire ? Fear more hell-fire and death everlasting. When Bilney burnt his finger in the candle, he remembered that hell-fire was more intolerable.

15. Wherein hath Christ been more an example to you, than in patient or obedient suffering, even unto death, and to the most accursed, shameful death ? Do you think that he only suffered to keep us from all suffering ? Peter saith, it was to leave us an example ; and Paul saith that we must be conformed to him, and partakers of his sufferings. Why else doth Christ call us to bear the cross ? And is it not joyful to see the footsteps of Christ in the way we go, and to know that we follow him ?

16. Sure that is not a state of greatest fear and sorrow, in which Christ hath commanded us to rejoice with the greatest joy : but so he hath done in the case of persecution ; " Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven ;" Matt.

v. 10. 12. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy;" 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. "They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and enduring substance;" Heb. x. 34. So Heb. xi. throughout.

17. God hath promised you that all your sufferings shall work together for your good; (Rom. viii. 28.) and taught you how to make them your exceeding gain. Practise this art, and you will be more patient, when you find the benefit and feel that you are more than conquerors. Our victory is by patient suffering. The worst men may conquer our bodies by force, but our souls are unconquered, and we are conquerors of the temptation and real hurt, while we keep obedient patience. When it is said of Job, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly;" satan was conquered, and missed his end, while he seemed to prevail upon his flesh.

By persecution you may learn. 1. What a nature is in lapsed men. 2. That there are devils that keep up a war against Christ. 3. How great their power is in the world, by God's permission over wicked men. 4. How wonderful a work of God it is, that the godly can live in so much peace and safety as they do, among those that are the very servants of the devil; even as Daniel was kept in the den of lions, because God shut their mouths. 5. How great need there is of sanctifying grace? 6. How great a mercy is our conversion, which cureth such a nature in us. 7. It calleth us to continual Christian watchfulness, to beware of men, and especially of their temptations, and to be wise as serpents, and innocent as doves. 8. It driveth us to constant prayer and dependance upon God for help and safety. 9. It teacheth us to keep up faith and hope, as having our eye continually on God, and on the heavenly inheritance, without which we have nothing to support us. 10. And it as sureth us that there is a day of judgment, in which Christ will call over again in righteousness, all the false judgments and actions of this world. He that maketh all this use of persecution, will have gain enough to plead for patience.

18. To review this last; if you believe in Christ indeed, you do believe that he will come again to judge the world in righteousness, and to set all straight that here was made

crooked by the falsehood and malignity of men. And will not the foresight of that resolve you patiently to suffer? Faith may foresee how poor blinded persecutors will then have their eyes opened, and see him with terror, whom they persecuted in his servants, and how he will silence and condemn them, with, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" Matt. xxv. 41. 2 Thess. i. 6. 10—12. ii. 12. If the forethoughts of that day do not quiet or resolve you, alas! you have greater matter of fear and trouble than persecution, even your own unbelief. Pray more for faith, than for deliverance from men.

19. Consider comparatively what man is, that hurteth you; and what God is, who hath promised to help you and reward you. Man is a worm, blinded and mad by the deceit of satan. They know not what they are doing against themselves and God, as well as against you: they are all the while going towards the grave, and their souls towards the dreadful bar of God: their bones and dust are no whit terrible. If God will here have mercy on them, he will make them know, who it is they persecute, and how hard a work it is barefoot to kick against the pricks, and make them, as Paul, themselves undergo such persecutions for Christ, as they madly used against others; they will say, as Paul, "I was mad against them:" And his case tells you, that if the very captain of the persecutors were but converted, though by a voice and miracle from heaven, the rest, instead of taking it for a conviction, would presently persecute him themselves. But if God let them go on, alas! where will they shortly be! O pray, pray hard for your persecutors, as Christ did, before they are past prayers and hope, in hell. But are these poor worms to be much feared? How oft are we charged, not to fear them; Luke xii. 4. Matt. x. 28. John xxiv. 27. Jer. xlvi. 27, 28. Ezek. iii. 8, 9. The fearful (that fear men) are numbered with unbelievers, and are shut out among the dogs, if fear prevail against their faith; Rev. xxii.

And then think what that God is, that hath promised our defence. When Infinite Power, Wisdom and Love, is set against a few wasps and worms, shall our fear of them be greater than our trust in him? If it were but an angel from heaven that appeared for our defence or encouragement, against a dog that barked at us, it were a shame to us not to

trust him. "If God be for us, who shall be against us?" Read Psal. xci. Rom. viii. Matt. vi. See Isa. viii. 13, 14. xli. 10, 13, 14.

20. Can any thing do you greater good, that can outwardly befall you, than that which both assureth you of your right to heaven, and puts you presently in possession of it? And this will be the fruit of martyrdom. O what a change will that day make! from torment to our Master's joy! from the raging army of the devil, to the heavenly choir of saints and angels! A strong faith would make us long for such a day. As children of God, joint heirs with Christ, if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him; and the present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory; Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day: "for our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator;" 1 Pet. iv. 19.

CASE VII.

Oppression and Injustice by Men of Wealth and Power.

Another case that requireth patience, is oppression by men of wealth and power in the world, and injustice of ungodly governors. Justice is so much due to all mankind, and injustice so odious, that we are ready to take it the more heinously when we cannot have our right. Oppressing landlords raise their rents to such a height, that poor men with the most tiring care and labour, can hardly live. And some rich men do think that their wills must be poor men's rule, and that they must deny them nothing that they command; as if the poor were slaves, that had no property or benefit of the law. And worst of all, when in too many nations on earth, rulers are unjust, and haters of just and upright men, and either break all bounds of law to ruin them, or else turn the law itself against them; and when they justify the wicked, and condemn the innocent, yea, when piety, and honesty, and conscience, are made the most intolerable crimes, and

filthiness, and sensuality do pass for works of one that may be trusted ; these cases call for extraordinary patience, and it is the more grievous because that magistracy is a special ordinance of God, and the image of his supereminence and governing power shineth in it: and to have satan get possession of it, and turn it against God himself who made it, and make that the plague and calamity of mankind, which was instituted for order, justice and defence, and the upholding of goodness, and suppression of sin, this is a most grievous case. The same I say of cruel masters tyrannizing over their servants, and wicked parents oppressing virtue in their children. Here patience is of great necessity.

And 1. We must here be very careful to distinguish between true power and its abuse, and not to think evil of power itself because it is abused. And this must be the more carefully studied, because here practically to distinguish is exceeding difficult. For the best things when corrupted, are the worst. It is hard to love rain and waters in a deluge, when it drowneth the country, men and beasts. One that had seen the fire of London, or yesterday the burning of Wapping; might be tempted to take fire to be more terrible than amiable. If physicians killed twenty for one they cured, men would grow into a dread or hatred of their profession: and as to rulers, judges, and all sorts of magistrates, the case is the same. They are God's ordinances (in general) and good in themselves, and if well used would be the great blessing of the world; God's ordinary means to protect the innocent, encourage the godly, and bring ungodliness to shame; to keep rich men from oppressing the poor, and the unruly multitude from popular rage against their neighbours or superiors; to keep up equity and justice, and to frustrate treachery, perjury and fraud; in a word, to be God's ministers or officers for the common good, and to see his laws obeyed by the subjects, being themselves the most zealous in obeying them, and to be a terror to blasphemers, fornicators, murderers, thieves, oppressors and other evil-doers, and a praise and defence to them that do well.

There are two cases which are no better than ruin to mankind: that is, to have no government, and to have utter tyranny, which designeth the undoing of the subjects, souls and bodies, by forcing them to sin against God to their damnation (as far as force can do it), or commonly to die as mar-

tyrs, and which is used to subvert the government of God, and to set up wickedness and will, and to destroy the common welfare.

And there are two cases which are such as we must submit to. One is the tolerable injustice, and oppression of ungodly rulers, who will kill, and ruin, and persecute some particular innocent men, but yet are for the common peace and welfare, and do more good by their government than hurt by their abuse. These must be patiently endured, so far as the evil cannot lawfully be remedied. The other sort is the defective government of good rulers, who endeavour the common good, and promote piety, and suppress sin, but with such mixture of failings as follow their personal imperfections, and with such blots as David had in the case of Mephibosheth and Uriah, and as Asa had, that oppressed many of the people, and as Constantine had in the case of Crispus and Athanasius, and as Theodosius senior had in the case of the Thessalonians, and as Theodosius junior and Anastasius had in the case of the Eutychians, and as even our King Edward VI, had about the death of the Duke of Somerset, and he about his brother's death. Grotius owneth the old saying, that the names of all good kings may be written 'uno annulo,' in one ring: I think that is too hard a censure. But even the best are men: and as a physician's faults, though few, cost the patient dearer than all their neighbour's faults do: so a prince's faults, though he be extraordinary good, may cost a kingdom dearer than the faults of thousands else. Yet these honest princes are so great blessings to the world, and so rare, that it is a happy nation that hath no worse, and must be very thankful for them.

But there is a fifth sort imaginable in Eutopia, and those men of so perfect wisdom and goodness, as that all their government is just. Short of heaven, there is little or no hope of this, unless there be a golden age to come, or such a reign of Christ for a thousand years as some describe, which is but the reign of wisdom, justice, piety and love. But when God hath some great blessing for a land, he useth to raise up rulers better than the rest of the nations have: and when sin provoketh him, he removeth them quickly from an unworthy land, as he did Josiah, and our King Edward VI, and Jovian in the Roman empire. Yea, sometimes a wicked people and

clergy prevail against a godly king, as they did against Ludovicus Pius in France.

2. Because bad rulers are a great national judgment, it calleth a land to search after, and repent of national sins ; for it is for such that this calamity usually cometh. When Gildas describeth the horrid wickedness of the British kings, he describeth the great wickedness of the clergy and people as the deserving cause. And no wonder, when in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, though the kings were excellently good, yet the unreformed, obstinate clergy and people so provoked God that he would not spare them, but cast them off into captivity and ruin. But usually God gratifieth their pernicious desires, and giveth them such bad kings as they would have, as he did Saul, Jeroboam, &c., and permits people to please themselves to death.

3. Take heed that selfishness and error cause you not to judge worse of governors than they are, and to take just restraint or punishment, for oppression, and to think all unjust that is displeasing to you. This error is common to the selfish, partial sort of men, that judge men and actions by self-interest.

4. Take heed lest overmuch love to your estates or liberties make some injustice and injuries done you, by rich men or rulers, to seem much greater than they are, and it be your vice that rendereth them insufferable.

These things being avoided, bear your oppressions with these considerations.

1. God permitteth it for your sin, or for your trial ; therefore be humbled under it as God's hand, and bear it obediently till he deliver you.

2. If wealth and power be so liable to make men oppressors, do not you desire them, but thank God for a safer station, and bear that which keeps you from it.

3. The sin of oppression is a far greater evil than the suffering of the oppressed ; therefore rather pity them as miserable, than yourselves.

4. Consider how much more many millions have suffered by oppressions, than ever you did, or are like to do. How many thousands were killed and ruined by Alexander ! How many thousands by Julius Cæsar ! How many thousands in many Roman civil wars, under Anthony, Marius, Scylla, Sejanus, &c. How many churches corrupted and persecu-

ted by Constantius, Valens, Gensericus, Hunnericus, &c. What a multitude did Justitian murder in Egypt, in blind zeal for Christ! How few ages have escaped the guilt of innocent blood! How many thousands did the Pope's cause slay in the Palestine wars, and in the Italian frequent wars, and the rebellions against the emperors, Fredericks, Henrys, &c. How many thousand Christians, Albigenses, Waldenses and Bohemians, did they murder! How many destroyed in Piedmont, Rhetia and Germany! How many thousands murdered at once in France, and oft besides! What dreadful work hath the Inquisition made in Flanders, Holland, Spain and Italy! What a dreadful case was Ireland in, when two hundred thousand Protestants were murdered, and thousands were stripped and utterly undone! Queen Mary's bonfires were sharper than we have yet felt. While satan in all ages fills the world with wars and blood, a little tolerable oppression by landlords or inferior rulers, should not be over tenderly and impatiently complained of, by tenants, servants or any others.

5. Innocency is a sound and healthful state, and can bear much: Peter bids servants be patient when they suffer undeservedly; but it is not thankworthy to be patient when they are beaten for their faults. Peace of conscience maketh all sound within; and then a man may bear the more easily all that befalleth him from without: when he can say, it is not for my sins, he may comfortably commit his cause to God.

6. Whoever oppresseth you, God will never do you wrong, and it is his hands that your great concerns are in: he will use you with merciful justice, yea, and deliver you from all the oppressions of men.

He suffereth men of the world to oppress the just, that they may be driven to him by prayer and faith, and may be saved from damning worldly love, and God may have the glory of their deliverance. How great a part of the Psalms are written upon the occasion of oppression, plots, and cruelties of wicked enemies: and what abundance of promises of deliverance from such, are recorded in sacred Scriptures.

7. Patience and faith are a thousand times better than money, or liberty, or any thing that oppressors can take

from you : do you but take the advantage of oppression to exercise these, and all is turned to your exceeding gain.

8. In this also nothing befallerh you, but what Christ foretold you of, and taught you in what manner to bear. The prosperity, power, and oppression of the wicked had almost stumbled David himself, till he went into the house of God, and understood their end : they are like gallants sporting and feasting in a sumptuous house, which is to be blown up or set on fire before the frolic is well ended, and then who would be found among them ! He will think himself happy that can say, I was none of them : yea in judgment, how fain would they, as Pilate, wash their hands from innocent blood ? And even of omissions, much more of oppressions, say, " Lord, when saw we thee hungry, naked, in prison," &c. ' Qui patitur vincit.' Christ hath foretold you of all this, and taught you to love your enemies, and bless them that curse you, and pray for them that hate and persecute you, and turn the other cheek to him that striketh you, and go two miles with him that commandeth you to go one, and give him your coat that sueth you for another garment : that is, rather suffer, than seek private revenge ; yea, or seek to right yourselves, when it will do no more hurt to the souls of others by scandal, or alienation, or exasperation, than it will do good.

Righting one's self against injuries, especially of powerful oppressions, will cost one more than patient putting up all will do. As I went along the street, a Tory in Latin reviled me, and struck me on the head with his staff ; I took little notice of him, and went on my way, and the hurt was small : I saw another stricken, and he struck again, and it raised a tumult, and he and others were sorely hurt, and went to law after for reparation.

He that cannot bear one blow, must bear many ; and he that cannot bear to be oppressed in his estate, perhaps may lose his liberty or life : we live in a world of wicked men ; and the wicked will do wickedly : and two rogues by perjury may take away the lives of the most innocent and excellent members of the commonwealth or city ! And what conscience do such wretches make of a malicious oath, that use to adorn their sentences with ' God damn-me,' and with direful oaths ?

Is not your oppression a reproof for your unthankfulness, that God, by wonderful restraint, hath saved your lives from perjury and oppression so long? Is it not a wonder of Providence that purjury hath murdered no more? Yea, that till Popery made it seem needful to their ends, few in many years did ever suffer by it? Is it not a wonder that the worthiest men, both lay and clergy, are not utterly destroyed, as to liberty and life, when two or three atheists, infidels, papists, exasperated villains, may swear them to the gaol, or the gallows, almost when they will? Yea, when even Walsh, the Popish priest, out of Keting tells you that his Irishmen, have in all ages lived in continual war, and murdering one another on the lightest causes, yet if Irish papists will come hither out of their own land, and set up the trade of swearing men to death, I know no remedy but to die in patience. I know some (the most innocent and worthy men that I know) who dare not let strangers speak with them, lest they should swear treason against them. For my own part, before my weakness confined me to my chamber, I long confined myself to my house, and refused to speak with unknown persons (to my grief forced to reject the presence of foreigners that came in want or begging) lest they should be men that would swear me to the gallows, if they could but say that once they spake with me, or saw me: and, as the world now goeth, if we escape with our lives by such avoiding human converse with unknown persons (as we fly from wolves and serpents) we shall esteem it a very great protection by the providence of the all-ruling God. I doubt not but (while I am sharply accused by some for coming too near the Papists and Conformists) there are no small number of them, whose faces I never saw, nor ever had any thing to do with, who would confidently swear some capital crime against me, had they but the least advantage of speech or presence, to make it seem but a possible thing, only because I am accounted an adversary to their side and opinion in religion.

And why should all this seem strange or intolerable to us, when Christ doth so often tell us, that rich men are usually the worst, and that he sent out his apostles as lambs among wolves? And when we know how Christ and his apostles were used by the rulers and teachers of the

people; yea, and Christians after them, in many ages to this day.

9. Consider how great the temptations are, of men that are in power, wealth and pleasure; and then you will pity them, and pray for them. Who knoweth what you would have done yourselves, if you had their temptations? They have a stronger worldly interest to tempt them against that law of Christ, which calls them another way, than other men have. They have more full and constant provision for all the desires of the flesh; they are more than any other men assaulted by subtle and designing seducers, who have their worldly ends (on church-pretences usually) to attain by their seduction: they are more in danger of the infectious breath of flatterers, and the false accusers of godliness and good men, than any others: they use to be deprived of the common needful benefit to mankind, of faithful and plaindealing friends and monitors, and truth is usually kept far from them, and out of such a hearing as is needful for conviction. And to live continually under such dangerous temptations, needeth more than man for their preservation, from deceit, and sin, and the ruin of themselves and hurt of others.

10. Our obedience to God were far from a tried praiseworthy degree, if it cost us little or nothing; and doubtless Christ will bear all your charges. O what an excellent servant is that, who will cheerfully do all his duty, to an unjust and abusive master! What an excellent child is that, who useth all due reverence, obedience, love and patience, to a froward, harsh, yea, and a malignant father. Not disobeying God, nor hazarding his soul by wilful sin, or forsaking godliness, and yet not dishonouring his parents, or disobeying them in any lawful thing! What an excellent wife is that, who constantly and patiently performeth all loving and cheerful duty, to an abusive, furious, drunken, profane, malignant husband! This requireth abundance more grace, than to live in cheerful love and duty to a godly, tender, loving husband. The former sort is called, more acceptable to God, and the latter sort of duty, is no glory; 1 Pet. ii. 20. To suffer for sin, is indeed a bitter suffering, even for that which is worse than suffering. "It is better, if the will of God be so, that we suffer for well doing than for evil doing: For Christ also hath once suf-

fered for sins, the just for the unjust;" 1 Pet. iii. 17, 18. "For hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed all to him that judgeth righteously;" 1 Pet. ii. 21—23. O follow this excellent example: there lieth more of Christianity in learning of Christ to suffer from foolish wicked men, than most will think of.

"Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance;" Col. iii. 22. "Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward;" 1 Pet. ii. 18. These are the excellent precepts of Christ.

It is therefore inconsiderately said by many, 'If I had deserved such usage, I could have borne it.' As if suffering without sin, were not a lighter burden than sin and suffering for it. The oppressor hurts himself a hundred times more than he can hurt you, (if you do no worse to yourself than he doth,) as guilt of oppression is a cause to such to weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon them: their riches are corrupted, and their gold and silver cankered, and the rust of them shall eat their flesh as fire, and they heap up treasure for the last days. The cries of the poor labourers oppressed by them, are entered into the ears of the Lord; "They live in pleasures and wantonness on earth, and nourish their hearts, in feasting and fulness, and condemn and kill the just, who resist them not. Be patient therefore brethren to the coming of the Lord;" James v. "God will speedily avenge his elect that cry to him, though now he delay;" Luke xviii.

CASE VIII.

Superior's Sufferings by Bad Children, Servants, Tenants or Subjects.

Another case that needeth patience, is the suffering of superiors by bad children and servants, tenants, tradesmen and others, whom they must use and trust. Of bad children I

have partly spoken before; natural love maketh this one of the heaviest afflictions in the world. When parents have been at all that suffering, care, labour and cost, which go to the bringing of children into the world, and bringing them up from the breasts to maturity, and teaching them their duty to God and man, and preparing them to be useful to themselves and others, that after all this, they should prove brutish, fleshly sots, that are slaves to their bellies, and wallow in the sink of filthy lust, and savour nothing but pride and fleshly pleasure, and the belief of God's word hath no power to change them, yea, perhaps prove haters of serious holiness, and enemies of good men, and plagues to their country, and fight against the only means of their own and other men's salvation. Oh! what a heartbreaking affliction is this! Yea, when in case of the most ungodly error, or swinish appetite and lust, the counsel, the tears, the prayers of parents cannot move them to any true repentance or reformation. I confess, I that never had a child, am no fit judge of the heaviness of this cross.

