

DIVISION THIRD.—THE INWARD PRINCIPLE OF PRAYER.

'In the Spirit.'

We are come to the third division in the apostle's directory for prayer—the principle or spring from whence they are to flow—*the Spirit*, 'praying...in the Spirit.' In proceeding to the consideration of this topic, the first point is that which will be determined by the solution of the following question, viz:—

QUESTION. What is it to pray '*in the Spirit?*'

ANSWER. Interpreters generally comprehend in this phrase *both the spirit of the person praying, and the Spirit of God, by which our spirits are fitted for and acted in prayer. Est oratio in spiritu, nempe et nostro quo oramus, et Spiritu Sancto per quem oramus* (so Zanch. in loc)—that is a prayer in the spirit, which, by the help of the Holy Spirit, is performed with our soul and spirit. These two indeed go ever together. We cannot act our spirit without the Holy Spirit. Alas! this is like a lump of clay in our bosoms till he quickens it; and we cannot but with our heart and spirit, when the Holy Spirit moves upon it. The Spirit's breath is vital. The Holy Ghost doth not breathe in us as one through a trunk or trumpet, which is a mere passive instrument; but stirs up our hearts, and actuates our affections in the duty. Prayer is called 'a pouring out of the soul to God.' The soul is the well from which the water of prayer is poured; but the Spirit is the spring that feeds this well, and the hand that helps to pour it forth. The well would have no water without the spring, neither could it deliver itself of it without one to draw it. Thus the Spirit of God must fill the heart with praying affections, and enable them also to pour themselves forth. From the words thus sensed, we shall a while dwell upon these two propositions. FIRST. He who will pray acceptably, *must pray in his heart and spirit.* SECOND. He that would pray in his own spirit, *must pray in the Spirit of God.*

BRANCH FIRST.

*[He who will pray acceptably,
MUST PRAY IN HIS HEART AND SPIRIT.]*

Praying in the spirit is opposed to lip-labour, 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their heart is removed far from me;' like an adulteress, whose heart and spirit is as far from her husband as where her paramour is. It is no prayer in which the heart of the person bears no part. Parisiensis, glossing upon the place of Hosea 14:2, 'so will we render the calves of our lips,' compares the duty of prayer to the calves in the legal sacrifices. The composure of the words, saith he, in prayer, is as the skin or hide of the beast, the voice as the hair, the understanding as the flesh, the desires and affections of the heart as the fat of the inwards; this, and this alone, makes it a prayer

in God's account. 'My spirit prayeth,' saith the apostle, I Cor. 14:14; and, 'I will pray with the spirit,' ver. 15. So, 'God, whom I serve with my spirit,' Rom. 1:9. The melodious sound which comes from a musical instrument, such as viol or lute, is formed within the belly of the instrument, and the deeper the belly of the instrument the sweeter is its music; the same strings on a flat board, touched by the same hand, would make no music. The melodiousness of prayer comes from within the man, 'We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit,' and the deeper the groans are that come from thence, still the sweeter the melody. There may be outward worship and inward atheism; as Melancthon said, *vos Itali adoratis Deum in pane, quem non creditis in cælo esse*—You Italians worship that God in bread, whom you do not believe to be in heaven. There may be much pomp in the outward ceremony of the performance, when the person neither loves nor believes that God whom he courts with an external devotion. The blemishes which made the sacrifices in the law rejected, were not only in the outward limbs of the beast, the sick as well as the lame beast was refused, Mal. 1:8. We read of loud praises when never a word was heard spoken. But God owns none for a prayer that hath the vehemency of the voice but not inspirited with the affection of the heart. Separate the spirit from the body, and the man is dead; the heart from the lip, and there is a dissolution of prayer. Now, in handling of this I must first show what it is to pray in our spirit when these three are found in the duty:—FIRST. When we pray *with knowledge*. SECOND. When we pray *in fervency*. THIRD. When we pray *in sincerity*. These three exercise the three powers of the soul and spirit. By knowledge the understanding is set on work; by fervency the affections; and by sincerity the will. All these are required in conjunction to 'praying in the spirit.' There may be knowledge without fervency, and this, like the light of the moon, is cold, and quickens not; there may be heat without knowledge, and this is like mettle in a blind horse; there may be knowledge and fervency, and this like a chariot with swift horses, and a skilful driver in the box, but, being dishonest, carries it the wrong way. Neither of these, nor both these together, avail, because sincerity is wanting to touch these affections, and make them stand to the right point, which is the glory of God. He will have little thanks for his zeal that is fervent in spirit, but serving himself with it, not the Lord.

*[To pray in the spirit, we must have
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.]*

FIRST. To pray acceptably, or in the spirit, it is required that *we pray with knowledge and understanding*. A blind sacrifice was rejected in the law, Mal. 1:8; much more are blind devotions under the gospel. As knowledge aggravates a sin, so ignorance takes from the excellency of an action that is good: 'I bear them witness,' saith Paul, 'they have a zeal, but not according to knowledge.' The want of an eye disfigures the fairest face, the want of knowledge the devoutest prayer: 'Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews,' John 4:22,

where we see what a fundamental defect the want of knowledge is in acts of worship, such as brings damnation with it.

Question First. But *why is knowledge so requisite to acceptable praying?*

Answer First. Because *without this it is not a 'reasonable service;'* for we know not what we do. God calls for *reasonable service,* Rom. 12:1, which some oppose to the legal sacrifices. They offered up beasts to God; in the gospel we are to offer up ourselves. Now the soul and spirit of a man is the man. Why did not God lay a law on beasts to worship him, but because they have not a rational soul to understand and reflect upon their own actions? And will God accept that service and worship from man, wherein he doth not exercise that faculty that distinguishes him from a beast? 'Show yourselves men,' saith the prophet to those idolaters, Isa. 46:8. And truly he that worships the true God ignorantly is brutish in his knowledge as well as he that prays to a false god.

Answer Second. Because the understanding is —*the leading faculty of the soul,* and so the key of the work. The inward worship of the heart is the chief. Now, the other powers of the soul are disabled if they want this their guide which holds the candle to them. As for those violent passions of seeming zeal, sorrow, and joy, which sometimes appear in ignorant worshippers and their blind devotions, they are spurious. Christ's sheep, like Jacob's, conceive by the eye.

1. The saint's eye is *enlightened to see the majesty and glorious holiness of God,* and then it reveres him, and mourns before him in the sense of his own vileness: 'Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,' Job 42:6.

2. Again, by an eye of faith he *beholds the goodness and love of God to poor sinners* in Christ, and in particular to him, and this eye affects his heart to love and rely on him, which it is impossible the ignorant soul should do.