I have written my thoughts to such miserable youths, and partly to parents, in a small book, called "Compassionate Counsel to Young Men." I here briefly add,

1. In this sad case, make not light of it, or as ungodly parents do, that are troubled more for their children's wastefulness and want than for their souls. And yet be not overmuch cast down: neglect no means (prayer, counsel, company, &c.) which may tend to their recovery, while there is any hope; and especially look back (not with despair) but with true repentance upon your own sins of youth against God, your parents, and yourselves. And then examine whether you have dealt with Christian wisdom and fidelity to have prevented their misery, in their education. Did you with love and diligence labour to make them understand the things of God and their salvation? Did you labour to bring it to their hearts, that they might fear God and his judgments, and know the evil and danger of sin? Did you labour to make religion pleasant to them by shewing them the goodness of it, and avoiding harsh, averting ways? Did you watch over their ways, and keep them from a custom of pleasing their appetites overmuch? And did you engage them in wise and good company, and use them in religious exercises, and keep them from the infectious company of

bad licentious youths, especially in places of plays and gaming, drinking and idleness, wicked schools, or academies, where temptations are too strong for fleshly, inexperienced youth. If you have failed in these duties, and have sent your children among the vicious, sensual and malignant, whether on pretence of learning, ministry, courtship, breeding, or gainful trades, no wonder if both they and you do suffer by it, and if they be plagues to their country and to you, who have been plagues and treacherous to them, and sent them as into a pest-house, or a stews, and then are grieved for their diseases.

2. Be humbled for the viciousness of your own natures, which had the root of all these sins, and conveyed them originally to your children.

3. Let it make you the more sensible of the greatness of God's mercy, which hath healed your natures, and pardoned your sin, and saved you from that wilful sottishness and wickedness, which others are given over to, of which you were in danger.

4. The thoughts of the far greater misery of most of the world, who lie in idolatry, infidelity, wickedness or error, may somewhat drown the sense of a particular affliction: as the common plague in London did overcome the sense of the loss of our own friends; and the common fire overcame the sense of the loss of our houses.

5. Yet while there is life there is hope. God hath ways enough to humble and break the stiffest, and the hardest heart: therefore pray for them and warn them to the last.

6. Grace maketh all Christ's members dear to us as well as our own kindred. Christ himself answered, when they mentioned his mother and brethren, that they that heard God's word and kept it, were his mother, sisters and brethren. And when one said, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," he said, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and do it." Therefore rejoice in the welfare of all the children of God in heaven and on earth, who will be as dear to you as your own children.

7. Submit to God's absolute dominion, who best knoweth what to do with his own, and never did wrong to any, nor can do, and will satisfy all at last of the wisdom and goodness of all his dispensations.

II. Bad servants also are to some an exercise of patience,

some will not learn nor be reformed, but hate goodness and live wickedly: some in drunkenness, filthiness, gaming and play-houses; some deceive and rob their masters; some are eyeservants and slothful, and make no conscience of any fault or neglect which they can but hide, or excuse with lying; some burn their masters' houses, or undo them, or at least much damage them by heedlessness, carelessness and forgetfulness; and the best ofttimes prove very costly by their neglects.

In all these cases, 1. Repent of all your neglects of them. If you have not diligently taught them the principles of religion, which should have made them better, or if you have not seriously endeavoured their true conversion and sanctification, and bringing heavenly things to their hearts, which would have kept out the love of sin; or if you have not taught them a conscionable life, by a careful example of it in yourselves; be humbled, and acknowledge the justness of your correction, and bear it as the fruit of your own sin.

2. Be sure that the sin and misery of your servants be more grievous to you than your own loss and suffering by them. It is but temporal things that you lose.

3. Remember what unprofitable, and unfaithful servants you have been to God, and how much more he daily beareth with in us all.

4. Remember that the frailty of man is such, that nothing will be done perfectly which imperfect persons do. The wisest and best are liable to many oversights, forgetfulness and omissions, and have much which must be borne with.

5. Be the more careful that you fail not in any of the duty which you owe to them or any others: for our own sin hurts us more than others.

III. What I say of servants, may serve as to the case of bad tenants, who will not pay their rents; and bad tradesmen that unconscionably borrow and break, and live on other men's estates, and ruin others by their falseness. God will permit man's badness to shew itself; and he will have all worldly things appear to be transitory, and unsatisfactory, and accompanied with vexation.

IV. As to the patience necessary in princes and magistrates to bad, provoking subjects, I am not to meddle with it, being discharged by rulers from being a monitor to them.

CASE IX.

False Accusations, Defamations; Duty made odious Crimes; Reputation Ruined.

Another case that needeth patience is, false accusation, defamation, and taking away our good name; when innocent men are proclaimed to be guilty of odious crimes, which they detest far more than their accusers do. Yea, when the most conscionable men, that most fear all sin, are defamed by their teachers themselves, as well as by the brutish rabble, to be the worst of men in the land, unfit for human converse, or to be members of any society, and unworthy to live, at least, out of gaols. Sin is so much worse than poverty, or any bodily suffering, that the imputation of it unjustly, seemeth a greater trial than to be taken for a beggar, or a leper. But the great trial is, when godly magistrates or ministers of Christ are taken for rogues, traitors, schismatics, unconscionable villains, by which their endeavours for the souls of men are rendered useless: and worst of all, when a malignant generation shall make the generality of men, fearing God, and living religiously, to be taken for the most wicked, dangerous hypocrites in the land. By this, young and inexperienced persons, and the ignorant multitude, are brought to a contempt or hatred of serious, practical religion, and made the enemies of their best friends, and of the means of their own salvation.

1. In this sad case, we must not on pretence of patience, and contempt of honour, be insensible of the snares that are laid by satan to deceive the multitude, and undo souls; nor of the heinous wrong that is done to Christ, and the Christian religion and name. Yea, this horrid crime when it is common, doth so much threaten the destruction of a land, and the removal of the Gospel, that it should make us all mourn and earnestly pray, that God would not leave so bad a people, that say, "Depart from us, we would not the knowledge of thy ways." What wonder if Christ give up that land to darkness and deceit, and satan, and take away his Gospel, when the practice of it is made a common scorn, and taken for an intolerable evil. When God's peculiar people were delivered into captivity, the reason is given, "All the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, and the Lord sent his messengers, because he had compas-

sion on his people, and his dwelling-places; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, and there was no remedy;" 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. "I will get me to the great men, and speak to them; for they have known the way of the Lord. But these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds: therefore a lion shall slay them," &c. Jer. v. 5.

When Christ and his apostles were taken for intolerable, God would tolerate the nation no longer, but gave them up to the most cruel destruction that hath been heard of in the world, and the remnants of them are scattered, cursed people in all countries to this day. When they cried of such as Paul, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live;" God concluded, 'Away with such a wicked nation, scatter them as cursed over the earth.' They that will themselves escape the destruction in such a land, must mourn and cry for all its abominations; Ezek. ix. 4. And must grieve for the reproach of the solemn assemblies; Zeph. iii. 18. And a Noah, Daniel or Job in it, may save none but their own souls.

But yet as our reputation is but our own personal interest, whether we are defamed for the common cause of conscience and obedience to God, or whether it be by any private, malicious slander against ourselves, we may bear it patiently.

For, 1. What is our reputation, but the thoughts and words of men concerning us? And how small a matter is this as to ourselves! If they think well of you, you are never the better; and if they think ill of you, you are not the worse. If you be poor, or sick, or pained, will it ease you, or make you rich, for men to think and say that you are well or rich? And if you be rich and well, will it make you poor or sick for men to think or say that you are so? And as the thoughts of men alter not your state, so what is man that his thoughts should be so much regarded by you? Thoughts are such unseen, transitory actings of the mind, that we have much ado to make men believe that there is any law for them, or any great sin in them, or that God himself regardeth them. And when a man is asleep, or thinks of other things, those thoughts are all laid by; and he must quickly die, and lie in darkness, and then what are his thoughts, or

what is it to you what that rotten carcass lately thought of you when it lived ?

2. The usual cause of impatience under personal disgrace and slander, is pride in ourselves, which is matter of a thousandfold more hurt and grief than the loss of our reputation is. Pride is an overvaluing our reputations or honour with men. A desire to be better thought of than we deserve, as to greatness, wisdom or goodness, or else an over great esteem and desire of that reputation, which is indeed our due, did you not overvalue it, you could more easily spare it, and bear the loss of it. O fear the devilish sin of pride a thousandfold more than any dishonour ! A truly humbled soul can easily bear the words and thoughts of men, as to its own interest : for he knoweth his own failings, and liveth not on man.

3. If you will not be hypocrites, let there be some proportion between your confessions to God, and your sense of the accusations and reproaches of men. In prayer you study enlarged confessions, and how much evil do you (truly) say of yourselves. And if another should wrongfully add somewhat more, methinks you might endure it. Is it not an incongruous thing to hear one in prayer an hour together on a day of humiliation accuse himself of the breach of every one of the ten commandments ; or for troubled, fearful persons, in all their discourse with ministers or friends, to accuse themselves as utterly graceless, and resist all that can be said to the contrary ; and yet for the same persons to be disquieted and impatient, if another accuse them overmuch, yea, or less than they accuse themselves ? There is some hypocrisy in this.

4. Praise is a more dangerous thing to us than dispraise ; and therefore our friends usually hurt us more than our enemies. Flattery is pleasing to nature, and dispraise displeasing ; but it is pleasing things only that are overloved, and things overloved that undo the soul. Praise is the usual fuel of pride, and pride the ready way to ruin ; but dispraise calleth us to examine and judge ourselves, and is a help to humiliation. And though praise be due to all that is good, and other men owe it to wise and good men ; yet the wisest and best are so apt to be tickled and pleased with it, that they seldom escape some degree of proud infection by it.

5. It is God's judgment to which we stand or fall. If

he calls us his children, it is a small matter what men call us. If he justifieth us, who is he that shall condemn us? As Paul saith, "It is a small matter to me to be judged of man (or at man's bar, or day); I have one that judgeth me, even the Lord;" 1 Cor. iv. 3. Why should he make a great matter what men think or say of him, who believeth that he must live or die for ever, as God shall judge him, and not as men judge him.

6. The thoughts and words of men, do not so much as touch our skin. If they be let into your hearts, and made our pain, it is not they, but ourselves that do it.

7. What kind of men be they that slander, reproach, and scorn men for their duty to God or man? Are they not miserable fools, led blindfold towards hell in satan's chains? And are we not happy and safe in Christ's justification? And will a lord or prince be cast down if a bedlam shall revile him, or because a child of seven years old thinks meanly of him? How easily do learned men bear the contempt of the unlearned, and great men bear the obloquy of beggars? It is not wise or godly men that dishonour you for being wise and godly; but only the ignorant and ungodly that speak against that which they never knew.

8. If it be for your obedience to God, the reproach is more against him than you: it was he, and not you that made the law which you obey. He that accuseth any one for obeying his father, master or prince, doth most accuse them that commanded him. If it be a fault and dishonour to mind heaven above earth, and to obey God and his word, before man, it is long of God that so commanded us, and not of us. And if they accuse God, be sure he is sufficient to confute them, and to defend himself; he will stop the mouths of all blasphemers, and you may boldly trust him if you suffer for him, and your cause is his. A barking dog may sooner stop the course of the sun, than a blasphemer conquer God.

9. Yea, it is one of the greatest honours in the world to be dishonoured for God. You are most deeply engaged for his cause and he for you: you are principal soldiers in his army; for suffering is the victory of the soldiers of Chrst. If God's name, and cause, and interest, and promise cannot put honour on you, nothing can.

10. The reproacher more dishonoureth himself than you.

It is a dishonour indeed to be a false accuser, but none to be a patient sufferer.

11. And though we be not guilty of what malicious liars accuse us, we are guilty of many other sins, which God may correct us for by their tongues.

12. Christ went before us in this kind of suffering. "He made himself of no reputation, but endured the cross, despising the shame. He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;" Heb. xii. 2. &c. He that came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, and to save men from sin, was said to be a sinner, and to have a devil, and to do his miracles by the devil's help. They accused him to be a glutton and a wine-bibber, and a sabbath-breaker, and a familiar with publicans and sinners, and a despiser of traditions, and ceremonies, and church-government, and an usurper, and a traitor against Cæsar, and a blasphemer against God; and that it might be believed, crucified him as such between malefactors, as worse than Barabbas, a murderer, and fastened his accusation on his cross, and to this day they call him a deceiver. And his apostles were accordingly accused; Paul was called a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, that taught men against Cæsar and the law, and turned the world upside down, not worthy to live upon the earth. The apostles were made a gazing-stock, the scorn of men, the filth and offscouring of all things. And did we not resolve to follow Christ and them, and to bear this cross?

13. But O what a joyful support to us should it be, to foresee by faith the approaching day, when all this will be set right, and godliness will be a dishonour no more; when Christ will come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe! 2 Thess. i. 10, 11. And when these accusers and slanderers will all be silenced, confuted and confounded: and sin will be an everlasting shame. O what a change will that day make! Then who will have the honour and glory, and who will be cast out as the dung?

Object. 'But odious lies are divulged, printed, and believed of me, and strangers, and posterity will not know but all is true.'

Ans. And what if it be so? It toucheth you not now; and neither your body in the grave will feel it, nor your soul in heaven. "Be patient, brethren, to the coming of our

Lord;" James v. Lies and false history are the devil's way, by which he deceiveth most of the world. It is little thought by the readers how much history is false. Turks and heathens think odiously of Christians; and Papists of Protestants, and by multitudes of lies, cherish hatred and blood-guiltiness in their followers. Pity the liars, alas! it is they that are the sufferers, that by this are hardened in mortal sin. O what a blessed day is at hand, when all these slanderers will change their tone, and God will openly justify his servants!

And in the mean time the wicked will believe the father of lies, and we cannot help it. But the faithful honour upright men not the less, but the more for calumnies which they endure, and had they not been prone to over-honour them, holy days and relics had not been used as they are.

Let it be your care to give the liars no occasion by your sin; and then mourn for the success of satan, but joyfully wait for the judgment of God.

CASE X.

Vexatious, strong Temptations of Satan, especially to Melancholy Persons.

Another case that needeth patience is, molesting, strong temptations of satan, especially to afflicted, sad, discontented and melancholy persons. As to alluring temptations to sinful love and pleasure, it is abhorrence, and watchfulness, and fear, that are more necessary than patience. But vexing temptations, which would draw men to murmuring, anger, malice, fear, hurtful grief, and such other sins, must be overcome by patience and watchfulness conjunct. But because against this I have written a treatise of "The Cure of Melancholy and overmuch Sorrow," and another of "The True Method of Peace of Conscience," I will here only say this little following:

1. God did not think meet to keep innocent Adam and Eve, no nor Christ himself, from being tempted. This life is appointed for trial and conflict, in order to a better. Not to be tempted, were not to be men on earth. There is no crown of glory, but to them that overcome; and no victory where there is no fight or strife. It is not force, but temptations, by which satan conquereth the world, and which all must conquer that will be saved. Yea, Christ was tempted to the

most odious crime, to worship the devil. But to be tempted is no sin of ours: resist and conquer, and it increaseth our acceptance with God, and (which some call our merit) our fitness for the reward. It may be an advantage to our own confirmed, rooted faith and holiness, and contribute to our greater glory in heaven.

2. Satan is a conquered enemy: Christ our Head was tempted that he might overcome him for us. And as he said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" so we may believe and rejoice, that he hath overcome the devil, that we might overcome him. "He was tempted, that he might succour them that are tempted;" Heb. ii. 18.

3. All that are in heaven (that had the use of reason) came thither by overcoming of temptations on earth. And would you go a way different from them all?

4. The tempter cannot do what he will, but what God permitteth him, who hath promised to restrain him, that he may not overpower us; "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it;" 1 Cor. x. 13.

6. But alas! we commonly are guilty of giving the tempter his advantage against us. We provoke God by sin to turn him loose upon us, and we give him entertainment by long parleys with him, and by thinking over all that he hath against us, and leaving his imaginations open to his access, and oft also our eyes and ears to feed them. In these cases true repentance is needful to our deliverance from temptations. Yea, and our own mistakes, corruptions, discontents, impatience and sinful passions are the very strength of the tempter, and he findeth within us the fire which he bloweth up. In this case the cure must be mostly wrought upon ourselves.

7. Strong love and resolution rejoice to conquer strong temptations: as strong men love not to be tied to the work of children and women, but would have such as exerciseth their strength. It is the joy of friendship, to undergo much for a friend: "Love is strong as death; many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it;" Cant. viii. 7. If you would give all the substance of your house for love, it would

be utterly contemned. Jacob will serve long and patiently for love. And when satan sheweth his malice against Christ and us, strong love will do as Samson and David by the Philistines, go out against them in God's strength, and overcome them. And though we are weak, God's grace is sufficient for us, and his strength is manifested in our weakness.

8. Remember who the tempter is, that you may meet his temptations with hatred and abhorrence. God in mercy put an enmity against devils into our natures, as soon as the devil's enmity had conquered man, that so we might abhor whatever we know to be from them. What if the devil appeared to you in some shape, and persuaded you to despair, or to blaspheme God, or to doubt of the life to come, or to any other sin or mischief? Would it not be a sufficient preservative to know that it is the devil that makes the motion? I do not think that the present forward servants of the devil would obey him as they do, if they saw him to be the tempter. If he brought the cup to the drunkard in a known apparition and shape, sure it would go down with terror, if at all: if he brought a harlot to the whoremonger's bed, it would cool his lust: if he appeared and persuaded the malignant to hate, deride and persecute men for obeying God, it would sure abate their rage. And why should it not work alike in troubling temptations, when you know they come from him, (which the nature and fruit of them may make you know)?

9. Let temptations move you to study their confutation. Know every snare, and the remedy: God hath furnished you in Scripture with armour against all, if you will use it.

10. Long for the blessed day when the tempter and troubler shall be cast out, and never more molest the faithful soul with any motion against God or comfort.

CASE XI.

Settled Doubts of Sincerity and Salvation. Temptations to Despair.

But it is yet a heavier affliction, when a soul is in a settled doubtfulness of its sincerity, justification and salvation, yea, and strongly persuaded that he hath no grace, nor ever shall have, and hath little hope left of mercy and salvation; and the more he examines and thinks of it, the more he believeth this sad conclusion.

For an ungodly man to know that he is ungodly, is the

most hopeful preparation to his recovery, and not to be stifled or made light of; but if it be a sincere person,

1. Before I tell you how far patience is useful in this case, I must tell you that on pretence of patience, the cure must not be neglected, nor contempt or senselessness indulged. Sin is it that bringeth men into this dark, uncomfortable state; and it is present sin in which it doth consist: search therefore what guilt of former sin was the cause, and see that it be truly repented of: and then search how much present sin doth cherish it. Usually there is much ignorance in it of the covenant of grace; and a great defectiveness in our sense of the infinite goodness of God, and of the wonders of his love in Christ, and of the ocean of mercy continued in the work of man's redemption. And there is much unbelief or distrust of God and our Redeemer, and of the promises of grace and salvation; and too little trust to the strengthening and comforting help of the Holy Ghost. And there is too little care to cure men's sinful fears and passions; and sometimes too little care to forbear renewing the wounds of conscience by yielding to temptations, and renewing guilt. And where these are the causes, they must first be resisted, and partly overcome.

2. And while the soul sincerely repenteth and striveth against that sin (especially distrust of God and Christ), it must be considered that God giveth not all his grace at once. Infants are not strong: faith, hope, love and comfort are weak before they are strong, and usually are long in getting strength: and weak faith hath always unbelief joined with it; and every weak grace is clogged and clouded by its contrary sin. And while grace is weak, and sin thus cloudeth it, it cannot be expected that the soul should have certainty of sincerity and salvation, or be free from grief, and fears, and doubting. But patient waiting upon Christ in the use of his appointed means, may in time bring faith and every grace to greater strength, and so the soul to more assurance.