Question First. But you will say, *what is necessary for the praying soul to know?*

Answer First. There is required a knowledge *that he to whom he directs his prayer is the true God.* Religious worship is an incommunicable flower in the crown of the deity, and that both inward and outward. We are religiously to worship him only, who, by reason of his infinite perfections, deserves our supreme love, honour, and trust. He must have the crown that owes the kingdom. 'The kingdom and power' are God's. Therefore 'the glory' of religious worship belongs to him alone, Matt. 6:13. Angels are the highest order of creatures, but we are forbid to 'worship any of the host of heaven,' Deut. 17:3. 'Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee it doth appertain'—where fear is put for religious worship, as appears by the circumstance of the place. The want of this knowledge filled the heathen world with idolatry. For, where they found any virtue or excellency in the creature, presently they adored and worshipped it, like some ignorant rustic, who coming to court, thinks every one he sees in brave clothes to be the king.

Answer Second. There is required a knowledge of this true God, *what his nature is.* 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,' Heb. 11:6. It is confessed, a perfect knowledge of the divine

perfections is incomprehensible by a finite being. He answered right who said—when asked *quid est Deus?* what is God?—*si scirem essem ipse Deus*—if I knew, I myself would be God. None indeed knows God thus but God himself; yet a Scripture knowledge of him is necessary to the right performance of this duty. The want of understanding his omniscience and infinite mercy, is the cause of vain babbling, and a conceit to prevail by long prayers, which our Saviour charges upon the heathen, and prevents in his disciples by acquainting them with these attributes, Matt. 6:7, 8. They came rather *narrare* than *rogare*—to inform God than to beg. The ignorance of his high and glorious majesty is the cause why so many are rude and slovenly in their gesture, so saucy and irreverently familiar with God in their expressions. We are bid to ‘be sober, watching unto prayer.’ Truly there is an insobriety in our very language, when we do not clothe the desires of our hearts with such humble expressions as may signify the awe and dread of his sacred majesty in our hearts. In a word, the reason why men dare come reeking out of the adulterous embraces of their lusts, and stretch forth their unwashen hands to heaven in prayer—whence is it? —but because they know not God to be of such infinite purity as will have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity? ‘Thou thought I was altogether such an one as thyself,’ Ps. 50:21.

Answer Third. We must understand *the matter of our prayers*, what we beg, what we deprecate. Without this we cannot in faith say amen to our own prayers, but may soon ask that which neither becomes us to desire, nor is honourable for God to give. This Christ rebuked, when she in the gospel put up her ambitious request for her children to be set one at the right the other at the left hand of Christ in his kingdom. God never gave us leave thus to indite our own prayers by the dictate of our private spirit, but hath bound us up to ask only what he hath promised to give.

Answer Fourth. There is required a knowledge of *the manner how we are to pray*; as, in whose name, and what qualifications are required in the prayer and person praying. We find Paul begging prayers, ‘that ye strive together with me in your prayers.’ In another place he tells us of a lawful striving, II Tim. 2:5. There is a law of prayer which must be observed, or we come at our own adventure. Even in false worship they go by some rule in their addresses to their gods. Therefore those smattering Samaritans, when a plague was on them, concluded the reason to be because they ‘knew not the manner of the god of the land,’ II Kings 17:26. The true God will be served in due order, or else expect a breach. A word or two for application of this branch.

[*Use or Application.*]

Use First. *How few then pray in the spirit!* Were this the only character to try many by, would they not be cast over the bar for mere babblers? As, first, those in the Popish church, where most know not a word what they say in prayer. If it be such a weakness to subscribe a petition to a king, or to a parliament, which we never read or understood, what shall we then think of such brutish prayers as these sent to heaven

and indorsed with an *ignoramus* on the back of them? Yea, amongst ourselves, many, who though they pray in their mother language, yet are as ignorant as to the matter of their prayers; how else could they patter over the creed and commandments with their blind devotion instead of prayers? Are there more deplored ruins of mankind to be found among the Indians than such? Yea, when they join with their minister in prayer, neither know that God to whom the prayer is directed, nor the Mediator under the favour of whose name it is presented. Before Nebuchadnezzar could bless God, he had the understanding of a man given him, which these yet want. Do you not think such ignorant wretches as these might be easily persuaded to kneel before an image gaudily dressed up, or to put their letter into some angel or saint's hand for despatch, being made to believe that it will find a kinder welcome by the mediation of such favourites? O what a darkness is there even at this day upon the face of our waters! on which, had but the pope's instruments opportunity to sit brooding awhile, they might soon bring their desired work to a perfection among the multitude of ignorant souls that are amidst us! We see there is need not only to stir up our people to pray, or else we send them before they have learned their errand, as if we should call a child to read before he hath learned his letters.

Use Second. It speaks to all that are at any time the mouth to God for others in prayer, *so to pray, that those who join with them may clearly understand what they put up to God for them.* Who is more to be blamed—he that prayeth in an unknown tongue, or he that with such uncouth phrases and high-flown expressions as are not understood by half the company? Suppose thine own spirit prays, as the apostle saith, yet thy understanding is unfruitful unto them. They, alas! are at a loss, and stand gazing, as the disciples did when the cloud parted Christ from them. Either come down from thy high towering expressions, or help them up to thee. They may say of thee as those of Moses, 'We know not what is become of the man.' No wonder if, while they cannot keep sight of the matter in hand, that their thoughts rove and dance about some object of their own framing. Dost thou pray to be admired for thy rousing tongue, height of gifts, or the like? Perhaps thou mayest have this thy reward of some ignorant ones, and others that would as fain commend themselves upon the same account; but consider what a low and base end thou propoundest in so high a service, unworthy of a Christian's thought. What! no net to fish with for thy credit and applause but a sacred ordinance! The whip which Christ made in the gospel belongs to thy back. Our blessed Saviour, that was all on fire with zeal to see his house of prayer made a house of merchandise, O how doth his soul loathe the baseness of thy mercenary spirit, who dost the same, though in another dress!

[*To pray in the spirit, we must have FERVENCY.*]

SECOND. We pray in the spirit *when we pray in fervency.* The soul keeps the body warm while it is in it. So much as there is our soul and spirit in a duty, so much heat and fervency. If the prayer be cold, we may certainly conclude the heart is idle, and

bears no part in the duty. Our spirit is an active creature: what it doth is with a force, whether bad or good. Hence in Scripture, to set the heart and soul upon a thing, imports vehemency and fervour. Thus the poor labouring man is said to 'set his heart on his wages,' Deut. 24:15. The hopes of what he shall have at night makes him sweat at his work in the day. Darius 'set his heart on Daniel to deliver him;' and it follows, 'He laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him,' Dan. 6:14. When the spirit of a man is set about a work, he will do it to purpose. 'If thou shalt seek the Lord with all thy heart and with all thy soul,' Deut. 4:29, that is, fervently. This consists not in a violent agitation of the bodily spirits. A man may put his body into a sweat in duty, and the prayer be cold. That is the fervent prayer that flows from a warm heart and enkindled affections; like an exhalation which first is set on fire in the cloud, and then breaks forth into thunder. 'My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue, Lord, make me to know mine end,' Ps. 39:3, 4. Now as zeal is not one single affection, but the edge and vehemency of them all; so fervency in prayer is, when all the affections act strongly and suitably to the several parts of prayer.