3. A man that hath not attained to a certainty of salvation, may yet have more cause of hope and joy, than of fear and sorrow, upon the mere improbability of his damnation. I have oft instanced thus: It would torment a good Christian, if he believed he should ever commit but such sins as David and Peter did (to pass by Solomon), and no Chris-

tian ordinarily is sure that he shall not commit as great sin : and no wise man that by God's grace is resolved against it, should torment himself with such a fear.

No wife is certain, but she may hate or forsake her husband, or he may hate and murder her ; nor any child, but that the father or mother may murder it. And yet it is so unlikely, that it is folly to be sad with such a fear. The old fathers, who thought that no ordinary Christian (but a few confirmed ones) can be certain of perseverance or salvation, and those Lutherans and Arminians that are of the same mind, did not yet live in terror for fear of apostacy and damnation, but rejoiced in the comfort of probable hope.

4. If your fears be, whether you are true Christians, presently become such, and so end those fears. It may be it is too hard for you to know whether you have been such till now ; but you may presently resolve it for the time to come : do but understand the baptismal covenant, and consent to it, and that work is done. Present consent, that is unfeigned, is true Christianity. If you can say, that now you are truly willing that Christ with his grace and glory be yours, and you his on his Gospel terms, that is, your Priest, Prophet and King, you are true Christians.

Your concluding that the day of grace is past, and God will never give you grace, nor pardon you, while he is daily entreating you to be reconciled to him, and accept his grace, is an abusive suspicion that God is not sincere, and a contradiction to the tenor of his word and instituted ministry. When he bids us go to the highways and hedges, and compel (even the basest) to come in, for a willing soul to suspect that God is unwilling, is abusively to give him the lie ; but if you are unwilling yourselves, why complain you ? It is an odd sight, to see a beggar in the cold entreated to come to the fire, or a man in the sea entreated to come into the ship, and he will not come, and yet cry and complain that he shall never be taken in ; that is, because he will not.

5. It is a great mercy of God that you have hearts so far awakened, as to be troubled with care and fear of your everlasting state, which you see the stupid, dreaming world so little regard. And here are two comfortable evidences appear in most Christians in these troubles. First, your fear of punishment hereafter sheweth that you have some belief of the word of God, for you believe his threatenings ; else

why do you fear them? And if you believe that his threatenings are true, it is scarce possible that you should believe that his promises are false; therefore your defect is in the application of these promises to yourself; and to doubt of our own faith or sincerity, is not to doubt of the truth or word of God, and is not damning unbelief (though some mistakingly have written so). Secondly, and you have so much of the applying act, as consisteth in consent and desire. You would fain have Christ, and grace, and glory; and you consent to be his as he consenteth to be yours: else why do your complaints and troubles signify so much? And desire signifieth love and willingness as really as joy doth, though not so pleasingly. So that here is faith, or consent, or willingness, and love to that which you mourn for want of: and those are evidences of grace.

Object. 'But may not a wicked man be terrified with the fear of damnation?'

Ans. Yes, but if this fear were joined with a willingness to be a true Christian, and to be justified, sanctified and ruled by Christ, he should be saved.

Object. 'But may he not be willing of Christ and holiness, as a means to his salvation, though else he had rather be ungodly and live in sin?'

Ans. 1. He cannot truly desire salvation itself, as indeed it is salvation: not to be tormented in hell he may desire; but salvation is to be saved from sin and separation from God, and to live in perfect holiness, love and joy in the heavenly society, praising God among the blessed for ever. The heart of the ungodly is against this holy life. 2. And every man hath some end: if this be not the end intended by any man, it must be some sinful pleasure that he must intend or desire. And to make perfect holiness (which mortifieth all such desires and pleasures) to be desired as a means to attain those pleasures (which it destroyeth), is a contradiction. So that a wicked man cannot truly desire perfect holiness more than sinful pleasure, neither as his end, nor as the means thereto. Yet I will not deny but that while he hateth it, he may consent that God should make him holy as a 'minus malum,' a lesser evil than the pains of hell, which he hateth more. But God hath not promised to give men Christ and holiness, because they hate hell more than it, and desire it not for itself.

Object. 'I fear that this is my case; for I have a great unwillingness to prayer, meditation and every holy duty.'

Answ. 1. Is your unwillingness to believe and trust God, and love him perfectly, and to live in his thankful, joyful praises, and to love his word, and ways, and servants, and that for ever, greater than your willingness and desire? It is these inward acts that are the holiness of the soul, and to be willing of these, is to be willing to be holy. 2. As to outward exercises, by praying, and such like, there may be some such disturbance of the spirits raised by them, through temptations and false thoughts and fears, as put the mind into renewed trouble: and it is that disturbance and trouble in the duty, that many are against, rather than the duty itself. And such may find, that at the same time they would fain have that calmness, confidence and delight in God, which they would be glad to express by holy prayer. 3. And we must distinguish between a degree of unwillingness or backwardness, which is predominant and effectual, and a degree which doth but strive against holiness, but not overcome. Every Christian hath flesh, which lusteth against the Spirit, and would draw back; and therefore hath some degree of backwardness to his duty: but if this did prevail, he would give it over, which he doth not. 4. And yet for a time in temptation and melancholy, he may be deterred from some outward duty, and give it over, and yet not lose a holy state of soul. Many a true Christian is many years affrighted from the Lord's supper: and some such persons in deep melancholy and temptations, have given over outward prayer, and hearing sermons and reading, and yet have not given over a desire of holiness, which is heart prayer, nor a desire to love and obey God's word. Sick men cease outward duty in their beds, when they cease not inward piety.

6. It may be God seeth that you were grown dull and sluggish, and he useth this trouble to awake you to a greater care of your duty and salvation: or he saw you in danger of overloving some worldly vanity, and he useth this to imbitter and divert you, that you may know better what to mind and desire.

7. The effects of a melancholy disease, or of a natural timorousness of the weak and passionate, are much different from rational, well-grounded doubts of sincerity and salvation. A melancholy person can think of nothing with con-

fidence and comfort: there is nothing but trouble, confusion, fears and despair in his apprehension. He still seems to himself undone and hopeless. A person naturally timorous, cannot choose but fear, if you shew him the clearest reasons of assurance. These are like pain in sickness, which faith and reason will not cure; but should help us to strive against and bear. God will not impute our diseased misery to us as our damning sin.

8. It is one thing to have grace, and another thing to know that we have it: many have it, who doubt whether it be sincere. And it is an unspeakable mercy to have it, though you doubt of it. God knoweth his grace in us, and will own it, when we doubt of it or deny it. As long as this foundation of God is sure, that God knoweth who are his, and while we name Christ, we depart from iniquity, we are safe, though through fear we are uncomfortable.

9. Though true faith do of its own nature tend to the peace and quietness of the believer, yea, and to fill his soul with joy; yet it doth not always quiet it; but it always consenteth to the baptismal covenant, which maketh us Christians, and so far trusteth Christ for pardon, grace and glory, as to cast our souls and hopes upon him, and to forsake all other trust and hopes rather than to forsake him. As I have oft said, If a prince say to a beggar, go out of thy own country with me in this ship, and trust me to convey thee to Mexico or China, and I will make thee a lord or prince; if he venture and go with him, though he trembles with fear at every wave or pirate in the voyage, he truly trusteth him, and shall speed accordingly. If a physician say, 'Trust me and take my medicine, and I will undertake to cure you;' if the patient take his medicine, he shall be cured, though he tremble with fear, and doubt of the success: he trusteth him practically, if he cast his hope upon him, though with fear. Though faith and obedience be formally two things, faith, which will cause us to consent, venture, and follow or obey Christ: preferring heaven, whatever we lose by it, is saving faith, whatever doubts, fears or disquietment remain. If this were better understood, timorous and dark or melancholy Christians, (who know there is none but Christ to trust to, and therefore resolve to be ruled by him) would not so ordinarily think they have no true faith, because it doth not cast out all their doubts and fears, and quiet and comfort them; which

indeed a strong faith would do, which is not hindered by error or diseases.

10. We greatly wrong God and ourselves in contenting ourselves with poor, diminutive thoughts of the essential love and goodness of God. When we think of the sun (a thousand times bigger than all the earth), and of all the stars, and the incomprehensible orbs of the heavens, and the inconceivable swiftness of their motions, and the power and extent of their rays of light and emanations, we are overwhelmed with the thoughts of the greatness, power and wisdom of God; but when we think of his goodness and love, we scarce think much more highly of it than of the goodness and love of a father, a friend, or some excellent man. And should we match his power but with a man's, what madness and ugly blasphemy were it!

Yet I would not have the presumptuous here to mistake, and hence to conclude that a God so good will not condemn the rejecters of his grace, and say, 'Essential, Infinite Love will make all men as happy as he can.' For, 1. Experience assureth us of the contrary; that he maketh great variety of creatures, and permitteth pain and misery in the world. 2. And the execution of justice on the impenitent, wicked subjects, is good, as a means to the right government of free agents. 3. and the infiniteness of God's goodness and love doth not appear in his loving any creature which is finite, but in loving that which is infinite, and that is himself.

But yet we must conceive of his essential attributes as equal in themselves. And if God's goodness and love were conceived of by man, in any proportion to his greatness and power, we could never so easily suspect his kindness, nor fear that he will damn those who unfeignedly desire to please him; nor should we fly from him as from a hurtful enemy, but long to be nearer him in holy communion, as we desire the company of our wisest, dearest friends; nor should we be so distrustful of him, as if he were no security to us from our dangers; but the name of the Lord would be our strong tower, to which when we fly, we should believe that we are safe, and our trust in God would be the quieting of our tormenting fears and cares.

11. And we have these poor thoughts of the love of God to man, because we do not sufficiently study the miraculous demonstrations of it in our Redeemer: diversions cause us

to neglect this study; and perverseness and unbelief do cause us to give it too narrow a room and too slight and short entertainment in our thoughts. Nothing in this world doth better deserve our most diligent and delightful study, than the Gospel of Christ, and the wonderful work of Divine Love in man's redemption and salvation; study this till you firmly believe it, and taste it, and it will be as angel's food, a heavenly feast here sent down to earth, to draw men's hearts to God in heaven. The love of God will turn your very hearts into returning holy love. It was drops of love that Christ sweat in the shape of blood in his agony, and it was a stream of love, which flowed from his pierced side, in the shape of blood and water. It is love which the three witnesses on earth, and the three from heaven attested. God knew how much sin had obscured his love and goodness to man, more than his power and greatness, by making man an unmeet receiver and discernor of it, by reason of guilt, fear and naughtiness of heart; and therefore how very backward man is to believe and relish God's love. Therefore while satan more industriously inticeth the soul of man to the idolatry of creature carnal love, than ever he did intice the bodies of men to worship Baal or such like; God hath set up his own image sent down to man from heaven, in opposition to satan's idols, that sense may have suitable means for the moral conquest of the tempter, and the replenishing of the soul with a truly excellent facilitating love; and in a congress of the love of God and man, in and by him that is God and man, heaven may be here begun, and may have a more full communion with souls on earth, than it had before Christ's incarnation. Study the Gospel aright, as the book of Divine Love, and it will turn you from many unprofitable studies, and cure sinful, melancholy fears, better than all other medicines in the world. And even those that said with Thomas, "Unless I may see and feel, I will not believe;" or as a holy divine in deep melancholy, rashly said to me, 'If an angel from heaven should tell me that I have free grace, I would not believe him;' would repent as both these did; and when by faith you have as it were put your finger into his wounded side, the sense of Divine Love will make you cry out, "My Lord, and my God."

12. And it greatly hurteth Christians, that they are not duly sensible, how much it is satan's design and work in all

his temptations to misrepresent God to man, and hide his love and goodness from us ; as he doth it in the wicked by drawing them to fleshly, deluding love, and making them ignorant, unbelieving or forgetful of the love of God ; so he doth much against better men by raising many objections against it, and filling them with false imaginations, and diminutive or suspicious thoughts against God, as if he were far more terrible to us than amiable.

13. And it wrongs some that they misunderstand the office of conscience, as if it always spake as an oracle from God, whereas it is but the act of a dark understanding, which very usually erreth, and misjudgeth of our state: and a mistaking conscience accusing falsely, as graceless, &c., shall no more condemn us at God's bar than a slandering enemy. " I judge not my ownself, (saith Paul,) I know nothing by myself (inconsistent with sincerity), yet am I not thereby justified: there is one that judgeth me, even the Lord : " that is, it will not really go with me as I judge, but as God judgeth.

14. And alas ! when fear beareth down both faith and reason, as to the act, no silencing reason prevaieth with the soul. I prove to them from the Gospel this great truth ; that Christ damneth none (that hear the Gospel) but those that wilfully reject him and refuse his offered grace, out of greater love to something else, and this to the last. I oft convinced dejected Christians that this is true, and that this is not their case ; they do not continue to refuse Christ and his grace by preferring something else. And yet this quieteth them not, nor receive they the conclusion ; for fear, and feeling, and weakness, and melancholy, overpowereth their reason, as bitter physic would not let children believe that it was good for them, and given them in love.

15. Though no pretence of patience must abate our desires after full assurance and perfection, yet while we find by experience that God will have men on earth to differ much from those in heaven, and to have but low and little things in comparison of their joy and glory, it is our great duty to be thankful for our present measure, and to wait in hope for more. He that hath no comfortable apprehension of his condition, can have no thankfulness for it: and we are all obliged to great thankfulness for the least degree of grace

and hope: and thankfulness is somewhat more than patience, and therefore doth include it.

The acts of the understanding and of the will go together: and if we had as full an understanding of the heavenly state, as those have that possess it, our wills by answerable love and joy would now enjoy it; and so we should have the peculiar privileges of the glorified here on earth. But this is no more suited to our present state in flesh, than it is to an infant in the womb to know what cities, courts and churches are, or what trades, and merchandize, and husbandry is, or what books, and arts, and sciences are, or what meat, and drink, and recreation are. We must be content on earth with the measure which God designeth unto earth. We see by constant experience, that he hath precluded the heavenly state from all our senses: he will not let us see what is done above. The first martyr had such a sight by miracle, but we must not expect it. He will not let our departed friends appear to us here to give us notice of what they see. He will not send angels to satisfy our desire of such knowledge: nay, infernal devils shall appear but rarely: the rareness of all these leaveth sadness in doubt whether there be any such thing or not. And Paul's sight of paradise was such as must not be uttered to us.

And full subjective certainty of salvation, which excludeth all doubts and fears, is so high a degree as few in flesh, I think, obtain. Objective certainty every true Christian hath; that is, his salvation (if he so die at least) is absolutely certain itself, so that his belief and hope of it shall never deceive him. But to be certainly known to men, that is, with an apprehension which as much excludeth doubts and fears as sight and possession would do, or as the light and the visible objects exclude all doubts, whether we behold them, or as we know that two and two are four, or that every effect hath a cause, and every relate a correlate, and that full contradictions are inconsistent; I think this degree of certainty none have on earth, without some miraculous inspiration or revelation. But we may attain to so firm an apprehension of that truth and blessedness, which is certain in itself, as may make our hope, and joy, and desire far greater than our doubts, and fears, and aversation. And this joyful life of well-grounded hope may be called a certainty or full assurance; though yet it be far short of perfect, and

the certainty of beatifical vision and fruition. And alas! it is but very few true Christians who attain this quieting, joyful degree.

All this being considered, you see that while we are on earth, we must not look for heaven; nor in the wilderness for the Land of Promise: Joshua, and Caleb's encouraging words, and the bunch of grapes, and God's promise and presence, and his conducting light, provision, and protection, must quiet us in our journey; and some few have Moses's Pisgah-sight. Murmuring at wilderness-wants, dangers, and difficulties, was the Israelites' sin and fall. We must not look for the harvest at seed-time, nor for more knowledge and assurance, and joyful apprehensions of heaven, on earth, than is suitable to the state of travellers in flesh: we are yet, alas! too sinful; and sin will breed doubts and fears: we are here very ignorant, and conscious that we are very liable to err; and that every man hath many errors; and therefore we are apt to doubt even of that which we see and feel, yea, and to fear where we see convincing evidence of certainty; and we can scarce tell when and how to trust our own understanding: we are in a dark world; and in a dark body, and chained to it in our actings: all our grace and goodness is imperfect; and till every grace be perfect in us, assurance of salvation will not be perfect: for the perfection of every grace is necessary to it. And is it any wonder that such a wight as man, in flesh, and sin, and under temptations, and in a dark malignant world, which God hath very much forsaken, should not have the joy of full assurance of invisible glory? The Christians of all those ages, who held that none (or only a few rare persons) could be certain of their salvation, could not have that certainty which they thought none had? Yet they did, and we must rejoice in hope, and be thankful here for a travelling degree.

CASE XII.

The Loss of Teachers, and suitable Means of Grace and Salvation.

Another great affliction which requireth patience is, the loss of the sound and serious preaching of the Gospel, by the death or banishment, or silencing of our teachers, while our own great wants and weaknesses call for the best assistance. The soul being more precious than the body, the

welfare of it is more valuable, and its loss and famine more lamentable: and we see that God ordinarily worketh according to the aptitude of means; and when he taketh away such needful means, it is a sad degree of his own forsaking us, and denying to us further grace. Alas! how bad are we under the best helps, and how dark and doubting under the most clear convincing teaching, how cold and dull under the most warm and lively ministry? And what shall we then be, if God remove our teachers from us? May we not turn cold, and dull, and worldly, and deceived under cold, dull, deceiving worldly pastors? And now grow careless of our own souls, under those that are careless of their own and our's? If in the communion of wise and holy Christians, we found it hard to grow in grace, may we not fear declining when we are separated from such, and dwell as Lot in Sodom, and must converse with worldly, or malignant men?

As to the sad case, 1. You may have the greater comfort, because you make not light of the affliction; and may be the more patient believingly, because you are not patient as contemptuous unbelievers. The patience of carnal men under such a loss, is a greater evil than the loss itself; and the patience of faith is a greater good than the helps which you lose. Had you been so blind, and dead, and bad, as to let go the Gospel, and be easily quiet and content, as long as you enjoy your honour, wealth, and ease, this had been a far greater misery than the want of teachers; as a mortal sickness which causeth loathing and indigestion, is worse than the hardest fare with appetite and health. Thank God that you are sensible of your loss.

2. If you are true Christians you have the law and Gospel written upon your hearts, whence none can by violence take it from you, you may lose the provision of your house, and the food on your tables; yea, and cast up that which you have eaten; but if it be digested and turned into your flesh and blood, it is not so easily taken from you. O bless God, that before he took away the means, he did convert you by them, and taught you effectually before he took away your teachers. When the word was digested and turned into knowledge, faith, repentance, desire, obedience, patience, hope, and love, neither men nor devils can take it from you; your heart, where it is sown and rooted, is not

within their reach, unless you will give them the key, and foolishly betray yourselves. When God hath made you his habitation by his Spirit, and Christ dwelleth in your hearts by faith, and the kingdom of God, and life eternal is begun within you, the loss of your outward helps will not undo you. I am not imitating them that tell you that all men have sufficient light within them, or that call you to undervalue the word written and preached, on pretence of that sufficiency, as if you need no other notice of God and Christ, but to be told that he is in you. But yet rejoice that God is within you, though all these outward means were gone: that is, that your faith and love have within you such an object to live upon as your Father, Saviour and Sanctifier, and such an agent as the Spirit to actuate all. When they silence your teachers, burn your books, shut up your church doors, they cannot shut out the Spirit of Christ, nor deprive you of its life, and light, and love.

3. If men take away the means forementioned, they do not therefore take away all. 1. You have all God's works to view and study: sun and stars, heaven and earth, sea and land, cities and country, fields and meadows, beasts and men, good and bad. And you are taught already by the Gospel, to see not only the great Creator in all these, but also the gracious Redeemer, purchasing, upholding, and using all as delivered to him for the good of his elect.

2. You have the daily use of meditation, as on all the works of God, so also on Christ and the Gospel which you have learnt; yea, and of the joys of heaven.

3. You have daily and hourly leave to open your case to God; you have access to him by Christ in prayer, thanksgiving and joyful praise. If you have but an appetite, you have here a continual feast, which you may enjoy in every place; in your closet, in the fields, in a prison.