In confession, then have we fervency, when the soul melts into a holy shame and sorrow for the sins he spreads before the Lord, so that he feels a holy smart and pain within, and doth not act a tragical part with a comical heart. For, as Chrysostom saith, 'To paint tears is worse than to paint the face.' Here is true fervency: 'I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise,' Ps. 55:2. There may be fire in the pan, when none in the piece; a loud wind, but no rain with it. David made a noise with his voice, and mourned in his spirit.

So, in petition we have fervency, when the heart is drawn out with vehement desires of the grace it prays for, not some lazy woundings or wishings, or weak velleities, but passionate breathings and breakings of heart. Sometimes it is set out by the violence of thirst, which is thought more tormenting than that of hunger. As the hunted hart panteth after the cool waters, so did David's soul after God, Ps. 42. Sometimes it is set out by the strainings of a wrestler—so Jacob is said to wrestle with the angel; and of those that run in a race, 'instantly serving God day and night,' Acts 26:7, <|6J,<,\—they stretched out themselves. 'My soul breaketh for longing,' Ps. 119:20, as one that with straining breaks a vein.

[Why we must pray in the spirit fervently.]

Question. But *why must we pray in the spirit fervently?* *Answer First.* We must pray in the spirit fervently, from *the command.* 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart,' Deut. 6:5, 6; which imports the affectionate performance of every command and duty. Sever the outward from the inward part of God's worship, and he owns it not. 'Who hath required this at your hands?' Isa. 1:12. As if he had said, Did I ever command you to give a beast's heart in

sacrifice, and keep back your own? Why dost thou pray at all? Wilt thou say, Because he commands it? Then, why not fervently, which the command intends chiefly? When you send for a book, would you be pleased with him that brings you only the cover? And will God accept the skin for the sacrifice? The external part of the duty is but as the cup. Thy love, faith, and joy are the wine he desires to taste of. Without these, thou givest him but an empty cup to drink in. Now, what is this but to mock him?

Answer Second. We must pray in the spirit, *to comport with the name of God.* The common description of prayer is calling on the name of God. Now, as in prayer we call upon the name of God, so it must be with a worship suitable to his name, or else we pollute it and incur his wrath. This is the chief meaning of the third commandment. In the first, God provides that none besides himself, the only true God, be worshipped; in the second, that he, the true God, be not served with will-worship, but his own institutions; and in the third, that he be not served vainly and slightly in his own worship. There is no attribute in God but calls for this fervency in his worship.

1. He is a *great and glorious God*; and as such it becomes us to approach his presence with our affections in the best array. Are yawning prayers fit for a great God's hearing? Darest thou speak to such a majesty before thou art well awake, and hast such a sacrifice prepared as he will accept? 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen,' Mal. 1:14. See here, first, anything less than the best we have is a corrupt thing. He will accept a little, if the best, but he abhors that thou shouldst save thy best for another. Again he that offers not the best—the strength of his affections—is a deceiver; because he robs him of his due, and he is a great God. It is fit the prince's table should be served with the best that the market affords, and not the refuse. When Jacob intended a present to the governor of the land, he bids his children 'take of the best of the fruit of the land in your vessels.' Lastly, the awful thoughts which God extorts from the very heathen by his mighty works, do reproach us who live in the bosom of the church, and despise his name by our heedless and heartless serving of him.

2. He is the *living God*. Is a dead-hearted prayer a sacrifice suitable to a living God? How can that be accepted of him which never came from him? Lay not your dead prayers by his side. The lively prayer is his, the dead thine own. What the psalmist saith of persons, we may say of prayers, *The living, the living they shall praise him.*' The glorious angels, who for their zeal are called seraphims, and a flame of fire, these he chooseth to minister to him in heaven; and the saints below—who, though they sojourn on earth, yet have their extraction from heaven, and so have spirits raised and refined from the dulness of their earthly constitution—these he sets apart for himself as priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto him. The quicker any one is himself, the more offensive is a dull leaden heeled messenger or slow-handed

workman to him. How then can God, who is all life, brook thy lazy listless devotions? When he commanded the neck of an ass to be broke, and not offered up unto him, was it because he was angry with the beast? No sure, it was his own workmanship; no other than himself made it; but to teach us how unpleasant a dull heart is to him in his service.

3. He is a *loving God*, and love will be paid in no coin but its own. Give God love for love, or he accounts you give him nothing. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments,' John 14:15. And, 'If a man would give the substance of his house for love, it would be contemned,' Song 8:7. So, if a man thinks to commute with God, and give him anything in prayer instead of his love and fervent affection, it will be contemned. Let the prayer be never so pithy, the posture of the body never so devout, the voice never so loud, if the affections of the heart be not drawn out after God in the duty, he disdains and rejects it, because it doth not correspond with the dear affections which God expreseth to us. He draws out the heart with his purse, and gives his very soul and self with all his gifts to his people. Therefore he expects our hearts should come with all our services to him. It is no wonder to see the servant, whose master is hard and cruel, have no heart to or mettle in his work; but love in the master useth to put life into the servant. And therefore God, who is incomparably the best master, disdains to be served as none but the worst among men use to be.

Answer Third. We must pray in the spirit, *because the promise is only to fervent prayer.* A still-born child is no heir, neither is a prayer that wants life heir to any promise. Fervency is to prayer what fire was to the spices in the censer—without this it cannot ascend as incense before God. Some have attempted a shorter cut to the Indies by the north, but were ever frozen up in their way; and so will all sluggish prayers be served. It were an easy voyage indeed to heaven if such prayers might find the way thither. But never could they show any of that good land's gold who prayed thus, though he were a saint. The righteous man indeed is declared heir, as to all other promises, so to this of having his prayer heard; but if he hath not *aptitudinem intrandi*—he is not in a fit posture to enter into the possession of this promise, or claim present benefit from it, while his heart remains cold and formal in the duty. There is a qualification to the act of prayer as necessary as of the person praying: 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' When God intends a mercy for his people, he stirs up a spirit of prayer in them: 'I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain,' Isa. 45:19; that is, I never stirred them up to it, and helped them in it, and then let them lose their labour. 'Then ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you: and ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart,' Jer. 29:12, 13. Feeble desires, like weak pangs, go over, and bring not a mercy to the birth. As the full time grows nearer, so the spirit of prayer grows stronger. 'Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, I tell you that he will avenge them speedily,' Luke 18:7, 8. None in the house perhaps will stir for a little knock at the door; they think he is some idle beggar, or one in no great haste; but if he raps thick and loud, then they go, yea, out of their

beds. 'Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity,' Luke 11:8.

[*Use or Application.*]

Use First. This sadly shows there is *little true praying to be found among us, because few that pray fervently.* Let us sort men into their several ranks.