4. It is very likely that you may save your Bibles, and other good books, and so have God's word still at hand. It was written in Hebrew and Greek, but God hath used man to translate and unseal it to you; and you may choose your time, and choose the subject which you would read: and the writings of your teachers are usually more accurate than their speaking; and at a cheap rate you may have choice and excellent helps. And you may read them in your fa-

milies, to your children and servants, and set up many teachers for one. Undervalue not these remaining helps.

5. And if God continue to you in the public assemblies, but sound doctrine and lawful communion, do not say all means are gone. If it be but the reading of the holy Scriptures, and singing psalms, and praying, no worse than is expressed in the liturgy of this nation, it is a mercy not to be despised. It was but a little part of the New Testament which was contained in Peter's speech, which converted three thousand; Acts ii. And but a little part which was in the words of Paul, which the Gentiles desired might be again spoken to them the next day. And but a little part which Paul wrote to any one church, when he required them to read it publicly, and to read that to one church which was written to another. Christ's own sermon, Luke iv. and that to his disciples, Matt. v. were but a little of what bare reading now can tell us. Ezra was put to spend much of the day in a pulpit, to read the law, and make them understand the reading: that is, when by their captivity they had lost the language in which the law was written, he was fain to read it in Hebrew, to translate it by word of mouth, and turn the Hebrew into the Chaldean tongue, which they understood. This was far less than the bare reading of both Law and Gospel already translated doth for you. The quantity of one or two of our chapters, were received in the days of the apostles with great joy, to the conversion of many souls. And in Queen Mary's days, some poor women would hire a boy secretly in a corner to read to them a little of the English Bible, yea, of the primmer. But the full soul loathes the honeycomb, when to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.

There are some ignorant Christians that think it enough to charge any thing in worship or religion to be unlawful because it is human, the work of man. It is like, these will not be grieved that their teachers are silenced, for they were men. And as men have written some forms of prayer, so they are men that have written the many hundred holy books that are now among us. And preaching and praying are the words and works of men. The singing psalms were turned into metre by men: yea, all our English Bibles were made English by men, and you read and hear no English words but the words of men, though they signify the word of God.

The dividing of the Scripture into chapters and verses, is the invention and work of men. And I think they were but men that taught you to speak and read. God worketh by man on man, as sociable, fit instruments: and if you despise all in religion that is the work of man, you will despise the word and work of God, and shew that you are less than men.

4. When God taketh teachers from one people (before death) he usually sends them to another: and it proveth oft to the advantage of the church. When the disciples were all driven away from Jerusalem, they went preaching the Gospel into all countries about. Persecution drove the apostles all over the world: it sent Paul to Rome, to preach it at the doors of Nero. When he and Barnabas were driven from one city, they carried the Gospel to another. Persecution had a great hand in sending the Gospel to most nations in the world that had it. Yea, the very banishment of Nestorius, Dioscorus, and such others, as heretics, for some forms of speech, had a great hand in the sending of Christianity into Persia, India, and many remote parts of the East, South and North; and of late to New England, and other plantations in America, it was sent by the prelates and other rulers from this land. A captive maid, it is said, began the conversion of the Iberians; as Frumentius and Edesius did of the Indians (or rather, planted a ministry in Habassia, miscalled India, which before had none but lay Christians since the eunuch's days).

And every good Christian is of a public spirit, and loveth Christ's greatest interest with the greatest love, and therefore loveth the church and the word better than himself, or his native soil. Why then should we not the more patiently bear the loss of those labourers, whom God sends to do greater work abroad? Is it like that Mr. John Elliot would ever have done half the good in England that he hath done in America? We pray that God's name may be hal- lowed, and his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and England is a very little part of the earth.

5. We must have our time of rest with Christ, when we have had our time of labour. If God call home his servants to himself, rejoice with them that there rejoice, "and have fought a good fight, and have finished their course, and do

receive the crown of righteousness ;” grudge them not their rest and happiness. God sent them hither to work, run and fight, and not to reign or long abide. It may seem hard to us that so holy a man as Stephen should do Christ no longer service in his church ; and that James, who hoped to have sat next to Christ in his kingdom on earth, should so quickly be taken from his apostleship ; but he had his petition to be near to Christ in a better manner than he desired : and Stephen and he did more in a day by dying, than most others do by living long. The foundation of the church was to be laid in blood ; and none is too precious for so great a work, for which Christ’s blood was not too precious.

6. Ministers are not idle or useless when they are silenced : they are praying for the church, and they are lights in the houses and company where they come, and Christ disdained not oft to preach to one woman or man ; [as John iv. ix. &c. And some of them publish God’s truth by writing, and that to a far greater extent and number, than ever they could have done by voice. The word of God is not bound, when we are bound.

7. Yea, the silence and sufferings of Christ’s faithful ministers, do powerfully preach : it maketh men see the evil of that proud and malignant spirit, which hateth such men, and cannot endure them. The vulgar are hardly brought to wisdom by mere words, or to know the difference between good and evil, till by sense and experience they feel and taste the several fruits. The cured blind man (John ix.) could quickly discern that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a (true) worshipper of God him he heareth ; and that he must needs be of God that could open his eyes ; and that therefore those men were not of God that hated and persecuted him that did so much good. The vulgar hate popery far more for Queen Mary’s bonfires, and the Inquisition, and the French, Bohemian, Polonian, Piedmont and Irish massacres, than for any doctrinal error in their religion. And when long experience hath assured them that the persecuted ministers preached the true Gospel of Jesus Christ with great plainness, seriousness, and love to souls, and that they sought no worldly gain or honour, but men’s salvation ; and that they lived as they preached, and when they see that it is this very sort of men that papists bend their malice against,

and study to extirpate, silence, and destroy, and that godliness and conscience, is the intolerable enemy which they would drive out of the land, and that the most wicked, sensual, filthy, debauched, unconscionable malignants, are their agents, and the men that they employ and trust, who will obey them before God, and against him ; this loudly tells the people what they are ; and by their fruits, wolves, thorns and thistles are known : they can tell whose servants they are by their works, better than by their livery, clothing, or names. To hinder the Gospel and good of souls, and make the godly a hated, scorned, persecuted people, and cause men of no conscience to be better thought of, is the devil's work, yea, his chiefest work in the world. And they are so far his servants that do it, by what names or titles soever they be called. And as human nature hateth cruelty, and Christianity hateth ungodliness, malignity and persecution, so these works do effectually preach to the people, and tell them who are their friends, and who their foes ; what to love, and what to hate.

8. God will do his work by others when we are dead and gone. Successive generations must partake of his mercies, and do his service here, and not the same men still continue. And when we grow dull with age and weakness, young men of greater vigour and alacrity shall succeed us.

9. And it hath hitherto been God's way to carry on his work with great changes and variety in the world. As he causeth winter and summer, nights and days, so his church hath had hitherto its turns of prosperity and adversity. And prosperity hath increased the number of Christians, and adversity hath tried them, and increased the grace of those that persevere.

10. It is more our diligence and faithful use of means, by which we grow in grace, than by the enjoyment of the best, if we be slothful under it : and sometimes God seeth that fullness breedeth wantonness and loathing, and like foolish children we play with our meat, or quarrel about it ; and then it is time to take it away, and let fasting help us to a better appetite. I have known those that when they lived among the ignorant, and could hardly hear a good sermon without going divers miles for it, and hardly borrow a good book, and rarely speak with a serious Christian, were so hungry, affectionate and diligent, that they evidently profited very

much ; but when they came where they had variety, choice and fulness of teachers, books and religious converse, some grew more notional, worldly and cold ; and some self-conceited, proud and quarrelsome ; and some downright heretical or schismatical. And do we need any more to justify the afflicting providence of God in taking away, and silencing ministers, than the sad review of our common miscarriages ? Have not pious ministers been disgracefully guilty of overvaluing their own judgments and opinions, and laying life and death on words they understood not, and raising hatred, censures and contempt against their brethren that differed from them, though wiser and better than themselves ? What shameful and doleful work did the Nestorian, and Eutychian, and Monothelite controversies make ? The doleful wars about predestination, grace and free will, which have torn the church, and destroyed love these twelve hundred years ; I have fully proved to be shameful and sinful, most about ambiguous words, or unrevealed things in a book called “ Catholic Theology.” We have heard with grief what unchristian contentions there have long been beyond sea, among Protestants called Lutherans and Calvinists, and how oft the former have persecuted the latter. We have heard of late, how some represent Calvinists, as if they were as bad as heathens ; and some in the pulpits say, ‘ The religion of the Arminians is the religion of the devil.’ If none of these speak the words of truth or charity, nor know either what they say, or what manner of spirit they are of ; is it not just with God to silence them all ? What dreadful work hath the interest and controversies of Diocesan’s liturgy and ceremonies here made ! And when we cannot bear with one another, it is just with God, to bear with none of us. How long have Episcopal, Presbyterians, Independents and Anabaptists been censuring, condemning, and some of them persecuting one another ; and been teaching the people to believe that those that they accuse deserve it ! And if we thus shew that we all deserve it, how can we open our mouths against God’s justice if he reject us all ?

11. As when God taketh away health, strength and life from the aged, they must be thankful that they enjoyed them so long, and consider how they used them while they had them : so when he taketh away ministers and public helps, we must be thankful that we had so long peaceable

enjoyment of them, and consider whether it be not for our abuse, that we are deprived of them.

12. God is not tied to outward helps, though he tie us to them while we may have them. If he take them from us, he can give us that grace in our secret closets, which we had in the public assemblies; and we may expect his assistance and blessing in any means which he appointeth us to use.

CASE XIII.

When God seemeth not to bless Means to us; Preaching, Praying, &c.

Another great trial of patience is, when praying and preaching seem to us to be all lost, and God denieth his answer and his blessing. When we hear from day to day, and understand and remember little that we hear, and find not that we are any stronger in faith, love and patience than we were; when we pray daily for more grace, and yet find no more than we had before; and we pray for our country, and our rulers, and teachers, and for many friends, and God seemeth to deny us almost all.

And this is not only grievous in itself, but in the temptations which it occasioneth. 1. Satan hence would tempt us to doubt, whether God regarded man, and man's concerns, as the Scripture tells us that he doth. 2. And he would tempt us to doubt whether the promises of God are to be trusted. 3. And consequently to question all religion, and to give over praying and other means, as if all were vain; or at least to use them heartlessly, with little faith, and hope, and comfort: and how should patience here be exercised, and these temptations overcome?

I. Our first work must be to understand God's instituted means, and the promises of God concerning their success, that we may be neither too high nor too low in our expectations, nor charge God foolishly through our mistake.

What is it that God denieth you? Is it outward things as health, wealth, deliverance from dangers, the life of your friends, the conversion of your relations, &c.? and why think you that prayer in such cases is in vain?

1. Did you think that it was ever the mind and promise of God, that on pretence of hearing prayer, he should give up to us the government of the world? And that we should never be poor, nor sick, nor die till we are willing? I doubt

then few would ever consent, but live longer than Methuselah in earthly prosperity and pleasure. And must our friends never suffer nor die as long as we will pray against it? Where then would there be room for those that are born (unless God made our friends a burden to us; and would not that be as much against our prayers as their death)? Did you think that God must reverse his first sentence, if you will but pray for it? "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground;" Gen. iii. 17—19. Must there be no thorns or briars, no cold or winter, no night or darkness, if you will but pray that there be none? You will say, it is moderate and reasonable prayers that you make.

But 2. Who must be judge what requests are reasonable, God, or you? If you must be judge, how can we tell what bounds your desires will have? You will not ask to live in prosperity a thousand years; but when death is coming at a hundred years' end, you would live yet longer, and so on for ever, still longer and longer; and a thousand years would not make you willing, if either faith or affliction do it not.

3. And would you have all others have the same grant, that affliction and death should be kept off if they do but pray for it; and that God should give them what they ask? This would infer a thousand contradictions. A thousand men would ask to be kings of England, when there can be but one. Many would ask for the same lordships, lands or offices: some of them would take you for enemies, and ask for your death or ruin, and it may be you would ask for theirs. They would have your house, your wife, your trade, and you would have theirs. So many would live long, as that you would want food and room. What a mad wish were this, for all men to have their wills! The world is full of folly and wickedness, and wrath and malice; should all such persons have their wills? What is this conceit but a dream of millions of mischiefs, confusions and impossibilities? One may see by such desires how the world would be governed, if God gave it up to the will of man. Could there be any unity, where every man would rule, and every man hath an interest cross to others? Can there be any order or goodness, when all men are partly bad, and every bad man would have his will?

But you will say, that it is not bad men, nor bad desires

that you would have God to grant but only what is just and good: *Answ.* But who shall be judge, what is just and good? If every man must be judge, unjust and wicked prayers must be granted: and the judgment and wishes of many will be against yours. If it be you that must be judge, though it is like that is it that you would have, you cannot for shame sure speak it out. This were for God to resign his place to you, and make you the God and Governor of the world, and only those prayers must be granted which you think just and good. Whence are all the bloody wars in the world, but that one king would have that which another hath, or have his will against another? You may see then that it is worse than madness to desire, that any but God should be the highest disposer of the affairs of men, and determine what shall befall us in this world.

4. And do you think that God is unfit to do it? Doth he want wisdom to know what is best? Doth he want goodness to choose what is best? Or doth he want power to do what is best? Who hath it if God wants it? And how come they to it if not by him? And doth he give more than he hath himself? If he hath any imperfection he is not God.

5. It is most certain that all things are done well by God, and as they should be; and therefore the cause of your dissatisfaction is in yourselves. And indeed in these several evils you may find it. 1. By your sin you provoked God in justice to correct you, and deny your prayers. 2. And by your present badness you make yourselves unfit for that which you desire, that is good. 3. And by your blindness and fleshly mind, you desire that which is not to be desired. 4. And after all this by your idolatrous, usurping self-will, you are discontented with God for not giving you your desires. These four things contain your case: and is not every one of them a shameful evil?

II. But suppose that it be not outward things, but more grace, and assurance, and comfort, and deliverance from temptation and sin, that you pray against, and God doth not give it you: is not this cause of questioning the success of prayer, or of doubting at least of my own success, and whether my prayers were not all in vain?

Answ. That I may give you full satisfaction, I will tell you, 1. What kind of means prayer is. 2. What prayer it is that is such a means. 3. What may be expected by means

of prayer, and what not. 4. I will prove to you that prayer is not in vain, nor God's promises to it broken. 5. I will shew you why you should be patient under God's denials.

I. Prayer is not a purchasing means, nor a meriting by giving God any thing which may benefit him ; nor doth it work any change on God ; but it procureth blessings by the fitting the petitioner to receive them. And that in several respects, 1. Even naturally considered, it is a contradiction for a man to be unwillingly happy, and to attain the happiness which he desireth without so much as asking him that alone can give it. 2. Morally considered, a man is very unfit for, and unworthy of the benefit which he thinks not worth his asking ; especially if it be the greatest blessing that man is capable of, which he so despiseth. 3. And legally considered, the gift cannot be his, that performeth not the condition imposed by the donor, especially when it is but so reasonable a one, as ask and have.

So that you see though prayer purchase not, and change not God, it is a naturally, morally and economically necessary qualification and condition of our reception, and thus only it hath the nature of a means.

II. There are three sorts of prayer, which are not in vain, and yet much differ as to their success. 1. There is prayer that is not dissembled, but cometh only from natural principles or common grace ; such as Abab's humiliation, and the mariner's prayers in Jonah ; and it is like the Ninevites, and Simon Magus's desires to escape punishment. This is not in vain, I cannot say that God is under any promise to grant it, but he oft doth grant it, and pity such as cry to him in their misery. Which it seems was the case described, Psal. lxxviii. cvii. And whether Manasseh's was any better, I know not.

2. There is the prayer of sincere, weak Christians, who are guilty of much weakness of faith, and coldness of desire, these yet through Christ have certain promises of necessary things. 3. There are the fervent and faithful prayers of men of eminent faith and holiness ; and these oft prevail for extraordinary blessings, which are not promised to the prayers of every true Christian. Elias, and Elisha, and Peter did miracles by prayer. There are devils, and sins, and sufferings, that go not out but by fasting and prayer. The effectual, fervent prayer of an excellent, righteous man, availeth

more than ordinary Christians. If church history may be credited, such were the prayers of Gregory of Neocæsarea, Martin of Tours, and some other holy men that prevailed for wonders or miracles with God. All attain not their success.

III. And I will tell you what grant of prayers you may or may not expect from God. 1. The attaining of salvation, or our ultimate end, every true Christian doth pray for, and shall obtain. 2. The obtaining of all those means which are of absolute necessity to salvation, every true Christian prayeth for, and shall obtain; such as are our part in the merits and intercession of Christ, the pardon of sin as to the damning punishment, the necessary grace of the Spirit, deliverance from the dominion of sin: these we may be sure of.

3. There be some subordinate means so ordinarily needful, though not absolutely necessary, that we must pray for them with great earnestness, and may pray for them with great hope, though not with certainty of obtaining them; such are the use of Bibles, the benefit of a faithful minister, sacraments, Christian society, time of preparation for a comfortable death, &c.

4. There are some things which seem better to selfish persons, and to flesh and blood, than indeed they are, and are of very mutable, various use; sometimes they are good for us, and at other times hurtful; to one man they are good, and to another bad: such are outward prosperity, wealth, honour, ease, health, friends and life. God best knoweth both to whom these things are good, and when, and how far, and how long; and because we know not, we cannot tell when, and how far, and to whom God will give them, when we pray for them; but we must ask in hope, according to our best understanding, and willingly leave all to the wisdom and will of God.

5. There are some things which would be certainly good for us if we had them, which sin maketh us unfit to receive, or, as the Scripture speaketh, "unworthy of," not only in the sense of the law of works, as all are, but even of the law of grace, or God's ordinary Gospel dispensation. Such are greater measures of grace, and of victory over sin, assistance in duty, and the enjoyment of the best means, and freedom from some temptations and afflictions. Guilty, culpable Christians of the worst sort, that have less faith, and desire and obedience than better men, cannot expect that in that

condition their prayers should prevail as much as better; and that God should not punish them by any correction, or deny them greater grace and glory.

6. A strong Christian who hath before lived by faith, in a holy fruitful life, and overcome the strong temptations of flattering prosperity, and fetched most of his daily comforts from the hopes of heaven, may expect with high probability, though not with absolute certainty, that God should give him in answer to his prayers, an answerable victory over all the temptations of adversity, and deliver him from such sufferings as else would be to his greater hurt than good.

7. Those that God called to propagate the Gospel by the attestation and seal of miracles, had answerable faith and grant of their prayers.

IV. By thus much you may see, that while prayer and hope are guided by God's word of precept and promise, they are far from being in vain: and though he give us not all that we desire, he giveth us all that we ought to desire absolutely, and all that we should conditionally desire, if we have the condition.

For, 1. Prayer goeth to him that can easily give us whatever we need, without loss, or cost, or difficulty. To him who is more full of goodness than the sea of water, or the sun of light. And if the sun be an intellectual, free agent, it should in reason be no hard matter to believe, that it is willing to give us light.

2. We come not to God before he calleth us: he hath commanded us to ask: it is in his own appointed way and mensns that we wait for mercy.

3. Sincere prayer cometh from God, and therefore is acceptable to him. It is his Spirit that giveth us holy desires, and teacheth us what and how to ask; and causeth us to believe and hope for mercy. And God despiseth not his Spirit's work. If it cause us but to groan out sincere desires, he knoweth the meaning of them.

4. In prayer we retire from ourselves to God. We exercise repentance in humble confession: we acknowledge our insufficiency, emptiness and unworthiness, and so are the more fit, as beggars, to receive the gifts of his free grace.

5. True prayer disposeth us to the right use of all that God shall give, and that is the way to obtain our desire. Prayer confesseth sin, and implieth that we take heed of sin-

ning for the time to come: it confesseth unworthiness, and therefore implieth a promise to be thankful. It trusteth to God, and seeketh all of him, and therefore implieth our purpose to live to him and please him.

6. We go to God in the name of Christ, and have a Mediator whom he heareth always. We plead his worthiness, and that by his own command.

7. And prayer hath many promises from God, who is faithful, and never brake his promise. "Ask and ye shall receive."

8. Lastly, though we have not all that we would have, yet experience greatly encourageth us to pray, and tells us that prayer hath prevailed with God.