1. The *ignorant*, do these pray fervently? Their hearts, alas! must needs be frozen up in the duty; they dwell too far from the sun to have any of this divine heat in their devotions.

2. The *profane person*, that is debauched with his filthy lusts, his heat runs out another way. Can the heart which is inflamed with lusts be any other than cold in prayer? Hell-fire must be quenched before this from heaven can be kindled.

3. The soul *under the power of roving thoughts*—whose mind, like Satan, is walking to and fro the earth, while his eyes seem nailed to heaven—can he be fervent? Can the affections be intended and the mind inattentive? Fervency unites the soul and gathers in the thoughts to the work in hand. It will not suffer diversions, but answers all foreign thoughts, as Nehemiah, in another case, did them that would have called him off from building, 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease?' Neh. 6:3. It is said of Elias {Elijah}, 'He prayed earnestly,' he prayed in praying, so the Greek. As in Ezekiel's vision, there was 'a wheel in a wheel,' so a prayer in his prayer. Whereas the roving soul is prayerless, his lips pray and his mind plays; his eye is up to heaven, as if that were his mark, but he shoots his thoughts down to the earth.

4. He *to whom the duty is tedious and wearisome*, who doth not sigh and groan in the duty, but under it; who prays as a sick man works in his calling, finding no delight or joy in it. True fervency suffers no weariness, feels no pain. The tradesman, when hot at his work, and the soldier in fight, the one feels not his weariness nor the other his wounds. Affections are strong things, able to pull up a weak body. Therefore, he that shrugs at a duty, and turns this way and that way, as a sick man from one side of his bed to the other for ease, shows he hath little content in the duty, and therefore less zeal. These aches of the spirit in prayer—though he be a saint—come of some cold he hath gotten, and declare him to be under a great distemper. A man in health finds not more savour in his food and refreshing from it, than the Christian doth in the offices of religion, when his heart is in the right temper.

Use Second. For *exhortation.* Dost thou pray? Pray fervently, or thou dost nothing. Cold prayer is no more prayer than painted fire is fire. That prayer which warms not thine own heart, will it, thinkest thou, move God's? Thou drawest the tap, but the vessel is frozen. A man hath not the use of his hand clung up with cold, neither canst thou have the use of thy spirit in duty till thy heart chafed into some sense and feeling of what thou prayest for. Now to bring thy cold heart into some spiritual heat,

*[Arguments to enkindle our zeal
and fervency in prayer.]*

Argument 1. Consider the excellency of zeal and fervency. If a saint, thou hast a principle that inclines thee to approve of things that are excellent; and such is this. Life is the excellency of beings, yea, even in inanimate creatures there is an analogical life, and therein consists its excellency. The spirits of wine commend it; what is it worth when dead and flat? In the diamond, the sparkle gives the worth; in fountain water, that which makes it more excellent than other is its motion, called therefore 'living water.' Much more in beings that have true life; for this the flea or fly are counted nobler creatures than the sun. The higher kind of life that beings have, their nature is thereby the more advanced—beasts above plants, men above beasts, and angels above men. Now as life gives the excellency to being, so vivacity and vigour in operating gives excellency to life. Indeed the nobler the life of the creature is, the greater energy is in its actings. The apprehension of an angel is quicker, and zeal stronger, than in a man. So that, the more lively thou art in thy duty, and the more zeal thou expressest therein, the nearer thou comest to the nature of those glorious spirits who, for their zeal in service of God, are called 'a flame of fire.' I confess, to be calm and cool in inferior things, and in our own matters betwixt man and man, is better than zeal. So Solomon saith, 'A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit,' Prov. 17:27. In the Hebrew it is a cool spirit. Injuries do not put him into a flame, neither do any occurrences in the world heat him to any height of joy, grief, or anger. Who more temperate in these than Moses? but set this holy man to pray, he is fire and tow, all life and zeal. Indeed it is one excellency of this fervency of spirit in prayer, that it allays all sinful passions. David's fervency in praying for his child when alive, made him bear the tidings of his death so calmly and patiently. We hear not an angry word that Hannah replies to her scolding companion Peninnah. And why, but because she had found the art of easing her troubled spirit in prayer? What need she contend with her adversary, who could, by wrestling with God, persuade him to espouse her quarrel? And truly were there nothing else to commend fervency of spirit in prayer, this is enough—that, like David's harp, it can charm the evil spirit of our passions, which in their excess the saint counts great sins, and I am sure finds them grievous troubles. When are you more placate and serene, than when the most life and fervour your souls can mount up in the flame of your sacrifices into the bosom of God? Possibly you may come, like Moses, down the mount with greater heat, but it will be against sin, not for self; whereas a formal prayer, like a plaster, which hath good ingredients in it, yet being laid cold upon the wound, hurts it rather than heals it.

Argument 2. God deserves the prime and strength of thy soul should be bestowed on him in thy prayers.

(1.) *He gave thee the powers of thy soul and all thy affections.* According to the mould so is the statue that is cast in it; such thou art as thou wert in the idea of the

divine mind. Now, may not thy Maker call for that which was his gift? He that made the stone an inanimate being, and confined the narrow souls of brutes to act upon low sensitive good, ennobleth thee with a rational appetite and spiritual affections. Now, wilt thou not employ those divine powers in the worship of thy God, from whom, thou hadst them? This were hard indeed—that God should be denied what himself gave, and not suffered to taste of his own cost. ‘I came unto my own,’ saith Christ, ‘and they would not receive me.’ Thus here, I came to my own creature; he had his life from me, and brings a dead heart unto me! Suppose a friend should give you notice that he will ere long be at your house, and sends you in beforehand a vessel of rich wine; which you, when he comes, grudge to broach it for his entertainment, and put him off with that which is dead and flat? Expectest thou a better friend to be thy guest than thy God? The psalmist calls upon us to ‘serve the Lord with gladness,’ and what is his enforcement? ‘Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us,’ Ps. 100:2, 3. Who plants a vineyard and looks not to drink of the wine? If God calls our corn and wine his, he therefore expects to be served with them; much more with our love and joy, for surely he allows us not to alienate the best of his gifts from him. When thou art therefore going to pray, call up thy affections, which haply are asleep on some creature's lap, as Jonah in the sides of the ship: ‘What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God.’

(2.) He *deserves thy affections because he gives thee his*. He is jealous of thee because he is zealous for thee. Well may he complain of thy cold dreaming prayers whose heart is on a flame of love to thee. High and admirable are the expressions with which he sets forth his dear love to his people; whatever he doth for them is with a zeal. In protecting of them, ‘as birds flying, so will the Lord defend Jerusalem,’ that is, swiftly, as a bird flies full speed to her nest when she perceives her young is in danger; in avenging them of their enemies, ‘the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this;’ in hearing their prayers he doth it ‘with delight;’ in forgiving their sins he is ready to forgive, ‘multiplies to pardon;’ when they ask one talent he gives them two. Jacob desires a safe egress and regress. He doth this and more than he desired, for he brings him home with two bands. Not the least mercy he gives but he draws forth his souls and heart with it; even in his afflicting providences, where he seems to show least love, there his heart overflows with it. ‘O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? mine heart is turned within me.’