I know that the devil and unbelief has many dissuading objections.

As, 1. 'That God is not moved by our words, much less by long prayers.'

Answ. But our hearts are moved while just desire is excited and exercised, and thereby made more fit to receive God's gifts. We pull the boat to the shore, and not the shore to the boat, when we lay hold on the shore and pull at it. If this reason were good, all means in the world were vain as well as prayer. If we do good, and obey God, and forsake sin, if it were to perfection, all this maketh no change in God: shall we therefore conclude, that it is vain, and no means of his acceptance and blessing. Your eating, and drinking, and trading, and ploughing, and sowing, and study, and travels, make no change in God: are they therefore all in vain? And will he give you all that you want without them? Changes are made upon the receiver, not on God.

Object. 2. 'God knoweth what we want without our prayer, and he knoweth our desires.'

Answ. What though you know what a beggar wants, or what your child wants; will you think him a fit receiver, who thinks himself too good to ask, or thinks you must give him all without asking? Is it not God himself that hath bid you pray, and are his terms too hard? Have you less need than Christ himself had, who spent whole nights in prayer?

Object. 3. 'Many live in prosperity that never pray, and many in adversity that pray.'

Answ. Dives lived in prosperity, (Luke xvi.) and so did Herod and Pilate, and so do many Turks and heathens: is

Christianity therefore in vain? And will you be contented with the portion of such men? Go into the sanctuary and see their end. Are those now in prosperity who are in hell with devils, past help and hope? Prayer is not to make us richer and greater in the world than other men, but to make us better, and obtain salvation. Do you judge of men by their case in this world or the next? And are those men prosperous, who are the slaves of the flesh, and the world, and the devil? And are they not better, who are secured of the love of God?

V. But I will next tell you, what cause you have of patience, even when God seemeth to deny your prayers.

1. It is an unspeakable mercy, that he will not deny us any thing that is necessary to our salvation. Is that man miserable, and should he murmur, who is a child of God, a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven; and is pardoned, sanctified, and shall be saved? Is there not enough in Christ and heaven to satisfy you?

2. God gave you mercy, yea, invaluable mercy, before you asked it: he gave you your being and reason unasked: he gave the world a Saviour unasked: he gave you Christian parents, teachers and books unasked: and he gave you his first grace unasked, and many a deliverance since; therefore if he deny you what you ask, it is not because he is backward to give.

3. If it be any outward thing that he denieth you, be-think you whether God or you be more fit to dispose of such. Have you more authority and right? He owed you nothing: if he have given you long ago, be thankful for that though it be past, it was freely given. And who is wiser, and better knoweth how to use you and all men? Is it God or you? Who is better, or more unlikely to choose amiss?

And again, remember how great a sin it is, to grudge at God for his government of the world, and to desire to depose him, and to dispose of any thing ourselves. Is this your subjection and submission to his will? Did not Christ by his example teach you better, when he said, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt?" And "if this cup may not pass from me unless I drink it, thy will be done;" Matt. xxvi. 39. 42. Man's duty, holiness, interest and rest lieth in bringing over his own will entirely to the will of God, and his sin and misery in resisting it.

4. Either you are sure that what you ask is best for you, or not. If it be wealth or health, you are not sure; more perish by prosperity than by adversity. I before told you that men are condemned for loving somewhat more than God, and holiness, and heaven, and preferring it in their choice. And do you think men are more like to over-love sickness, and poverty, and crosses, more than health, and wealth, and pleasure? And would you have God give you that which is worst for you, only because you pray for it or would have it? You will not do so by your child, no nor by your swine, lest he burst his belly.

But if it be grace, and that which you are sure is best for you, your first duty is to examine whether there be not some great impediment in yourselves, which is the cause of God's denial. Do you go to the root of your old sins in your penitent confession? Do you hide no secret guilt or sin, and deal too gently with it? Do you humble yourself to those that you have wronged by word or deed? Do you make just restitution, so far as you are able, to all that you have defrauded? Do you not dally with temptation, and wilfully renew your guilt? Do you not overmuch hanker after worldly prosperity, or some sinful pleasure? Do you not wilfully omit some certain duty to God or man, in your relation or converse, and look after none but yourself, and live unfruitfully to others, your children, servants and neighbours? If conscience find such guilt as this, presently endeavour faithfully to amend it, and then beg God's further grace, and you shall find him not unwilling to give it you.

But if none of this be the case, but you have the testimony of your consciences, that excepting your unwilling imperfections and infirmities, in simplicity and godly sincerity you have your conversation in the world, and endeavour true obedience to Christ; then you may be sure that God hath denied you no grace essential to Christianity, and necessary to salvation.

5. And as to increase of grace and higher measures, remember that even the desire of it is an unspeakable mercy: for the desire of perfection is the mark of sincerity, and so of salvation. Be thankful to God for those desires. But this is the affliction next to be spoken to more distinctly.

CASE XIV.

Weakness of Grace, Knowledge, Faith, Love, Comfort, Great Corruptions.

It is one of the greatest burdens to an upright soul, to be kept under spiritual languishing and weakness, and to have but a low degree of grace. When knowledge is so small that it will not free us from daily uncertainties about truth, and duty, and sin; and all that plead for their several opinions perplex us; and Scripture seemeth unintelligible to us, and we do but grope after God as in the dark, and are overwhelmed with strange, unsatisfied thoughts of God, and of Christ, and of the world which we are going to.

When faith is so weak, that we trust Christ for heaven and earth, with fear, and inquietness, and distrust; and can scarce tell whether our faith overcome the world; and our trusting Christ for heaven would make us forsake earth and life, rather than hazard it by wilful sin; when doubts and fears do tell us that we have little faith.

What a calamity is it, when our hopes of heaven do so little rejoice us, that every worldly suffering seems strong enough to quell and quench our joy! Yea, we have more dread than desire, more trouble than joy, when we think of dying, and of the next life!

What a calamity it is, when our love to God, and Christ, and glory, is so small, that we are in fear that we love more this body, and worldly prosperity, and pleasure! When all the thoughts of God's essential goodness, his love and mercy to us and others, and all the wonderful love and mercy of our Redeemer, and all the mercies on earth, and promises of heaven, will scarce warm our hearts with love and thankful joy in God! And yet we can easily love, and over-love our flesh, our house, our lands, our friends, and fanciful amorousness is a common disease.

What a calamity is it that we have no more government of our thoughts, to keep out covetousness, pride and lust, and to cast out satan's abominable temptations.

And that when we know that God trieth us to exercise our patience, we can no better overcome fear, anger, grief and discontent. Should we be patient under all this want of grace?

Answ. This is to me the greatest burden in this world,

and I suppose it is so to all sound Christians, as to considerate trouble of mind, though loss of friends or bodily pains may stir up more passion. That which was before said about uncertainty of salvation, must be taken in about this case.

And, 1. Let us make sure of our sincerity, before we talk of imperfections; if we can know that we have the truth of special grace, we may know what to say to the case of our infirmities. And for that, still remember what I said before about the sincerity of faith. If you have so well thought of this world and the next, and of Christ, that you are soundly resolved to trust Christ for grace and glory, to the forsaking of all that stands against it, you have saving faith and title to salvation. I opened it before to you by two similitudes, of a patient that practically trusteth his physician, and a poor prisoner that practically trusteth one that promiseth him a lordship in a foreign land. Though you venture with fear and trembling, if you will venture all on Christ, and leave all for him so far as he requireth you, it is saving faith. Practically trust him and he will save you.

2. When you are got thus far, remember that as you were born in sin, so you too long lived in it. Sin had a long time to darken your understandings, and harden your hearts, and corrupt your wills, and set you at a greater distance from God: and do you think all this must be undone and cured very easily, and in a moment, or as soon as you desire it? It is an unspeakable mercy that it is so far cured, as that you are translated from death to life, and made new creatures, and the heirs of heaven: and moreover, that Christ hath undertaken the perfect cure in his time and way. Grace somewhat imitateth nature: you were not born as soon as conceived, nor were you at ripe age as soon as born. Your growth and strength came by degrees in time; you had not your learning all at once, but by long study. You get not your riches by trading or labour in a few days: your land brings not fruit to perfection as soon as it is sowed; nor your trees as soon as they are grafted or planted: and must not so great a work as the cure and sanctifying of a soul, be done by such degrees?

3. And consider that you must not be mere patients, but also agents in the increase of your grace and strength. It must be had by exercise; the frequent acts must increase the habits, and God will not do it all without you: he hath

appointed you means to use, and will try and exercise your obedience therein. As he giveth not life and strength to those that will not take their food, nor the fruit of the earth without our labour, so neither hath he promised to give more grace, save in the patient use of the means which he hath appointed. Time, means and diligence are needful.

4. And alas! most Christians are too slothful, and use means negligently, and then look that God should give them as much grace, at their mere wish and prayer, as if they were laborious and diligent. And too many do venture on sin, and so keep under grace by careless living.

5. And some unskilfully use means for one sort of grace when it is another that they most need, and should use the means accordingly. When they should excite and feed their faith, and hope, and holy love, by the consideration of God's truth and goodness, and his love in Christ, and by heavenly doctrine and thoughts endeavour to [get a heavenly mind, some study small controversies, and some perplex themselves with scruples about duties and sins of their own making, and some plunge themselves into confounded and bewildering thoughts, and think over again all satan's temptations; and some only strive to get a more passionate weeping sorrow; and much neglect all serious endeavours for a believing, loving, joyful soul.

6. You must remember that many Christians grow in grace and do not know it, but think that they go backward, or have none; because they do not sufficiently observe wherein the nature of sanctification doth principally consist: some lay it on passion, and some on memory, and some on the belief of their own sincerity, justification and salvation, and some on words and free expression, whereas it chiefly consisteth in the estimation of the judgment, the resolution of the will, and the obedience of our lives. If you esteem God's grace and glory better, and sin worse, and the world to be good or bad, as it serveth grace or sin, then you grow in understanding. If you are more firmly resolved to place your hopes, and make your choice according to this estimation, and to please God, and secure grace and glory, what ever it cost you, and to avoid wilful sin, which is your danger, and to use the world for holy ends, especially if you love wisdom, and holiness, and justice better, and hate sin more than you did heretofore, then your will doth grow in grace.

And if you shew this will and choice in more obedience of life, avoiding known sin more, and endeavouring to do good, and devoting yourselves more entirely to God, then you grow in holiness of life. Though your memories grow weaker, and though your holy passions and feelings should grow less, and are less able for long meditation, or to keep an order or steadiness in your thoughts, and though you want words in prayer and discourse, and though fears and peevish angriiness, and troubling thoughts should by weakness or temptation get more advantage of you, yet all this stands with rootedness and growth in grace.

7. Forget not what you were heretofore. Had you not formerly a higher esteem of worldly things, and less fear of sinning than you have now? Growth in grace may be like the growth of your trees, or corn, or flowers, or the shadow on your dial. You do not see these grow or move; but if you come after a sufficient time, you may see that they are grown. We are bigger at age than in childhood, and yet we never saw ourselves grow: it is by insensible degrees. Strong Christians have more knowledge than they had, and a more fixed resolution for God and heaven, and a greater contempt of worldly vanity, and victory over fleshly desires and wilful sin, though they perceive not how these grow.

8. Be thankful that you desire to be better: those desires (as is aforesaid) prove sincerity, and are the earnest of what you do desire, and are a greater blessing than all the riches of the world: God that gave them you will not see them lost. The grace which we have on earth, is desiring, seeking grace: desires are our best evidence here; "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness;" for they shall be satisfied hereafter. We must know the difference between earth and heaven: it is there that we shall have all that we desire. Here desiring and seeking is our work: perfection is the prize and crown; which is not to be had till we have done our race and warfare. The womb is but the place of preparation for what is to be enjoyed in the open world; and no great matters are there to be expected; we must not look for more on earth than its part.

9. And when all is done, God is a free agent, and giveth his grace in such variety as he pleases, and doth not give to all alike. As he freely diversifieth nature and common gifts, so doth he several degrees of grace. It is an unspeakable

mercy to have so much as shall save us from the hell we deserve, and give us right to life eternal; though we yet are faint through weakness, and have not the strength and comfort which we desire.

10. And though we have yet much corruption left uncur- ed, we have helps appointed us to overcome them; and the exercise of grace against all such enemies, is much of its glory, and sheweth its amiable worth; as darkness sets out the worth of light, and sickness of health, and death of life. Diseases occasion the honour of our physician. Where sin hath abounded, grace hath superabounded. The whole need not the physician. We must have daily use for Christ, both to pardon us, and to cure us; God could have prevented Adam's fall; but he hath permitted it, and permitteth all the sin in the world, though he cause it not: and he knoweth how to use it to his glory. All souls in heaven were once sinful, saving Christ's: we must daily be washed in his blood. We shall never perform a duty so innocently as to need no Saviour and pardoning grace. Where there is no enemy, there is no war; and where there is no war, there is no victory; and where there is no victory, there is no triumph.

11. And that God who freely pardoned all our reigning sins before conversion, will surely pardon all our mere infir- mities, when we renew our faith and our repentance. He that through Christ can forgive such as were enemies, will forgive a son: and being reconciled by Christ's death, we shall be saved by his life.

Not that any of these considerations should reconcile us to sin, or abate our hatred of it; it must be our grief that any thing should cleave to us which is hateful to God, which killed Christ, and which is so contrary to holiness and hea- ven: but use no such impatience as hindereth the sense of the love of God, or the grace of Christ, or the thankful ac- knowledgment of his mercy. Fight against sin as well as you can, and serve your Lord as well as you are able: but do not sit down and cry, because sin is too strong for you, and because you can serve God no better; complain to Christ in order to beg his help and grace; but use not com- plaint instead of endeavour.

Thank God that you are weary of sin, and say with Paul,

“ O wretched man, who shall deliver me !” so you will but say next, “ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And now you are weary and heavy laden, come to Christ for ease and rest. And remember, that (if you were ungodly) you could once have endured sin without weariness. Who heard you then impatiently cry out against it? Yea, you were loath to think of leaving it. And look about you on the multitude of the ungodly, and you shall see how far they are from being impatient with their sin, though it be mortal; when they can scarce be patient towards him that would but save them from it. They grudge at God because he will not give them leave to sin, and not because he doth not cure them. O how contrary is the impatience of saints and wicked sinners!

12. While you remember what grace you want, remember also both what you have received, and what is promised you, that thankfulness and hope may keep you from discouragement. You are not cured, but you are alive; and Christ hath promised you a cure. In many things we all offend; James ii. 2. “ He that saith he hath no sin, is a liar;” 1 John i. 8. Paul tells us that he had not obtained perfection, but he rejoiced that he was pressing towards the mark; Phil. iii. 12, 13. “ We may rejoice that our Captain hath overcome the world;” John xvi. 33. “ And he will shortly bruise satan under our feet;” Rom. xvi. 20. vii. 25. Christ, that cured all bodily diseases on earth, will cure spiritual blindness, lameness and deadness too, if we have but grace enough to go to him for more.

13. Lastly, the more weary you are of sin and weakness, and the more desirous you are to know God better, and love him more, and praise him with greater cheerfulness and joy, the more you should long to be with Christ. Heaven will deliver you from all imperfection; from all darkness, unbelief and dulness; from all sad, uncomfortable thoughts, and from all, both alluring and molesting temptations. O that we could believe that more strongly, and then our honest impatience with sin and imperfection would but quicken us to the means of our deliverance, and help our joy in the foresight of that blessed change, which will leave no matter of discontent, and will give us more than we could here desire.

But to those who are overmuch dejected at their imper-

fections and remaining faults, I add these cautions. 1. See that it be not the disgrace, or the outward troublesome fruits of your sin, which grieve you more than the sin itself.

2. Take heed, lest while you complain of your badness, there be no secret pride and hypocrisy, to make you angry with those that think you but as bad as you call yourself. It is an odd kind of contradiction, at once to be impatient because we are so bad, and also impatient with them that take us to be so; and not to endure another to say that of us which we say ourselves.

3. The worse you take yourselves and your sins to be, the more you should esteem and desire a Saviour and his grace to heal you; and rejoice that a full remedy is at hand, and freely offered you; and be the more thankful for that mercy which is given, and which is promised to so unworthy sinners.

4. Shew your impatience with sin and wants, by hating sin, and diligent using the means of cure, and not by idle, discouraged, despairing complaints.

5. Remember that our Head is perfect for us: his merits and righteousness are perfect: he is fully perfected in glory: and is it nothing that he is related to us, as our Surety, Saviour and Head? He hath his glory for our good.

6. Remember that no sin or imperfection shall condemn us, but that which we had rather keep than leave, and love more than hate it: and that all things are tolerable which will end in heaven. We groan, being burdened both with sin and sorrow in the flesh; but we wait for full deliverance from the bondage of our corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

CASE XV.

When God doth not Bless the Labours of our Callings, Ministers, Parents' Endeavours for Children, for near Relations, Tradesmen, Endeavours for the Church.

Another case which greatly needeth patience, is, when God doth not bless and prosper our endeavours; when ministers study, and preach, and pray, and yet see but small fruit of their labours; few converted, reformed or strengthened, but all their labour seemeth lost. When parents take pains with their children, and they remain still obstinate and wicked. When magistrates' endeavours are frustrated

by a contentious, rebellious people. When men labour in their lawful callings, and all goeth backward, and God seemeth not to bless their labours. In sickness our physic doth not prosper. When we are falsely accused, our just defence is not believed. When we endeavour the public good, we prosper not. This maketh men fear that God forsaketh them.

These several causes should be severally considered. And the case of unprosperous ministers, I confess, is very bad. When a man from his youth is devoted to that holy work, and by many years' hard study prepared for it, and is drawn to it by a longing desire to do good, and studieth for it all his life, and spends time and strength in constant labour, and after all can see small fruit; this lieth heavy, and tempteth them to doubt whether they were called of God, and whether they are not unfit for the work, or unfaithful in it. Through God's great mercy it is not my own trial: I know not that ever I laboured any where in vain; but I have lived near far better men, who have lived to above fourscore years of age, and have said, that they know not of two souls converted by them in the parishes where they lived: some speed better upon such as came from other parishes, and some on very few at all. And alas! to see no better fruit of such employment, than barely to have a benefice to live on, and some reverence from the people, or a few good words, is a poor encouragement.

But, 1. The first thing to be done in this sad case, is, to search whether the fault be not in ourselves. Whether we choose such subjects to preach on as are most suitable to the hearer's state, and most fit to convince and win them: whether we study plainness and familiar words, and a close, convincing way of speech: whether by familiar conversation with them we get their love and also find out their ignorance, error and sin, their objections and doubts, that we may know what they need; and whether we deal with them privately and personally as well as publicly, for their instruction: whether our lives preach to them as well as our tongues, and shew them that we believe what we speak; and whether we do all in the expression of unfeigned love, and do them all the good we can for their bodies, and quarrel not with them for worldly things, but lose our right rather than scandalize them, and harden them against the truth. If any of this be amiss, it must be amended; if not, then consider,

2. That to labour is our part, and to prosper is God's. Paul and Apollos can but plant and water, but it is God that must give the increase. Christ himself both preached and wrought miracles in some places, when yet few believed on him; yea, though the people cried him up, it was no great number that were thoroughly converted by all his preaching and works; that being reserved for the coming down of the Holy Ghost, after his death and resurrection. And in some places few were converted by the apostles: Even among the learned philosophers at Athens, how little was their success?

3. God knoweth his chosen, and all shall come to Christ that the Father hath given him, and none of them shall be lost: and God loveth souls and holiness better than we do: all souls are his; and Christ knoweth the price of them. And we know that all that God doth is good, and we shall see the reason of it at last.

The prophets and apostles had more unthankful requitals, than the mere loss of their labour with the greater part. They were also persecuted, scorned and killed, by them whose salvation they desired. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers killed and persecuted," saith Christ, Matt. xxiii. See Isa. liii. 1. &c. John xii. 37, 38. Acts xvii. xix. 9. xxviii. 24. Yea, to some the word is the savour of death unto death, and Christ is a stone of stumbling, and ministers are the scorn of the world, and the offscouring of all things; and, alas! they must be witnesses against their hearers to their condemnation, and must "shake off the dust of their feet against them."