(3.) He is a *good pay-master for his people's zeal*. ‘He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,’ Heb. 11:6. Never did fervent prayer find cold welcome with him. Elias’ {Elijah's} prayer fetched fire from heaven because it carried fire to heaven. The tribe of Levi for their zeal were preferred to the priesthood. And why? Surely they who were so zealous in doing justice on their brethren would be no less zealous in making atonement for them by their sacrifices. Most men lose their fervency and strength of their desires by misplacing them; they are zealous for such things as cannot, and persons that oft will not, pay them for their pains. O how hot is the covetous man in his chase after the world's pelf! He ‘pants after the dust of the earth,’ and

that 'on the head of the poor.' But what reward hath he for his labour? After all his getting, like the dogs in pursuit of the hare, he misseth his game, and at last goes often poor and supperless to bed in his grave; to be sure he dies 'a fool,' Jer. 17:11. How many court-spaniels—that have fawned and flattered, yea, licked up their master's spittle, and all for some scraps of preferment —have befooled themselves, when at last they have seen their creeping sordid practices rewarded with the fatal stroke of the headsman, or a lingering consumptive death in their prince's favour? Which made that ambitious cardinal say too late, If he had been as observant of his heavenly Master as he had been of his earthly, he could not have been left so miserable at last. In a word, do we not see the superstitious person knocking his breast and cutting his own flesh, out of a zeal to his wooden god, that hath neither ear to hear nor hand to help him? Now, doth not the living God, thy loving Father, deserve thy zeal more than their dead and dumb idols do theirs? For shame! Let not us be cold in his worship when the idolater sweats before his god of clouts^[1]; let not the worldling's zeal in pursuit of his earthly mammon leave thee lagging behind with a heedless heartless serving of thy God. Neither fear the world's hooting at thee for thy zeal; they *think* thee a fool, but thou *knowest* them to be so.

[How to raise our affections to fervency in prayer.]

Question. But how may we get this fervency of spirit in prayer?

Answer (a). Thou who propoundest the question art a saint or not; if not, there is another question must precede this. How thou, that art at present in a state of spiritual death, mayest have spiritual life? *There must be life in the soul before there can be life in the duty.* All the rugs in the upholsterer's shop will not fetch a dead man to warmth, nor any arguments, though taken from the most moving topics in the Scripture, will make thee pray fervently while thy soul lies in a dead state. Go first to Christ that thou mayest have life, and having life, then there is hope to chafe thee into some heat. But,

Answer (b). If thou beest a saint, it yet *calls for thy utmost care to get, and when thou hast got, to keep, thy soul in a kindly heat.* As the stone cannot of itself mount up into the air, so the bird—though it can do this, yet—cannot stay there long without some labour and motion with its wings. The saints have a spark of heavenly fire in their bosom, but this needs the bellows of their care and diligence to keep it alive. There is a rust that breeds from the gold, a worm from the wood, a moth from the garment, that in time waste them; and ashes from the coal that choke the fire; yea, and in the saint too, which will damp his zeal if not cleared by daily watchfulness. Observe therefore what is thy chief impediment to fervency in prayer, and set thyself vigorously against it. If thou beest remiss in this precedaneous^[2] duty thou wilt be much more remiss in prayer itself. He that knows of a slough in the way, and mends it not before he takes his journey, hath no cause to wonder when his chariot is laid fast in it.

Answer (c). Now this is not the same in all, and therefore it is *necessary that thou beest so much acquainted with thine own estate as to know what is thy great clog in this duty.* Certainly, were not the firmament of the saint's soul cooled with some malignant vapours that arise from his own breast, and weaken the force of divine grace in him, it would be summer all the year long with him, his heart would be ever warm, and his affections lively in duty. Look therefore narrowly whence thy cooling comes. Perhaps thy heart is too much let out upon the world in the day, and at night thy spirits are spent, when thou shouldst come before the Lord in prayer. If thou wilt be hotter in duty thou must be colder towards the world. A horse that carrieth a pack all day is unfit to go post at night. Wood that hath the sap in it will not burn easily; neither will thy heart readily take fire in holy duties who comest so sopped in the world to them. Drain, therefore, thy heart of these eager affections to that, if thou meanest to have them warm and lively in this. Now, no better way for this than to set thy soul under the frequent meditation of Christ's love to thee, thy relation to him, with the great and glorious things thou expectest from him in another world. This, or nothing, will dry up thy love to this world, as your wood which is laid a sunning is made fit for the fire. Whereas, let your hearts continue soaking in the thoughts of an inordinate love to the world, and you will find, when you come to pray, that thy heart will be in a duty even as a foggy wet log at the back of a fire, long in kindling, and soon out again. Haply the deadness of thy heart in prayer ariseth from want of a deep sense of thy wants and mercies thou desirest to have supplied. Couldst thou but pray feelingly no doubt but thou wouldst pray fervently. The hungry man needs no help from art to learn him how to beg; his pinched bowels make him earnest and eloquent.

Is it pardon of sin thou wouldst pray for? First see what anguish of spirit they put thee to. Do with thy soul as the chirurgeon with his patient's wounds, who syringeth them with some sharp searching water to try what sense he hath of them. Apply such considerations to thy soul as may make thee feel their smart, and be sensible of thy deplored estate by reason of them; then go and sleep at prayer if thou canst. We have David first affecting his heart, and expressing the dolor of his soul for his sin: 'Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me,' Ps. 38:4. Now when his heart is sick with these thoughts, as one with strong physic working in his stomach, he pours out his soul in prayer to God, 'All my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee,' ver. 9.

Art thou to pray for others? First pierce thy heart through with their sorrows, and, by a spirit of sympathy, bring thyself to feel their miseries as if thou wert in their case. Then will thy heart be warm in prayer for them when it flows from a heart melted in compassion to them. Thus we read Christ troubled himself for Lazarus before he lifted up his eyes to heaven for him, John 11:33, 38, compared.

Again, it may be thy want of zeal proceeds from a defect in thy faith. Faith is the back of steel to the bow of prayer; this sends the arrow with a force to heaven. Where faith is weak the cry will not be strong. He that goes about a business with little hope to speed will do it but faintly; he works, as we say, for a dead horse. It is a true

axiom, *voluntas non fertur in impossibilia*—the less we hope the less we endeavour. We read of strong cries that Christ put up in the days of his flesh. Now mark what enforced his prayer—‘unto him that was able to save him;’ and not only so, but if you look into that prayer to which this refers, you shall find that he clasped about God as his God—‘My God, my God.’ His hold on God held up his spirit in prayer. So in the several precedents of praying saints upon Scripture record, you may see how the spirit of prayer ebbed and flowed, fell and rose, as their faith was up and down. This made David press so hard upon God in the day of his distress: ‘I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted,’ Ps. 116:10. This made the woman of Canaan so invincibly importunate. Let Christ frown and chide, deny and rebuke her, she yet makes her approaches nearer and nearer, gathering arguments from his very denials, as if a soldier should shoot his enemy’s bullets back upon him again; and Christ tells us what kept her spirit undaunted, ‘O woman, great is thy faith!’

Again, may be it proceeds from some distaste thou hast given to the Holy Spirit, who alone can blow up thy affections; and then, no wonder thou art cold in prayer when he is gone that should keep thy heart warm at it. What is the body without the soul but cold clay, dead earth? and what the soul without the Spirit? truly no better. O invite him back to thy soul, or else thy praying work is at an end. And, if thou wouldst persuade him to return, observe what was the thing that distasted him, and remove it. That which makes this dove forsake its lockyers will hinder his return if not taken away.

[*To pray in the spirit, we must have SINCERITY.*]

THIRD. We pray in the spirit *when we pray in sincerity*. There may be much fervour where there is little or no sincerity. And this is strange fire; the heat of a distemper, not the kindly natural heat of the new creature, which both comes from God and acts for God; whereas the other is from self, and ends in self. Indeed the fire which self kindles serves only to warm the man's own hands by it that makes it: ‘Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks,’ Isa. 50:11; the prophet represents them as sitting down about the fire they had made. Self-acting and self-aiming ever go together; therefore our Saviour with spirit requires truth. He ‘seeketh such to worship him’ as will ‘worship him in spirit and in truth,’ John 4:23, 24.

Question. But *wherein consists this sincere fervency?*

Answer. Zeal intends the affections, sincerity directs their end, and consists in their purity and incorruption. The blood is oft hot when none of the purest, and affections strong when the heart insincere; therefore the apostle exhorts us that we ‘love one another out of a pure heart fervently,’ I Peter 1:22, and speaks in another place of ‘sorrowing after a godly sort,’ that is, sincerely. Now the sincerity of the heart in prayer then appears when a person is real in his prayers, and that *from pure principles to pure ends*.

First. When he is *real in what he presents to God in prayer.* The index of his tongue without and the clockwork of his heart within go together; he doth not declaim against a sin with his lips which he favours with his heart; he doth not make a loud cry for that grace which he would be sorry to have granted him. This is the true badge of a hypocrite, who oft would be loath {that} God should take him at his word. A dismal day it would be to such when God shall bring in their own conscience to witness against them that their hearts never signed and sealed the requests which they made. There is a state-policy used sometimes by princes to send ambassadors, and set treaties on foot, when nothing *less* than peace is intended. Such a deceit is to be found in the false heart of man, to blind and cover secret purposes of war and rebellion against God with fair overtures in prayer to him for peace.

Second. When the person is not only real in what he desires, but this *from a pure principle to a pure end.* I doubt not but a hypocrite in confession may have a real trouble upon his spirit for his sins, and cordially, yea passionately, desire his pardoning mercy; but not from a pure principle—a hatred of sin—but an abhorrency of wrath he sees hastening to him for it; not for a pure end, that the glory of God’s mercy may be magnified in and by him, but that himself may not be tormented by God’s just wrath. He may desire the graces of his Spirit, but not out of any love to them, but only as an expedient, without which he knows to hell he must go; as a sick man in exquisite torture—suppose of the stone or some other acute disease—calls for some potion he loathes, because he knows he cannot have ease except he drinks it. Whereas the sincere soul desires grace, not only as physic, but food. He craves it not only as necessary but as sweet to his palate. The intrinsical bounty and excellency of holiness inflames him with such a love to it, that, as one taken with the beauty of a virgin, saith he will marry her though he hath nothing with her but the clothes to her back; so the sincere heart would have holiness though it brought no other advantages with it than what is found in its own lovely nature. So much to show what sincerity in prayer is.

Now he that would pray acceptably must pray thus in his spirit, that is, with the sincerity of his spirit. ‘The prayer of the upright is his delight.’ Nadab and Abihu brought fire, and had fire, ‘a strange fire,’ to destroy them for the ‘strange fire’ they offered; and such is all fervency and zeal that is not taken from the altar of a sincere heart, Lev. 10:1. ‘The fervent prayer’—B@8×ÆFPb,4—‘availeth much.’ It can do much, but it must be of a righteous man, and such the sincere man only is. And no wonder that God stands so much upon sincerity in prayer, seeing the lip of truth is so prized even among men. Nature hath taught men to commend their words to others by laying their hands on their breasts, as an assurance that what they say or promise is true and cordial; which the penitent publican it is like aimed at, he ‘smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner,’ Luke 18:13, thereby declaring whence his sorrowful confession came. That light which told the heathens that God must be worshipped, informed them also this worship must come from the inward recesses of the heart. *In sancto quid facit aurum —quin damnus id superis, &c.*—what care the

gods for gold! let us offer that which is more worth than all treasures, *sanctos recessus animi*—the heart and inward affections of it. It is a strange custom Benzo, in his *Historia Novi Orbis*, relates of the natives there: *Indi occidentales dum sacra faciunt, dimisso in guttur bacillo, vomitum cient, ut idolo ostendant nihil se in pectore mali occultum gerere*—the West Indians, when worshipping their gods, used, by putting a little stick down their throat, to provoke themselves to vomit, thereby showing their idol that they carried no secret evil within them. I should not have named this barbarous custom but to show how deeply this notion is engraven in the natural conscience—that we must be sincere in the worship of God.

Use. Let it put us upon the trial *whether we thus pray in the spirit*—whether you can find sincerity stamped on your fervency. If the prayer be not fervent it cannot be sincere, but it may have a fervour without this. This is a very fine sieve; approve thyself here, and thou mayest without presumption write thyself a saint. But how fervent soever thou art without sincerity, it matters not. Nay, zeal without uprightness is worse than key-cold; none will go to hell with more shame than the false-hearted zealot, who mounts up towards heaven in the fiery chariot, a seeming zeal, but at last is found a devil in Samuel's mantle, and so is thrown down like lightning from heaven, whither he would have been thought by his neighbours to be going. Be not loath to be searched. Then there will then need no further search to prove thee unsound. If God's officer be denied entrance, all is not right within. Now to help thee in the work, inquire—

[RULES for trying the sincerity of our hearts in prayer.]