4. If our success were according to our own desires, it would be beyond what God intendeth for men in the world: we would have every man in the world converted and saved. It is our duty to desire and endeavour it as far as we are able; for it is not God's decrees, but his commands which are our rule; Luke iv. 25. "Many widows (saith Christ) were in the days of Elisha, but it was not to many that he was sent." We may have comfort in our just desires and endeavours.

5. God will accept and reward us, according to our faithful work, and not according to our success. A bad man may be used to save other men's souls, when his own is lost; "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength;"

Isa. xlix. 5. It is spoken both of the prophets and of Christ. It was to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," that Christ saith he was sent; and he is called a member of the circumcision. And yet Israel was not gathered, when he would have gathered them as a hen doth her chickens; Matt. xxiii. But they were to be utterly ruined for rejecting him; 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15. "Now thanks be to God, who causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one the savour of death to death, and to the other the savour of life unto life; and who is sufficient for these things?" Faithful labour is never wholly lost.

6. And one soul is so precious, as is worth more than all the labour of our lives. He is a hypocrite himself, and no faithful minister of Christ, that had not rather save one soul, though he live in poverty, than have the richest bishopric, and save none. His money shall perish with him, who loveth money better than the soul of the poorest beggar.

7. There may perhaps be many more souls converted than the preacher ever heareth of. The work hath often obscure beginnings. You know not what workings may be in the secret hearts of sinners: and some are bashful, and some have not opportunity to shew themselves. I have visited some aged women before death, who were not noted for any zealous profession of religion; but what they shewed in the church-assemblies, and I found them of solid understanding and experience; and perceived by their talk that they had been constant in all secret duties, and conscionable in all their course. And when I inquired farther, I found that they had husbands that restrained them from the society of godly people, and from all open manifestation of what was in their hearts, save what their church-worship and upright living shewed. And this is the case of some children and servants, who are under the restraint of bad parents and masters. We must not then conclude, that all the seed is lost, which seemeth buried, and appeareth not to us.

8. It is not lost labour which doth but restrain men from being worse. The suppression of vice, and the keeping up a profession of the truth, is worth all our labour; as also the keeping out heresies and errors; and it is worth our la-

bour to feed Christ's sheep, and help to confirm such as are true Christians already, and to increase the grace they have ; and to comfort the sad, and resolve the doubting, and edify the body of Christ. Surely, the work which is to be done in guiding and edifying the converted, requireth as great skill at least, as that which is required to the converting of infidels and wicked men ; (though the change made on the learners be not so great, in regard of the ' terminus a quo ;' for the higher includeth the lower,) and more learning is necessary to teach the higher form, than to teach the alphabet. Some are for planting, and some for watering ; some went forth to make disciples of the nations, and baptize them, and some were to guide them when baptized, and teach them to observe all Christ's commands.

9. If your study and doctrine edify and save yourselves, it is an unspeakable mercy ; you have had the comfort of sweet and holy studies, and the pleasant work of opening and pleading saving truth : and if all this study and preaching have but prevailed with yourselves, and conquered your own sins, and subdued your souls to the obedience of Christ, how happy are you ! Yet all this is not said to make you indifferent as to your success ; I further, therefore, advise you, 1. Long for the winning and edifying of souls ; for I have observed, that few prosper this way, but those that earnestly desire it.

2. Pray hard for them to God, and see that you neglect not your own duty. Study for eminent abilities : preach plainly, earnestly, reverently ; exhort them personally, do them good charitably ; hurt none ; avoid scandal ; live as you teach ; shun all unnecessary crossness and singularity ; " keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace with all true believers ;" and patiently leave the issue to God.

3. If you are distasted through prejudice, and have long laboured without any notable success, advise with your brethren whether you should not remove, and another be not more fit for that people, and you for another, and do accordingly.

II. As to the second cause of the frustration of all endeavours for the souls of children and servants, I touched it before. I confess it is a grievous case to bring up children who will be slaves of satan, plagues to the church, and firebrands in hell ; and to speak to them in vain, as blocks or

madmen. But good men have lived comfortably that had bad children : Adam had a Cain, Noah had a Ham, Abraham had an Ishmael, Isaac had an Esau, Jacob's sons greatly sinned ; Eli had an Hophni and Phinehas, Samuel's sons forsook their father's way ; David had an Ammon and an Absalom, Solomon had a Rehoboam, Hezekiah had a Manasseh, Job justly feared his sons' forgetting God in their fulness, and lost them in it : Christ saith, the son shall be against the father ; Matt. xiii. 12.

And if you have but one good child, you owe great thanks to God for that. If a minister must not deny God his thanks, nor himself his comforts, though most of his flock prove obstinate and perish ; neither must parents be unthankful or uncomfortable, if most of their children should be obstinate and perish, if God permit it, who hath more interest in them than you have ; you must submit, and take comfort in your good desires and faithful duty : But O see carefully that you neglect not love, and prudent diligence, and good example, and that you keep out of tempting company, and keep under suitable means.

III. And it is as near a trial, when a husband cannot convert a wicked wife, nor a wife a wicked husband, but one must lie in the bosom of a slave of satan, and an enemy of Christ, and no persuasion will do such good. The nearness maketh the affliction very great, such as few that have not had sad experience of it can know. It is a very hard thing to love such with a true conjugal love, who have no true loveliness of soul, but hate the holy ways of Christ ; and it is not easy to keep up innocency, and godliness, and peace, under the constant opposition of one so near.

But yet this must be patiently borne, when it cannot be remedied. For, 1. Usually it is a just correction for a sinful choice, which must be repented of ; and it is a mercy that your repentance hath some help.

2. It may be such a constant exercise of your grace, especially patience and prudence, as may render you better and stronger Christians, than those that have less exercise by trials.

3. The greatness of the temptations must cause you to double your watchfulness and resolutions against the sins which you will be tempted to, and to perform all the duties of our place. As, 1. See that no pretence of love, or pleas-

ing, or obedience, draw you to imitate a husband or a wife in sin, and to become as bad as they, or to receive any error from them, or grow cold to holy duties. Some women that have Papists or other erroneous husbands, cannot tell how to love and please them, without being flattered or drawn into their errors; strong constant trials need strong and constant watch and resolution: for if you be overcome to be as they, it is a thousand times worse than all the grief that you have by them.

2. See that their badness destroy not conjugal affections towards them: those may be loved as husbands or wives, who cannot be loved as sincere Christians.

3. See that you exceed mere carnal persons in all the duties of your relations. If your difference and grief do cast you into sourness and displeasing discontented conversation, or if you be as peevish and froward as common persons, you will be a scandal to those that you should win, and drive them further from religion and salvation. You must shew, if you are wives, more love and meekness, and patience, and obedience, than carnal persons do, as well as more forwardness in religion. Froward impatient wives do harden many ill husbands in their sin. It hath much pleased me to hear a husband saying of a good wife, 'I differ from my wife in religion and church orders; I go to one church, and she to another: I think she is too precise and strict; but I think there is not a better wife, a better mother, and a better mistress in the land.' A good Christian must be good in all relations.

4. Continue prayers and winning endeavours while there is hope.

5. And let the sense of another's sin and misery provoke you to be thankful to God for his grace, and that he hath not left you to the like.

IV. And as to the next case (when God blasteth our labours and estates, and prospereth not our callings,) it is an usual trial: some are ruined by deceivers, and breaking tradesmen, some by losses at sea, some by suretyship, some by fire, some by false servants, some by prodigal sons, some by soldiers, some by unjust suits at law, some over-reached in bargains about land; and divers other ways there are by which the rich have been brought to poverty; (to say nothing of gaming, luxury, and such vice, which belongs

not to this present case) and by which lawful means of living want success.

And here, 1. It is your duty to see that there be no guilt of any other unpardoned sin which God punisheth this way. Sometimes an estate is blasted by God, because it was unlawfully got by ancestors: sometimes the owner is guilty of former defrauding others, and hath made no restitution; sometimes God thus punisheth some other secret sin, as fornication, lying, flesh-pleasing, and such like. Search deep, and see that no such guilt be unrepented of, and be as a moth or fire to consume your wealth.

2. Especially search lest your hearts grow secretly into a worldly disposition, and too great hopes of riches and prosperity, and too great a desire after plenty, and too much pleasure in the possession, or the hopes of it: if this be your case, it is God's great mercy to blast all to you, and to break your idol, and to fire you out of the garrison that you trust. They that trust in riches, Christ tells you, are as hardly saved as for a "camel (or cable) to go through the eye of a needle:" and it is men's hope which causeth their trust. When you hope for more from riches than they can give, you are said to trust in them. If ever God save you, he will save you from this worldly mind and love: and sure prosperity is not the likeliest way to that; but rather withering the object of your hopes.

3. However, make this use of your crosses, to be more weaned from the world, and more careful to lay up a treasure in heaven, where fire, rust, or moth corrupts not, and thieves, pirate, or soldiers cannot steal, and then your loss, be it never so great, is made your gain.

4. And let your crosses and frustrations call you to exercise the graces suitable to your condition; to renew repentance, submission to God's will, prayer and dependance for your daily bread, abatement of pride, not disdain the lowest employment, nor to be beholden to others: and if you can follow Christ and his apostles in a holy poverty, you shall quickly be above contempt and want. And let it make you ply that calling and work which will never disappoint you: believe and hope strongly, pray earnestly, obey diligently, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as your labour shall not be in vain, though all your worldly wealth be blasted.

V. The last care is the saddest trial of all, when just endeavours for church and state, for societies and posterity seem all in vain : when hopes of peace and piety, and public good have been high raised, and all soon blasted and turned into shame. But of this I must speak anon. I conclude all this case of labour frustrate, and hopes cast down, with this necessary warning ; Judge of God's love to you by the great and sure tokens of his love, and not by uncertain transitory things : If God loved those best that prosper most in honour and wealth, Turks and tyrants, and the most luxurious wicked men, would have the best proofs of his love. If your souls prosper in the increase of faith, and in sweeter or desiring thoughts of heaven, and in delight in God and holiness, and in victory over all your carnal affections, and discontents, and in a more willing obedience to all God's laws, and in a word, in a fuller compliance of your wills to the will of God, then you are truly prosperous persons, and have the certain tokens of the love of God ; when the prosperity of fools will destroy them, and turn to the increase of their sin, and will be but as fuel to hell-fire, and prepare for endless misery.

CASE XVI.

The common Sin and Misery of the World, and fewness of Wise and Godly Men.

A heavier trial of our faith and patience yet is, the misery of this world by the universal corruption of mankind, the prevalency of most odious wickedness ; and paucity of wise and godly men : that at five thousand, six hundred and eighty-two years after the Creation, most of the earth seemed forsaken of God : five parts of six being heathens, Mahometans and infidels ; and of the sixth part, the far greatest part are Papists, and lamentable ignorant Greeks, Armenians, Abassines, Jacobites, Nestorians, &c. And of the Protestants, so few that so much as seem to be practisers of the Christian faith and hope, but most live in worldliness, and sensuality, if not also in enmity to serious piety, and persecution of all that practise what themselves profess.

This is a manifold and grievous trial. 1. To our faith ; while satan taketh advantage by it to make us doubt whether man was made for another life, when his nature seemeth

to have no inclination to it, but rather to abhor it: and to doubt how Christ is the Saviour of the world, and died for all, and would have all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, when so few of the world shall be saved, and so many kingdoms and ages damned, when we ourselves can scarce bear the pain of the stone or cholic patiently, or the miscarriage or misery of a child or friend. And it maketh it the harder to us to perceive the goodness, love, and amiableness of God, who can convert and save the world, and will not.

I have answered all this so fully in a little book called "The Vindication of God's Love," that to avoid repetition, I will say but this little following:

1. We are fully certain of God's perfect goodness, by all his works; it being equal to his greatness; and therefore no argument can be of force against a certain truth: Nothing can be true that is inconsistent with so sure and greath a truth.

2. God's goodness is infinite in act, in his blessed self-love: no finite creature is an object fit to demonstrate infinite love in perfect act, nor capable of it.

3. It is certain 'de facto' that God hath made toads, serpents, dung, and puts sensitive nature in men and brutes to great pains and death; therefore it is certain that all this is consistent with God's perfect goodness.

4. God's love to his creature is his beneficence or complacence. He was no ways bound to make all his creatures equal, nor to give as much to a fly or flea as to a man, nor to a man as to an angel, or to the sun: nor is it meet that he complacentially esteem any creature better than it is.

5. It is no way unmeet that God should make a middle rank of active natures between necessitated brutes and immutable confirmed spirits, even a rank of intellectual free agents to be governed morally by laws, in a life of trial, with a power of self-determining as to their wills, and to leave them to their own determined choice, decreeing accordingly to judge them; yet resolving to secure the salvation of some. If it be not against God's goodness to make brutes that have no intellects nor capacity of glory, it is not contrary to it to make intellectuals merely capable, and leave them to their free wills.

6. While we are thankful for God's mercies to his pecu-

liar people, the church, we must not, as some peevishly and rashly do, deny what he doth for the rest of the world. He useth them not according to the terms of the first law: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die: he leaveth not himself without witness while he winketh at their ignorance;" Acts xiv. In that he giveth them abundance of temporal mercies, fruitful lands and seasons, health and time, and punisheth them not as they deserve: so that, "that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it to them: for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse, because, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God;" Rom. i. 19—21. "Who hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they may feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us;" Acts xvii. 25—27. "And in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him; for he is no respecter of persons;" Acts x. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:" And Noah that believed the warning of God, "and prepared the ark, being moved by fear, became an heir of the righteousness of faith;" Heb. xi. 6, 7. "God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing do seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, and honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles; for there is no respect of persons with God: for as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law: for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified: for when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are

a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also beareth witness; and their thoughts the meanwhile, either accusing or excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of man according to my Gospel;" Rom. ii.

The world is not left in despair as devils, under the sentence of the broken law of innocence, but is under the edition of the law of grace which was made to Adam and Noah, and is used on terms of mercy and forgiveness, or else they should not receive all the mercies as they do: they are all obliged to repent in hope, and to use some means for recovery and salvation: and God under the law proclaimeth himself to be "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear," &c. Exod. xxxiv. 5—7. God would be no otherwise known to any men on earth.

And how far men keep or break this law of grace, their Judge best knoweth: but we know that they shall be judged according to the law that they are under, and the measure of talents delivered to them: to whom much is given, of them much is required: Melchizedec was king of Jerusalem, even of righteousness and peace: and Job and his friends seem to have been great men of several countries: in Nineveh they "believed God, proclaimed a fast, and God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil," &c. Jonah iii. "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be (or is) great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be (or is) offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be (or is) great among the heathens, saith the Lord of Hosts;" Mal. i. 11.

John and Christ preached repentance and remission of sin, before that they preached that Jesus was the Christ: and the very apostles that dwelt with Christ and followed him, did not believe till after his resurrection, that he must be crucified and die for our sins, and rise again, and ascend and intercede in heaven, &c. They were fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken, how that Christ ought to suffer such things, and so to enter into his glory; Luke xxiv.

We are too like the Jews, who were so proud of their peculiarity, that they deceitfully took their outward privileges to signify much more for them than they did: as if all the rest of the world had been quite forsaken and had been no people of God, because they had not their covenant of peculiarity; when as indeed their peculiarity was mostly typical, in that they were a type of the peculiar catholic church under the Gospel, and that Christ was to be a Jew according to the flesh; even as their law and the righteousness of it was excellent as typical, and as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, though it was called faulty, and was to be done away, that a better covenant might take place. God promised Abraham temporal greatness, viz. that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and he should have a land that flowed with milk and honey: and all this was made good; but in such good as this, how small was the portion of the Israelites! How small and poor their land and kings, in comparison to the Romans, Turks, Chinese, Indians, &c. The whole land of the twelve tribes, not so big as England; and they lived most in vexation or captivity by the Philistines or others, till David conquered, and Solomon reigned in peace and luxury; and no longer did David's line reign over any more than two of the twelve tribes, and those ere long went into captivity; so that the glory of the Jews' kingdom was the divinity of their typical law, and that the Messiah, and the original of the Gospel church, was to spring from them.

And as to their goodness, all the history and prophets tell us how bad they were; and if the lives of most of their kings be compared with Alexander Severus, M. Aurelius, Antonine Philos. and Anton. Pius, and Trajan, and Titus, &c. there will no great cause appear to think that none but Jews could be saved; the pride of their peculiar covenant set them at a greater distance from all others than their real greatness, wisdom and goodness.

“What advantage then hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God;” Rom. iii. 1, 2. And the Christian church hath now the said oracles and the covenant of peculiarity in a more excellent kind than ever the Jews had: but let us not follow them in our pride, lest we follow them in destruction; for if we be worse than

others, we shall suffer more than others, as our light was greater. Though we only are the church and the peculiar people, the rest of mankind are part of the kingdom of the Redeemer, who "died, rose, and revived, to this end, that he might be Lord of the dead and the living;" Rom. xiv. 9. 10. "For all power is given him in heaven and earth, and he is head over all to the church;" Eph. i. 22, 23. Matt. xxviii. 19. And our covenant of peculiarity, is no repeal of the old law of grace made to mankind in Adam and Noah by God the Redeemer, who ruleth all upon terms of mercy and grace; and was known accordingly as a merciful, pardoning God, before he was incarnate or known as such: and so is still known, when as incarnate he is not known; and is past doubt, that as much of his grace and mercy of redemption went before his incarnation, so much of it still extendeth further than the knowledge of his incarnation; as the light of the sun is not utterly gone, when clouds keep it unseen, and before it riseth, and after it is set.

And as to the question, 'How many among the uncalled world do fear God and work righteousness, and are accepted of him? Who art thou that judgest another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls:' only I repeat, that Abraham, the father of the faithful, who "saw Christ's day," thought that there had been "fifty righteous persons in Sodom;" a city so bad, that fire from heaven must consume it. And all history tells us, that in all countries there are pious, virtuous persons, who are hated and derided by the sensual herd, yea, and persecuted in most places.

This much I think needful to be considered, that we wrong not God, and ourselves, and others, by clouding his mercy and goodness, and making difficulties to our faith and love.

7. And again, and again, I repeat, that no man is fit to judge diminutively of God's mercy and love, who knoweth not what he saith; (and yet speaketh against a certain truth.) But they that say, more are damned than are glorified, know not what they say: for it is visible, that all the earth is to the rest of the world, no bigger than an inch to all England, that I say not, to all Europe: and we see that each region hath inhabitants connatural here below (water, earth, air). And we see that the superior regions are most

glorious as well as vast : and I think, that few men of sense do think, that sun, moon, and stars, and all the orbs, are made for no higher use than to shine upon, or serve this dirty world of earth : so that again I say, that hell is like the gallows, and earth like the gaol, to a whole kingdom or vast empire : and it is no sign of a bad prince, to have one gallows and one gaol in his dominions.

8. And we must remember that though hell be but one word, it signifieth divers degrees of punishment : and Christ who best knew, tells us, that they who “knew not their Lord’s will, shall be beaten with few stripes :” and even to “Sodom in the day of judgment it shall be easier” than to those that refuse the Gospel : and it is an airy, active life of misery that the devils themselves have now.

9. And we see by the pain and death of brutes, that God doth lay such pain and death on them without desert by any sin : and is it any diminution of his goodness to lay more on sinful man ? All confess that he might have killed and annihilated us without our sin : he that gave a man life freely for thirty, fifty, sixty years, was not bound to continue it for ever. And he that made toads and snakes might have made us such ; and yet it is certain, that most men had rather endure any tolerable degree of pain, than either to be annihilated or made toads or snakes : and we cannot certainly tell how far those pains may be called tolerable, which Christ calleth by the name of “easier and few stripes.”

10. It is most certain that when we come to heaven, we shall be fully reconciled to all God’s dealings, and rejoice in the glory of his holiness and justice, and see no cause to think diminutively of his goodness and his grace.

11. And in the meantime, let us rejoice that he hath made us vessels of mercy, and that he hath endued so many thousands on earth with his grace, and that the heavenly church is so great and glorious : there will be no want of number there.