Rule 1. What is thy care in performing this duty of prayer in secret? If thy heart be sincere, it will delight in privacy. A false heart calls others to see his zeal for God. May be he is forward to put himself upon duty where he hath spectators to applaud him, and can be very hot and earnest at the work; but wither he is wholly a stranger to secret prayer, or else he is cold in the performance; he finds himself becalmed now he wants the breath of others to fill his sails. The plummets are off which quickened his motion, and he moves heavily to what he did before company. Whereas a sincere Christian never finds more freedom of spirit, and liquefactions of soul, than in his solitary addresses to God. Joseph, when he would give full vent to his passion, sought some secret place where to weep, and therefore retired himself into his chamber, Gen. 43:30. So the sincere Christian goes to his closet, and there easeth his heart into the bosom of God, and lets his passions of sorrow for sin, and love to Christ, burst forth and have their full scope, which in public prayer he restrains—as to the outward expression of them—out of a holy modesty, and fear of being observed by others, which he hunts not for. Now speak, Christian, what is thy temper? Can thy closet witness for thee in this particular? It is the trick of a hypocrite to strain himself to the utmost in duty when he hath spectators, and to draw loose in his gears when alone; like some that carry their best meat to market,

and save the worst for their own food at home; and others that draw their best wine to their customers, but drink the dead and flat themselves at their own private table.

Rule 2. Observe thyself in thy more public addresses to the throne of grace: and that in two particulars. (1.) When thou prayest before others. (2.) When thou joinest with others that pray.

(1.) *When thou prayest before others*, observe on what thou bestowest thy chief care and zeal, whether in the externals or internals of prayer—that which is exposed to the eye and ear of men, or that which should be prepared for the eye and ear of God; the devout posture of thy body, or the inward devotion of thy soul; the pomp of thy words, or the power of thy faith; the agitation of thy bodily spirits in the vehemency of thy voice, or the fervency of thy spirit in heart-breaking affections. These inward workings of the soul in prayer are the very soul of prayer; and all the care about the other without this, is like the trimming bestowed upon a dead body—that will not make the carcass sweet, nor these thy prayer to God's nostrils. It is the faith, love, brokenness of heart for sin, and the inward affections exerted in prayer, that, like Elijah in his fiery chariot, mount up to God in the heavens, while the other, with the prophet's mantle, fall to the ground. The sincere soul dares not be rude in his outward posture. He is careful of his very words and phrase, that they may be grave and pertinent. Neither would he pray them asleep that joins with him, by a cold, dreaming, and lazy manner of delivering of it; but still, it is the inward disposition of his heart he principally looks to, knowing well, that by the other he is but cook to others, and may fast himself if his own heart be idle in the duty; and therefore he doth not count he prays well—though to the affecting of their hearts—except he finds his own affections drawn out in the duty. Whereas the hypocrite, if he may but come off the duty with the applause of others in the external performance, is very well pleased, though he be conscious of the deadness and naughtiness of his own heart therein.

(2.) *When thou joinest with others that pray*. Do the gifts and graces that breathe from others in prayer warm thy affections, and draw out thy soul to bear them company to heaven in the petitions they put up? Or do they stir up a secret envying and repining at the gifts of God bestowed on them? This would discover much pride and unsoundness in thy spirit. The hypocrite is proud, and thinks all the water is spilt and lost that runs beside his own mill; whereas the sincere soul prizeth the gifts of others, can heartily bless God for them, and make a humble and holy use of them. His heart is as much affected with the holy savoury requests that another puts up, as when they come out of his own mouth. But the hypocrite's eye is evil, because God's is good.

Rule 3. Observe whether thy fervency in prayer be uniform. A false heart may seem very hot in praying against one sin; but he can skip over another, and either leave it out of his confession, or handles it very gently. As a partial witness, that would fain save the prisoner's life he comes against, will not speak all he knows, but minceth his evidence; thus doth the hypocrite deal with his darling lust. He is like one that

mows grass with a gapped scythe; some he cuts down, and other he leaves standing; vehement against this, and favourable to that lust; whereas sincerity makes clear work as it goes. 'Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me,' Ps. 119:133.

Again the false heart is as uneven in his petitions as in his deprecations. Very earnest he is for some mercies, and they are commonly of an inferior nature, but more indifferent in his desires for those that are greater; he tithes mint and cummin in his prayers —temporal mercies, I mean—but neglects the weightier things of the promise—the sanctifying graces of the Spirit, humility, heavenly-mindedness, contentment, self-denial; a little of these upon a knife's point will content him.

Rule 4. Observe whether thy endeavours correspond with thy prayers. The false heart seems hot in prayer, but you will find him cold enough at work. He prays very fiercely against his sins, as if he desired them to be all slain upon the place; but what doth he towards the speeding of them with his own hands? Doth he set himself upon the work of mortification? doth he withdraw the fuel that feeds them? is he careful to shun occasions that may ensnare him? When temptations come, do they find him in arms upon his guard, resolved to resist their motion? Alas! no such matter. If a few good words in prayer will do the work, well and good; but as for any more, he is too lazy to go about it. Whereas the sincere heart is not idle after prayer; when it hath given heaven the alarm, and called God in to his help, then he takes the field himself, and opposeth his lusts with all his might, watching their motions, and taking every advantage he meets with to fall upon them. Every mercy he receives, he beats it out into a weapon, to knock down all thoughts of sinning again. Thus, 'Seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; should we again break thy commandments?' Ezra 9:13, 14. O God forbid, saith the holy soul, that he should bid such a thought welcome! Every promise he reads, he lifts it up as a sword for his defence against this enemy. 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves,' II Cor. 7:1. I shall shut up this head with a few directions how we may get this sincere heart in prayer.

[How we may get this sincerity in prayer.]

(1.) Get *thy heart united by faith to Christ*. It is faith that purifies the heart from its false principles and ends in duty. 'God made man upright;' and, while he stood so, his eye and foot went right; neither did his eye look or his foot tread awry. But after Eve had talked with the serpent, she and all mankind after her learned the serpent's crooked motion, to look one way and go another. 'God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions,' Ecc. 7:29. O beg therefore, with David, that God would 'renew a right spirit within thee,' Ps. 51:10. What the evil spirit hath perverted the Holy Spirit alone can set right. If the cause why a piece carries wrong be in its make and mould, it must be new cast, or it will never carry right. Hypocrisy in duty comes from the falseness of man's depraved nature; the heart therefore must

be made new before it can be sincere. The new heart is the single heart, 'I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you,' Eze. 11:19. He that loves 'truth in the inward parts' can put it there.

(2.) Make hypocrisy in prayer *appear as odious to thee as possibly thou canst*; and thou needest not dress it up in any other than its own clothes to do this. Consider but how grievous a sin and how great a folly it is, and methinks it were enough to set thee against it.

(a) Consider *what a grievous sin it is*. A lie spoken by one man to another is a sin capable of high aggravations; what then is that lie which is uttered in prayer to God? Surely this must be much more horrid, for here is blasphemy in the untruth. God spares not to give the hypocrite the lie, 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit,' Hosea 11:12; so many lies they told to God, as prayers they put up. O the patience of a God that doth not strike the hypocrite dead upon the place, while the lie is in his throat, as he did Ananias and Sapphira.