12. And as to the temptations hence to unbelief, consider, that the heavenly hopes, and desires, and lives of all the godly, do prove that God intended them for heaven ; all the work of his sanctifying Spirit is not delusion : and the fear and hope that human nature hath of another life,

doth shew that we have another to expect: and that the wicked have no such heavenly desire, doth but shew, that they are incapable of heavenly felicity, but not that all others are so too.

CASE XVII.

The sad Distempers and Divisions of Christians, and the hurt they do to the World, and to one another, and the dishonourable state of the Church.

Another exercise of our patience is, the great imperfection, scandals and divisions of Christians, and the hurt they do to one another, and to the world, and the dishonourable broken state that they are in.

It is a doleful case to think, how narrow, and low, and corrupt a state the church was in for four thousand years before Christ's incarnation: how small it was for the two first centuries: how quickly shameful heresies did corrupt it; how lamentably they multiplied even under persecution: how quickly the advanced, enriched clergy were corrupted; what odious schisms they made in the church; how they grieved the hearts of peaceable princes, who with all their power, were unable to keep even common love and peace among the prelates, and to get them to live but as quietly with each other as the heathen did. What a shame is it to think, how the majority carried it in their most famous councils; and into how many sects the church was broken, and most of them by bishops continued to this day! Greeks, Muscovites, Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Melchites, Papists, &c. And that so many hundred years' experience doth not end or heal their rents. To read the doleful divisions and cruelties by the Arrians, the bloody feuds about Nestorians, Eutychians, Monothelites the Tria Capitula, images, excommunications, particular men's striving for preeminence, to read how the Papacy sprang up, and to read the schisms and lives of the Popes, the General Council's dismal accusations of some of them, their ignorance, simony and wickedness. To read of the wars between the Pope and Emperors, Frederics, Henry IV. and Henry V., Otho, &c. And how commonly the clergy swore, and unswore, and forswore; sometimes for the Pope, and sometimes for the Emperor. To read how a council of bishops made it the Henrician heresy to hold that emperors have a

power to invest bishops 'baculo et annulo,' and that the pope may not excommunicate and depose them; and that they decreed to dig up the carcases of the dead bishops and burn them as Henrician heretics, who had been for the emperors against the popes: to read of all the horrid cruelties of bishops and clergymen, in inquisitions, the murder of many hundred thousand Waldenses and Albigenses, and the many massacres and burnings for religion since: to see at this day, that the clergy will not by reason or request, be entreated to give one another, or the kingdoms of Europe any peace. What clamours! what preaching! what writings! what railings! what diabolical slanders and persecutions of one another! To see prisons filled, houses rifled, multitudes of true Christians undone and hunted by one another! To see how ignorant the most zealous Christians are in many places, and, alas! even the teachers of them; and how contentious and prone to sects and bitter censures, and to justify unjustifiable things, and to make odious one another, and to speak evil of the things they understand not, and to be most confident unto rage, where they are most mistaken! To hear how confidently contrary sides appeal to God, and father all their cause on him! How confidently and religiously they seem to die, who are executed for contrary causes! The pious words e. g. and prayers of those in 1660, on one side, and the pious words and prayers of the Jesuits and other Papists lately! To hear some swear others guilty unto death, and the Jesuit appeal to God that it was all false, and renounce all equivocations and absolutions at their death! Yea, to hear lately in this parish at the communion publicly while they received the sacrament on it, one man swear or vow before God those visible actions of another, which that other, there and then, as solemnly vowed to be all false! To read every week's newsbooks, whose studied work is with the greatest wit, and vehemency, and gross lies to draw Christians to hate and destroy each other; and while they cry up love and peace, for the same men so to fight against it, worse than all their public enemies, so that there appeareth no hope of saving the land; yea, the most upright Christians from the lies, rage and malice of professed Christians. So that men seem incarnate devils.

And, alas! the few sincere souls live below the holy joy which their Christian faith and hope bespeaketh, in too

much fear and grief, or tenderness of the body. How can patience endure to see all this.

The case is doleful; but, 1. Remember that all this doth but tell us what sin is, and what it hath done to mankind, and yet men will hardly believe that it is so bad.

2. All this may help you to believe that there is a hell and devils, that God is not to be accused of it, when sin itself is so much of misery and hell.

3. All this doth most notably set forth the excellency of wisdom, godliness and justice, when the contraries are so odious. It is not godliness, truth or justice, but the want of them in whole or part, which is the cause of all this evil. Do but think if all England, or all the world, were but such as those few humble, holy, charitable, peaceable, patient Christians, which you and I know! O what a quiet and blessed land and world would it then be! I know the places where they live in so great holiness, love and peace, that it is a great delight to live among them. Were all such as some of my beloved friends and daily companions are, and have been, it would be such a resemblance of heaven, as would leave no room for the sad complaint of this objection. And by this we see what an excellent thing true faith and godliness is in itself. And though in the same persons there be the remnants of ignorance, error and sin, which are a trouble to others and themselves, this is because that grace is yet imperfect, but its excellence appeareth in being contrary to sin, and so far subduing it, and keeping it as fire in the chimney, from doing that mischief which reigning sin doth: and making men so good and useful, notwithstanding their remaining faults.

4. And in a life of trial which prepareth us for the reward, it is no wonder if where there be somewhat left for all grace to oppose, and exercise itself against. What war, what victory is there where there is no enemy! and what crown!

5. The church is Christ's hospital, and is it a wonder that all are sore and sick? We are here under his cure: he hath done much already; more than all the world could do, in the work of true regeneration and sanctification: he hath broken the head of the serpent, and the heart of sin: and it is dying daily more and more, and it is not the imperfection that must cause us to undervalue so great a work.

6. Christ knoweth his own grace in all believers, even the weakest, notwithstanding all their faults and follies; and he loveth his own, while he hateth their sin, much more than any man can do: and he pardoneth their remaining infirmities, and loveth their persons, and calleth them his brethren, and so must we. If Christ can pardon sin, and love the uprightness of the imperfect, we must imitate him.

7. As we must live in constant need of our Creator for our daily bread, or life, or preservation, so must we live in daily need of the pardoning and healing grace of our Redeemer: as once creating puts us not into a state of self-sufficiency and independence, so neither doth once redeeming us. And the daily benefit of a Saviour's pardon, and healing grace, is our daily comfort.

8. As I told you before about the imperfection of each ones grace, God will have a difference between earth and heaven, and what we want here, we shall there have in perfection; even greater perfection than we can here believe.

9. The faults of all Christians teach us all to think humbly of ourselves, and also not to over-value imperfect man, nor to trust the best too far; nor to take all for true or good, which they do or teach; but to walk cautelously with all men, and to put our whole trust in God alone.

10. And the worse we all are, the more we discern the freeness of God's love and grace, and the great cause of thankfulness that we have for all our mercies.

11. And when we see that the best on earth are so imperfect, it should help us all to long for heaven; where there is no ignorance or error, no sin, no malice, no proud censoriousness, no divisions, but God is joyfully praised by all, as with one soul, one mind, one love, one mouth.

12. In all ages and countries where the church hath been most degenerate, God hath had many that have maintained their integrity, and have not consented to the corruptions and contentions of the times, nor run into the guilt of the ambitious clergy, or of unruly heretics; and a few such as are his jewels, are worth many of the earthly, drossy world.

13. And what wonder is it if nominal Christians that are real hypocrites and wicked men, be haters and persecutors of the just, and the plagues of the world, and the chiefest instruments of the devil on earth. Certainly the false pro-

fession of Christianity is so far from making men good, and saving them, that it sublimateth their wickedness, and makes them the worst and most miserable of men.

14. It somewhat tendeth to allay the fears of weak Christians who think that their faults are inconsistent with sincerity, when they see that so many of all sorts are so faulty: they see what God's mercy beareth with in all.

15. And it is no real cause of dishonour to charity; for no enemy can find any fault in that. There is no sin against God or man, which Christ hath not forbidden, and is not more against than the most righteous alive is; it is therefore utter impudence, to charge those faults of men on Christ, which he forbiddeth and abhorreth. What would they have him to do more to signify his hatred of sin, than to condemn it, and prepare hell for all that live and die impenitent? and himself to die, rather than it shall go unpunished, even in those that are forgiven? and to do so much as he hath done to destroy it?

16. And if the wicked will perish by the scandal which they take at Christian's faults, their impudence maketh their damnation just. It were else easy for them to see a difference between the imperfections of a saint, and the wickedness of a beastly or malignant sinner: and they should rather gather, that if the faults of serious believers are odious, their own reigning sin is much more so; and therefore this should hasten their repentance.

17. And O how desirable should the common sin and ignorance, and divisions in this world, make Christ's appearing and glorious kingdom to us, when the whole church shall be presented spotless, and beautiful in holiness and love, and Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all believers! The holy city of God, the Jerusalem above, hath nothing but perfect amiableness, concord, love, and joy, where all are, though many, yet but one.

CASE XVIII.

Heavy Judgments on the Land, by Plagues, Poverty, Fire and Wars.

Another trial of our patience is, public, and common, and heavy chastisements of God, upon whole cities, countries and kingdoms; especially by plagues, famine, fire and war. I. In 1665 how doleful was the case of London! When

a hundred thousand died in a short time ; when men were cast by heaps into pits for burial, and when good and bad were swept away, and the living were hard put to it to bury the dead, and husbands and wives, and parents and children who were burying their friends, expected to be presently dead themselves ; and when the houses that were not used to prayer, had praying doors, ' God be merciful to us,' being written on them to notify their case : and when we were glad to fly into remote and solitary places, and were afraid to meet a man, lest he should infect us.

2. And how doleful was the very next year's case, where the rich and famous city of London was burnt ! Oh what a sight were those dreadful, raging, mounting flames ! How many thousand houses were consumed in three days, which pride had adorned with costly furniture, and where luxury had wasted the creatures of God ! What treasures that had been long in heaping up, were there consumed ! To see the streets crowded with men astonished, that looked on all their wealth consumed, and could do nothing to save it from the flames ; and others carrying out their goods, and some laying them in vaults for safety, and some in churches, and altogether there consumed ! The booksellers hoped that the famous structure and vaults of St. Paul's church might have saved their great treasure of excellent books, which yet did but increase the church's ruin. Yea, the houses of the most just and godly men no more escaped than the rest, even where God was daily called upon and worshipped ! No, nor the churches, where many holy, excellent men had been famous, fruitful preachers, and where the bodies of thousands of true saints had been buried. About seventy churches burnt down ; when it was but about four years before that most or many of their faithful pastors had been cast out or forbidden to preach the Gospel ; and now those that were set up in their steads are driven out by the flames, as they lately fled away from the plague ; and most of them to this day, or very many, lie unbuilt, and God's worship is performed in such poor wooden tabernacles, as before would have been made a scorn. And how many thousand families had no habitation, and were reduced to poverty, and to this day live in the distress which those flames did bring upon them ! And since then, how many dreadful fires have consumed many corporations in this land ! Near us, how ca-

lamitous was that in Southwark! and but a fortnight past; that more dreadful fire at Wapping, where about a thousand houses, that had above three thousand families, were burnt.

3. And though God hath not yet tried us with any common destructive famine, poverty causeth thousands to die of sicknesses taken by want; even by drinking water, and wanting fire and clothes, and eating unwholesome food. And we have oft had notice of the case of Germany, after the wars, about 1627, when they were fain to watch the graves, lest the dead bodies should be digged up and eaten; and of the more miserable case of Rochel, and others likewise.

4. But alas! bloody wars have been more common, and men to men more terrible than mad dogs, or wolves, or tigers. We had sad experience of it in England, Scotland and Ireland; but other countries have felt much more. They that have not tried it, know not what it is to live under the power of savage soldiers, who domineer over all, and make all slaves to them in their own houses, and keep them under daily fear of death, and take away all they have, and make no more to kill men, than to kill dogs or flies; and if they can but call them enemies, think him the most honourable who killeth most. O what dismal sights were our fields, covered with the dead, and garrisons stormed, and all countries filled with men-hunters, who took their neighbour's estates and lives for their lawful prey. Besides that one party of them grew to that inhumanity and blasphemy, as to make a scorn of death and hell, and so to defy God, as that to this day the word, 'God damn me,' continueth with them a word of course. And others that professed piety, fell into pride and presumption, and contentious sects, for which they usually raged and were confident. Is it not hard to think of such things with patience, much more to see and feel much of them?

But God hath not left us without remedy. I. As to plagues. 1. The great numbers that die together, make us think otherwise of it than is meet: it is but death, and all must die. Not one more dieth of the plague, than would ere long if there were no plague; and it is usually a shorter pain than other fevers bring; and the pain is small in comparison of the stone in the bladder, and many other diseases.

2. And the terror of men's danger and dying multitudes usually doth more to awaken men to repentance and serious preparation, than other diseases use to do. Though fear alone make not a sound repentance, fear is a great and necessary preparatory. I have reason to hope, that the great plague in London was a help to the conversion of many hundred souls; not only as it called men to review their lives, and bethink them of their state; but as it made them far more impartial hearers of public preaching and private counsel. There was then in London no scorning at holy seriousness and diligence for salvation, in comparison of what is now. The houses that now roar out drunken songs and scorns at godliness, and revile, threaten and curse the religious sort, had other language then, when 'Lord have mercy on us' was written on the doors. When the public ministers fled, God stirred up the charity of many silenced ministers, who till then had forborne public preaching, and they ventured among them, and begged money out of the country for the poor; visited them, and preached to them in the deserted pulpits. And the sense of approaching death so awakened both preachers and hearers, that multitudes of young men and others were converted to true repentance.

And this was the chief occasion of the public preaching of the silenced ministers ever since. They had so great experience of God's blessing, and their young converts were so sensible of the benefit, that both preachers and hearers then resolved to hold on as long as they could.

And was not London now a gainer by this plague? Did it not make men better? Compare it and other places then. At Oxford the parliament of lords, bishops and commons, who fled thither from the plague, even then in the heat of it were making that Swearing Act, which ruineth and imprisoneth nonconformists that come within five miles of any city, or burgess corporation, and take not their oath and declaration; (yea, and some lawyers say, conformists too, that have but once preached in that which they call a conventicle, and take not the oath.) But in London there is no such work; they were not then sending the preachers to gaol, or hunting them as rogues or rebels, but gladly hearing them, and begging for their prayers.

II. And as to famine or common poverty, I have spoken of it before. The great distress that the fires and other

means have brought on many thousand families, hath but drawn out the charity of others, and exercised the repentance, humility and mortification of the poor, and so hath prepared both sorts, rich and poor, for a greater reward: it hath done much to try men's charity, and to shew the difference between man and man. I that have had the opportunity to try both sorts, have found by long experience, that whereas malignant, worldly men were wont to say, that these religious persons were but hypocrites; though they read the Scripture and prayed much, they were as covetous and uncharitable as others; it is so much contrary, that they excel others in charity as much as in piety; and I can sooner get ten pounds, or twenty, for the poor, from religious persons, than ten shillings from those that speak against them, that are of greater wealth than they.

III. And though the aforesaid flames of London, Southwark, Wapping, Northampton, &c. were great corrections, let us not make them greater than they are. As to the loss of estate by them, it is but what the richest merchant is liable to by piracy or shipwreck, and not so much as death will shortly bring on all, when all the world must be forsaken. 2. And it was a great mercy of God, that men's lives were preserved when their wealth was gone; so that they had time to improve the correction. 3. And a great help it was to men of any sense and consideration, to see the vanity of all worldly wealth and treasure, and to prepare for the time when it must be finally left. And the flames of London and its after ruins, were a notable fore-signification of the great flames and ruins of the final judgment day; and it loudly called on men to examine what the corporation common sin of England is, which laid so many corporations in ashes; and to repent in time. And we need not make it an aggravation that it was done by malice; for it is easier to our consciences, that it be done by others than ourselves; and it helpeth those men to see the evil of those destructive principles which engage men to no such mischief on pretence of the service of the church. 4. Yea, and it is a pre-signification of the new heaven and earth, when all things shall be restored, to see such a city so soon rebuilt, in far greater splendour than before.

IV. But cruel wars and soldiers, are a more sharp calamity; but yet leave us alleviating considerations, and mat-

ter enough to exercise and help our patience. For, 1. It doth lively tell us what man is in his corrupted state, and what sin is, and what we had been if grace had forsaken us.

2. It tells us what our state on earth is ; a militant life ; and calls us to remember our spiritual enemies and warfare, and to live as armed in constant watchfulness. 3. It helps our faith to believe that there are devils, and a hell, when we see the works and instruments of devils upon earth, and see earth made so like to hell. 4. It teacheth us to set light by earthly treasure, which thieves and plunderers can so quickly take away ; and to live in constant preparation for death, when men are so ready to take away our lives. 5. And it tells us how much we are beholden to God for our preservation, and for our peace, that all men be not thus continually as incarnate devils to one another. 6. And it calls us to long for the world of perfect love and peace, where there are no such men, and no such doings. How sweet will everlasting peace and joy be when we come newly out of such a world of savage cruelty ! 7. And God often by wars, prepareth people for a better peace than they had before ; the sweetness of which doth make the miseries of war forgotten. 8. And usually it is the most wicked men that are cut off by war, while the pious and peaceable look on and escape ; wicked men are mad with sin, and will not give peace to themselves or others : while they run with rage to murder others, they are killed themselves, and “ God is known by the judgment which he executeth, while the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands, and dashed in pieces by their own rage ; for the wicked are like the raging sea ; which casts out dirt ; there is no peace to the wicked saith the Lord ;” Isa. xlix. And while men “ bite and devour one another, they are devoured one of another ; and they that lead into captivity, shall be led into captivity ; and they that kill with the sword, shall be killed by the sword.”

So that it should seem no strange thing to a soldier of Christ that the world which he is passing through is malignant.

CASE XIX.

The Prosperity and Triumphs of wicked Enemies of the Church.

Another great trial of our patience is, the triumph of the

wicked enemies of the church, and that the saints are usually under their feet in sufferings and scorn. I spake before of persecution, and as to the prosperity and triumphs of malignants. David, who was under the like temptation, hath long ago given us considerations sufficient for our patience; Psal. xxxvii. lxxiii. And the triumph of the wicked is but for a moment, and their motion as the grasshoppers, that fall as they rise. Their victories, and glory, and rage, are like a squib of gunpowder, which makes a noise and is presently extinct: they are moved dust, which the wind of God's displeasure blows into our eyes: they are dying while they are raging, and their own death is at hand and lingereth not, while they are killing others. Go into the sanctuary and see their end, and it may silence all impatience; for see their corpse in rottenness, and their souls in hell, and pity will overcome envy, and their case will appear to you a thousand times more sad than theirs that suffer by them for righteousness sake. Their contrivances do but plot themselves into misery. All the blood which they shed, must be reckoned for: and precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, even when they seem deserted. Where now is Alexander, Cæsar, Tamerlane, and such other famous murderers called conquerors? Are they now triumphing? Is it an ease to their tormented souls, or life to their dust, that living fools do magnify their names, and their dear-bought victories and murders? If it be no glory to a serpent, crocodile, or a wolf, or a mad dog, to kill men, no nor to the devil, who is a murderer from the beginning, why should it be a glory to these instruments of the devil? O what a dreadful search will it be to Babylon, when in her shall be found the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and upon her shall come at once all the righteous blood that hath been shed! The blood of the many hundred thousand Waldenses, Albigenses, Bohemians, &c. did but render the Papacy more odious: their Inquisition, and Alva's cruelties lost them the low countries. They got nothing in France by the sudden murder of thirty or forty thousand Protestants; nor will they get at last by their present cruelties. The two hundred thousand murdered by the Irish, prepared for the murderer's greater ruin, but did not satisfy their desires. Queen Mary's fires did but make Popery the more easily and commonly hated and extirpated in the days of her

successor. Persecutors are not immortal, but must die as well as others : and they have not always the choice of their successors. And as their names rot with their carcasses, and to pious, sober and wise posterity no names are more odious, so their designs and works also often perish with them. We have seen in our days and land, the same men that were the terror of the nation in war, laid in a grave and left to the common earth, where no one is afraid of them. And the same men that were lift up by many victories, thought kings, parliament, ministers, and people must submit to their will, as being in their power, within one or two years were hanged, drawn and quartered, and their quarters hung up over the gates of the city : their victorious army being dissolved without one drop of bloodshed.

If we saw a drunken man, or a madman raging in the streets. so that people were afraid to come near him, who would think such a man therefore ever the more happy ? Or who would desire to be in his case ? If we judge of them by that part they are now acting on the stage, under great names and garbs, we shall be deluded as they are. Look on them undressed, and off the stage, see what they are under the pangs of death, or when the soul is dragged away to punishment, and hath left their ghastly faces and carcasses for the grave. See what God saith of them in his word, and believe his prognostic what shall befall them. Is Ahab ever the better for being recorded in Scripture, as an enemy to faithful prophets ? Or Cain ever the better for being the first murderer in the world ? Or Herod ever the better for being mentioned in the Gospel ? Or Pilate, for having his name in the creed ? Or are the flames ever the easier to Dives, because he once fared sumptuously, and was clothed richly every day, while Lazarus lay at his gate in sores. The time is short ; the conqueror and the conquered will be equal in the dust, where they will cease to trouble, and lie in peace ; but the persecutor and the persecuted (for righteousness sake) will be as distantly separated as hell from heaven. The men of this world, who have their portion in this life, are God's sword and rod to correct his children ; but as they now glory in their shame, so they shall shortly be ashamed of their glorying, and wish in vain that all their proud oppressions and cruel victories had been not done, or could be undone.

CASE XX.

No Probability in any Visible Means that ever the World should be much better. Twelve General Directions to get and use Patience in every Case.

And it adds much to the trial of our faith and patience, that there is no apparent means of deliverance, nor probability, in the eye of reason, that ever the world should become better, but it groweth worse and worse. Could we see any hope of better days, we might the more easily wait in patience. 1. The heathen world is out of our reach: we know not how to send any probable means among them. The Roman jesuits and friars, who have greater stocks of money, have been encouraged by kings, especially of Portugal, to go among some heathens with their ambassadors, or by their help: and to their due praise be it spoken, in Congo, Japan, China, and some other countries, they took great pains, and did much. But most that they did was quickly undone, partly by the pravity of sensual heathens, and partly by their depravation of the Christian doctrine which they should have preached. They consulting with carnal wisdom, durst not tell men long of Christ's crucifixion: and they did but change their heathenish images for Agnus Dei's and pictures of the Virgin Mary, and other trinkets like their own; which was easily received, but made not sound Christians, while the people thought that Christianity lay in such little things: and two things broke down all their paper building. In Congo they liked the profession of Christianity, when it touched not the flesh, and lay but in opinions, names and relics; but when they were told that they must leave drunkenness, whoredom and riotous sports, they cast off all, and would go no further. In Japan (and most places) when they perceive that the design is secular, to subject all kingdoms to the pope, the princes abhor them, and cruelly persecuted the new made Christians, till they had utterly extirpated Christianity there.

The Protestant princes and states are little regardful for the conversion of heathens, but contend about their own dominions, interests and wills, when they should confederate for the promoting of the Gospel of salvation. Save that old Mr. John Elliot and his helpers, have by long, unwearied labour done much intensively, but not much extensively in

New England: and how to carry it farther they know not. Merchants that should contrive to make their factories serviceable hereto, take little care of it, but prosecute the way of their own gain.

The most capable persons were princes by their ambassadors; but who much regards it? Or rather, the neighbour nations of Christians, who live near the heathens and Mahometans, and traffic with them. But alas! these are mostly an ignorant sort of Christians, unfit to manage so great a work, such as the Arminians, Georgians, Circassians, Mengrelians, Abassines, and most of the Jacobites and Nestorians; or ignorant and vicious also, such as mostly are the Greeks and Moscovites; or contemned by those that master them, such as are the Transylvanians and Hungarians. So that they are a scandal to the Turks and heathens, and bring Christianity with them into contempt.

And among Christians how small is the number of those that are sincerely godly, and keep sound doctrine, and live accordingly: and there appeareth no probability of reforming them. The great and famous Eastern churches are mostly gone to Mahometanism. And the servitude of the Greeks keeps them in ignorance, and ignorance cherisheth all vice. The Muscovites have neither bishops nor priests that can preach, or desire it, nor emperors that will suffer it, but are ignorant slaves under the name of Christians. The Roman party are armed with wealth, learning, policy and power to keep up the papal claim and corruptions, and keep out that reformation, which would restore Christianity to its former purity. The reformed in France are under heavy sufferings, and near extirpation. The Lutherans too bitter enemies to concord, and most Germans too sensual in their lives. The Protestant churches seem every where declining, if not hastening to ruin. Some rulers that have professed reformation are serving the Papists, with resolved violence to root it out, and bring themselves and subjects under a foreign jurisdiction. And George Herbert's prophecy seemeth to go on, that religion is forsaking Europe, and flying to America. Scultetus in "*Curriculo vitæ suæ*," tells us that one time all seemed so strongly for reformation in Germany, Bohemia, France, England, &c. that many said the golden age was coming: and in one year all was changed and brought as low as formerly. And if we might judge by

probabilities, all of Christianity saving a lifeless name, and shell, and ceremonies, is like to be rooted out of the earth. And the devil reigneth as powerfully by wicked rulers, and prelates, and priests, called Christians, as by Mahometans. And godliness is as effectually destroyed in such a kingdom as Moscovy, as it is in some infidel lands. And when Christ cometh, will he find faith on the earth?

This case indeed is a great trial of our faith and patience; but let us consider, 1. That this world was never intended to be the place of our felicity or long abode, but only as is aforsaid, as the womb where we are conceived and formed for a better world: or as the wilderness to the Israelites, where they were to be tried by difficulties in their way to the land of promise: or as a winter journey through dirty or craggy ways homeward. And what if this womb, this wilderness, these ways never amend? What man is so weak as to be discouraged, because posterity is like to find the ways as foul or rough as he hath done? Or because the desarts of Lybia, or Arabia, or the dangerous passages over the Alps will be no better to the next generation that they are to this? It is indeed the desire of every true Christian that the world were better; and these desires are not vain; they shew the honesty of them that wish it: but God will not do all that he hath made it our duty to desire. We must desire the conversion and salvation of many that never will be converted and saved.

2. God will give us all that we desire, but it is not on earth. If we did still see by faith the greater, perfect, glorious world, which we are near, it would quiet us against all our perplexing doubts and troubles in this world. All is well in heaven, even better than we can desire: there is no ignorance, no infidelity, atheism, Mahometanism; no wars, no sects, no cruelties, no contentions; reformation is there perfect, and the church all holy.

3. In all reason our affections should be but proportioned to their objects. It is our duty to mourn for the miserable world, and the corrupt state of the church on earth; but seeing the heavenly glory incomparably exceedeth the world's misery, our joy should be far greater to think of heaven, than our trouble when we think of earth. Again I say, all the earth is no bigger compared to heaven, than our gaol is, compared to all this kingdom, yea, to all the king-

doms on earth ; and it is our duty to be sorry, if those in prison do not amend, and that those must die that are condemned. But should we not more rejoice, if it went as well as we could wish with all the rest of the kingdom, or of the world. Heaven, which is many thousand times bigger than earth, hath nothing but perfect felicity and glory, perfect knowledge, love and joy.

4. And this earth shall serve to all God's ends. He will gather all his chosen ; and he will be glorified in his providence towards the rest. Out of this Bedlam, Christ bringeth many to saving wisdom ; and out of this gaol God's mercy taketh many sons to glory : he reprieveth all, and pardoneth all that are penitent believers ; and traitors and enemies are reconciled to him by Christ, and being justified by faith have peace with God. God placed man in an earthly paradise as the passage to the heavenly ; and man's own wilful sin and folly turned his paradise into a prison, and it is now a house of correction, where God joineth instruction, and by the book and rod doth teach his chosen saving wisdom : and as the Israelites in the wilderness had their suitable mercies for their forty years ; and as Jeremy led the captive Jews to build, and plant, and marry in Babylon, and pray for its peace, as the place in which their own peace must be had, till seventy years were past (which is the age of man), so God here giveth us great mercies suitable to our wilderness and captive state ; and when a little is over, we shall have better than we could here believe. And though I would not cherish that sinful desire, which would have that on earth which is proper to heaven, nor have I skill enough in the exposition of hard prophecies to make a particular determination about the thousand years' reign of Christ on earth before the final judgment, yet I may say, that I cannot confute what such learned men as Mr. Mead, Dr. Twisse, and others (after the old fathers) have hereof asserted. And I am certain that Christ teacheth us all to pray that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ; and that he appointeth us to use no prayer or means in vain. And many are ready to believe the old saying, that as the world was made in six days, and the seventh was made a day of holy rest, and a day with the Lord is as a thousand years :

so after six thousand years of sin and sorrow, a thousand years holy rest shall follow. Of this I am uncertain: but I believe there will be a new heaven and earth, in which will dwell righteousness. We must not look for too great matters in a sinful, cursed earth. We would fain have all the blessedness of heaven, but we are loath to die, and therefore would have it here on earth; and the rather because as hearsay without sight doth not give a man a satisfactory conception of any house or place that he would know; so such a sensible conception we would have of heaven. But death is the wages of sin, and die we must; "but the gift of God is eternal life, through Christ who hath overcome him that hath the power of death, by the fear of which we are kept in bondage." And we may rejoice by an implicit trust to Christ, in the hope of that glory which we can in the flesh have no explicit idea or conception of; where will be no sin, no death, no fear, no imperfection, no unbelief, or censorious distaste at any of God's words or works; but beatifying vision, and fulness of everlasting joy in glory.

And against this and other objections, you must still remember that a suffering condition is not so bad for the church on earth, as unbelief and flesh would make you think. For,

1. A fleshly prosperity is too brutish and short to be true felicity. It is the portion of the wicked, and the occasion of their deceit and ruin; Psal. xvii. 14. Luke xii. 15, 20, 21. And is the church less happy, because it is saved from so dangerous temptations?

2. Forget not the invaluable riches of the church, in its lowest state. Their God, their Christ, their Comforter, the promises, and all suitable providences fitted to their good, are a thousandfold greater riches and honour, than all the kingdoms and power of the ungodly world.

3. The church in its most depressed state, hath impregnable strength and safety: their God is invincible: their Saviour is the rock which the gates of hell shall not prevail against; Matt. xvi. 18.

4. When they are most scorned and contemned, and used as fools and rogues, and as the basest and most odious of mankind; they are the members of Christ, the children of God, and bear his image, and are the charge of angels, and passing to a crown of glory. And what is any dishonour

from man, as set against such honours with God and all the blessed? "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" Matt. v. "The reproach of Christ is greater riches than worldling's treasure;" Heb. xi. 26. Ephes. ii. 7. v. 25. 27. i. 22, 23. iii. 10.

5. Remember that the far greatest part of the church, even all since the creation; are in possession of heaven already, and it is but a small remnant as the gleanings, that are here yet behind; Heb. xii. 22, 23. read the description of them there: Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren; (Heb. ii. 11.) and useth them as such: in his Father's house he hath many mansions for them; John xiv. 1—3. And if you saw all those millions in heaven with Christ, could you for shame grudge that the few behind are passing thither through temptation and tribulation? Or that it must be as by swimming, or on broken pieces of the ship, that they must come all safe to land, as Acts xxvii. If all be well in heaven, grudge not at the way: these things are never the worse or more uncertain in themselves, for being unseen.

6. And how great security hath God given the church of all this heavenly glory promised. Can we fear that Christ will be defeated of the great design of man's redemption, and reigning in the New Jerusalem, where he is to be its light instead of the sun? And doth not God love his church much better than we do; and better know how to deal with it, and all the world? Shall we, blind sinners, who do nothing thoroughly well, be afraid lest God will miscarry, or do any thing amiss?

8. The church must have its purgatory on earth; and prosperity filleth it with hypocrites who corrupt it; and adversity must refine from such dross.

9. Particular Christians are better by affliction; and what else is the church but particular Christians? God will not leave our temptations to the damning love of the world too strong.

10. The church must be conformed to its Head, who suffered, and then entered into glory.

11. While all individuals are sinful and imperfect, what wonder if all the church do suffer by it?

12. Most exercises must shine and increase by exercise; like some jewels that must be rubbed: as fire in a flint, or steel, that must be called into sight by violence. We are

but like common men in appearance, till somewhat more than common work, or suffering call us out, and shew our difference from hypocrites.

These, and many such considerations before intimated, may convince us that the worst state of the church or world, is no just cause of censuring God's providence, nor of discouragement or impatience to any true believer: but still in patience we may possess our souls.

I will draw out this Treatise no longer, but to remember all Christians, that the common great defect of patience is a great dishonour to our profession of faith and heavenly hope, and leadeth us to that within as the cause, which we should be greatly humbled for; and that it is a disease so painful to ourselves, as should make us loath to cherish or excuse it. A tender state of body is not desirable, which can endure no cold or air; no diet but curiously drest; neither winter nor summer, &c. Much worse is a tender, impatient mind, that is hardly pleased by man or God; that is impatient at every loss or cross, at every real or supposed wrong, at every danger, threatening or ill news; that must be stroked, and rocked, and used as a child. Alas! many people that truly fear God, have so great a want of patience, as that one can hardly live quietly with them; but he must have extraordinary skill, and care, and tenderness, if not flattery, who will not be a trouble to them.

And yet because some causelessly judge these to be worse than they are, I will say again, that passion and the will's defection, are very different sorts of impatience.

I conclude with these few brief directions, for establishing the heart with patience in all trials whatsoever.

I. Understand well the true nature of patience and impatience, that you mistake not natural temper for either saving grace, or damning sin. The passions must be distinguished from the judgment and will. A man of a choleric temper, and aged, sick, or weak persons may be peevish, and impatient with the little provocations which daily befall them, so far as to be angry and trouble themselves and others. Children will cry, and most women are more easily cast into passion than men; they are apt to fear beyond all reason, and to be troubled and troublesome to others with unquiet grief, displeas'dness or anger. This must neither be made light of, as no fault, nor yet made a greater fault

than it is. Many men have stronger natures, and free from passion, (and some almost to stupidity,) which joined with grace and a due sense of weighty things, is a great advantage and ornament: but it is found oft in the most graceless, wicked men, who deceive themselves by it, and think they are better than passionate, honest men. Yea, it usually proveth a great hindrance to their repentance and reformation; no sermon, no reason, no thought of death or eternity will move and change their senseless hearts.

But the saving grace of patience is principally in this, when a man hath so resolvedly given up himself to God by Christ for life eternal, and is so much under divine authority, that he can endure the loss of all, even reputation, estate, friends, liberty or life, rather than forsake Christ, or hazard his salvation by wilful sin; and therefore also striveth against all sinful passions, and repenteth of that which doth surprise him.

And damning impatience is, when a man cannot deliberately bear the loss of corporal prosperity, for the sake of Christ and righteousness, nor hold on in a holy, righteous, sober life; but will rather fall off, and wilfully sin, and venture his soul, than deny his flesh, and be undone in the world: such take godliness for a grievous yoke, or else they would not be impatient to bear it, and they take not God and heaven for their best.

II. Nothing therefore will make one patient in a holy, saving sense, but the well-grounded resolved choice of God's love in Christ, and the blessedness of another world, as that portion which must make us happy, whatever we lose or suffer on earth. Therefore faith and hope must be above, and fetch from heaven the matter of our constant resolution, or else there can be no true patience: if we live more on earthly hopes and comforts than heavenly, and more to the flesh than to the Spirit, there can be no true patience, much less durable: for in the world we shall have troubles; and if we have not, yet a content in the love of it is more damnable than trouble.

III. Therefore the true contempt of fleshly prosperity and worldly things, by mortification, is absolutely necessary to patience. While the body and its appetite, ease or life is over-dear to us, we shall never patiently lose or spare them; and while we love the flesh and world, reputation,

wealth and pleasure too much, we shall be overmuch troubled to lose them. Account all loss and dung for Christ, as Paul did, and you will easily bear the loss of it.

IV. Think what you have, as well as what you want; reckon up truly all the riches of grace in Christ; to be a child of God, beloved by him, an heir of heaven, a member of Christ, pardoned, justified, sanctified, under God's true promise of everlasting joy; and compare this with your suffering, and think whether it becomes an heir of heaven to be impatient in the way.

V. Therefore be diligent to make your calling and election sure; neither neglect necessary obedience, nor cherish causeless doubts, lest you lose that comfort of hope which must make you patient in all trials; else when heaven and God's love should support you under all, you will be still questioning your title to it, and so have nothing to set against all your sufferings and fears. If this anchor of hope be not well-grounded, what shall uphold men in sufferings and death?

VI. Live in the constant belief and apprehension of God's absolute disposal of all the world; and see all things and persons as in his hand, and remember that there is nothing comes to pass without him, and that he useth even the permitted sins of men to his good and holy ends. Think on no man, action, or event, as independent upon God; but remember still with whom you have to do, and who it is that overruleth all, and whose rod your enemies and afflictions are: and this will tell you that nothing is done amiss by him, and that nothing shall be finally hurtful to the faithful; and that we must not dare to accuse our Maker: and it will make you say, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good. The will of the Lord be done."

VII. Here see still the certain end of all: how the sufferings of the faithful will end; and how the power, wealth, prosperity and triumph of the wicked will end. Go into the sanctuary. Believe what God hath foretold you, and faith may fully satisfy you.

VIII. Keep a due humbling sense of your own and other's sin, and of God's common mercies to you and all men, that you may still perceive how much better God dealeth with you than you deserve. It is no small mercy to

be alive, out of hell, and to have the free offers of a Saviour, of pardon and salvation, and to have God entreating you to be reconciled to him, and promise you Christ and life, if you do but willingly accept his gift.

IX. Be acquainted with your chief temptations, both to impatience and to other sins, that you may live in arms and watchful resistance. 1. Renew not your own wounds and sufferings by gross negligence or wilful sin, and yielding to the tempter; for if you put God to use a sharper rod, your patience will have a harder work. And do not by rashness make your own suffering, and run into it, (as by rash words, by suretyship and imprudent actions many do) you may more confidently look for God's support under the cross which he layeth on you for trial, than that which you make for yourselves; though there also repentance may give us a comfortable remedy. 2. And understand what are your temptations to impatience. Is it crosses, poverty, threatenings of men, a froward companion, a wicked child, or rather a weak and peevish, passionate temper? Whatever it is, get those particular considerations against it, which must be your armour, and live in the daily use of them.

X. Resist the beginnings of unbelieving, troubling thoughts, and roll them not in your mind. Abhor the first degrees of distrusting God, or discontent with his providence, or any secret accusation of his disposals; and turn your thoughts presently to his love, and mercies, and promises, and Christ's abundant grace; pore not upon troubling and discontented things any further than is necessary to avoid the evil; but study the satisfactory promises and terms of further grace and endless glory. Be careful (with distrust and trouble) for nothing, but in all wants and straits go to God and open all to him, and ask him for your daily bread, remembering that he clotheth the lillies of the field, and that a sparrow moveth not without his providence, and that all the hairs of your head are numbered, and that he knoweth what you need, and what is best for you, and that sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. Think what a mercy it is that he commands you, to "cast all your care on God, who careth for you:" and whether if the king bid a beggar or prisoner, trust him, and cast all his care on him, it would not comfort him.

XI. Forget not all the wonderful deliverances that you

and the church of God have had, and how oft his mercies have confuted and reprov'd your distrust.

XII. Lastly, thoroughly study a crucified Christ, and the reasons and use of the cross, and why he will have us imitate him and follow him in sufferings to glory. And never think God disappointeth you, if he will but bring you safe to heaven. And read oft the sufferings of Christ, and his sermons; Matt. v. John xii. 14—16. Matt. vi. Rom. viii. 1 Pet. iii. iv. James iv. v. Rev. ii. iii. Rom. v. 3, 4. Col. i. 11. Heb. vi. 12. xii. 1, &c. Rom. xii. 12, &c. xv. 4, 5. 1 Tim. vi. 11. "For you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God you may inherit the promise;" Heb. x. 36. "Count it all joy when you fall into divers (trying) temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith (which is more precious than gold which perisheth,) worketh patience; but let patience have its perfect work." And shew that you are patient toward God by your patience toward men. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus;" Rom. xv. 5. So prayeth your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

RICH, BAXTER.

December 27, 1682.

END OF THE ELEVENTH VOLUME.