(b) Consider *what a great folly it is*. [1.] As it is *infeasible*. Who but a fool can think to blind the eyes of the Almighty? Canst thou cover the eye of the sun with thy hand or hat, that it shall not shine? as unable art thou to hide thy secret designs so close that the great God should not see them. [2.] As it is *impossible to deceive God, so thou puttest a woful cheat upon thyself*. Thou thinkest thou mendest the matter by praying, and thou makest it worse. When thou comest on thy trial for thy life, thy hypocrisy in prayer will cost thee dearer than thy other sins. Thou takest pains to increase thy condemnation; thou dost, as Solomon saith of another kind of hypocrite, Prov. 1:18, 'lay wait for thy own blood; they lurk privily for thy own life.' Of all sinners, the hypocrite hath the precedency in God's purposes and preparations of wrath. Hell is prepared for them as the firstborn of damnation. Other sinners are said to have their 'portion with hypocrites,' as the younger brethren with their elder, who is the heir, Matt. 24:51.

(3.) *Crucify thy affections to the world*. Hypocrisy in religion springs from the bitter root of some carnal affections unmortified. So long as thy prey lies below, thy eye will be to the earth, even when thou seemest like an eagle to mount in thy prayers to heaven. The false heart does *uti Deo ut fruatur mundo*—he useth religion for secular ends, and makes his seeming piety to God but as a horsing-block to get into the creature's saddle. God is in his mouth, but the world is in his heart; which he projects to attain more easily by the reputation that this will gain him. I have read of one that offered his prince a great sum of money for no more but to have his leave once or twice a day to come into his presence, and only say, 'God save your majesty.' The prince, wondering at this large offer for so small a favour, asked him what this would advantage him? O sir, saith he, this, though I have nothing else at your hands, will get me a name in the country for one that is a great favourite at court, and such an opinion will help me to more by the year's end than I am out for the purchase. Thus some, it is to be feared, by the very name which they get for great saints among their neighbours, from their acquaintance with religious duties, do

facilitate their carnal projects, and advance their worldly interest, that lie at the bottom of all their goodly profession. Well, Christian, this is but to play at small game—to fish for any of the world's petty enjoyments with religion's golden hook. As thou lovest thy soul, and wouldst not lose this for ever, to get that which thou must lose after thou hast got it, mortify those carnal affections which thou findest most likely to withdraw thy heart from God. Thou knowest not God, if thou seest not enough in him to make thee happy without the world's contributions. This, thoroughly believed, will make thee sincere in his service. 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect,' Gen. 17:1.

BRANCH SECOND.

*[He that would pray in his own spirit,
MUST PRAY IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD.]*

Having despatched the first importance of this phrase, '*praying in the spirit*,' viz. the spirit of the person that prayeth, and shown that then a person prays in the spirit *when his own soul and spirit acts in the duty—when he prays with understanding, fervency, and sincerity*; now we proceed to the second importance of the phrase. To pray '*in the Spirit*' is to pray in, or with, the Spirit of God; 'praying in the Holy Ghost,' Jude 20. So that the note or doctrine to be insisted on will be this,

DOCTRINE. That to right praying, *it is necessary that we pray in, or by, the Spirit of God*. Prayer is the creature's act, but the Spirit's gift. There is a concurrence both of the Spirit of God and the soul or spirit of the Christian to the performance of it. Hence we find both the Holy Spirit is said to pray in us, Rom. 8:26, and we said to pray in him, Jude 20. By the first is meant is his inspiration, whereby he excites and assists the creature to and in the work; by the latter the concurrence of the saint's faculties. The Spirit doth not so pray in him as that the Christian doth not exercise his own faculties in the duty, as the Familists^[3] Niclaes gained many followers, among them the great publisher Christophe Plantin, who surreptitiously printed a number of Niclaes' works. Niclaes apparently made two visits to England, where his sect had the largest following. Elizabeth I issued a proclamation against the Family of Love in 1580, and James I believed it to have been the source of Puritanism. The sect did not survive after the Restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, but according to George Fox, a British preacher and the founder of the Society of Friends (or Quakers), some remaining Familists later became associated with the Quakers. — From *Encyclopædia Britannica*. fondly conceive. In handling this point I shall endeavour to do these three things: FIRST. I shall assert the point, and prove the truth of it. SECOND. Explicate what it is to pray by the Spirit of God. THIRD. Make some application of the point.

FIRST. I shall assert the truth of the point, *that to right praying it is necessary we pray by the Spirit of God*. This is clear from Eph. 2:18, 'Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' Mark those words, 'by one Spirit.' As there is but one Mediator to appear and pray for us in heaven, so but one Spirit that can pray in us, and we by it, on earth. We may as well venture to come to the Father through another Mediator than his Son, as pray by another Spirit than by the Holy Ghost. Therefore our Saviour, when he would show his dislike of the disciples rash motion, he doth it by telling them, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of,' Luke 9:55. As if he had said, It behoves you to be well acquainted with the spirit that acts you in prayer; if your prayers be not breathed in and out by my Holy Spirit, they are abominable to me and my Father also. The name of Christ is not more necessary than the Spirit of Christ is in prayer. Christ's name fits only the Spirit's mouth; it is too great a word for any to speak as he ought, that hath not the Spirit to help him. 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,' I Cor. 12:3. One may say the words without any special work of the Spirit in him, and so may a parrot; but, to say Christ is Lord believingly, with thoughts and affections comporting with the greatness and sweetness thereof, requires the Spirit of God to be in his heart and tongue. Now it is not the bare naming of Christ in prayer, and saying, 'For the Lord's sake,' that procure's our welcome with God; but saying it in faith, and none an do this without the Spirit. Christ is the door that opens into God's presence, and lets the soul into his very bosom; faith is the key that unlocks the door; but the Spirit is he that both makes this key, and helps the Christian to turn it in prayer, so as to get any access to God. You know in the law it was a sin, not only to offer 'strange incense,' but also to bring 'strange fire,' Lev. 10:1. By the incense, which was a composition of sweet spices appointed by God to be burned as a sweet perfume in his nostrils, was signified the merit and satisfaction of Christ, who being bruised by his Father's wrath, did offer up himself a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. By the fire that was put to the incense—which also was appointed to be taken from the altar, and not any common hearth—was signified the Spirit of God, by which we are to offer up all our prayers and praises, even as Christ offered himself up by the eternal Spirit. To plead Christ's merits in prayer and not by the Spirit, is to bring right incense but strange fire, and so our prayers are but smoke, offensive to his pure eyes, not incense, a sweet savour to his nostrils.

SECOND. I proceed to explicate *what it is to pray by the Spirit of God*. To the better opening of this, we must know that there are two ways that the Spirit of God helps persons in prayer; one way is by his gifts, the other by his grace.

First. The Spirit of God helps in prayer *by his gifts*. Now those gifts which he furnisheth a person with for prayer are either extraordinary or ordinary. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in prayer were, in the primitive times, shed forth, whereby the apostles and others were able in a miraculous manner to pray as well as preach on a sudden in a language that they never had learned. Of this gift interpreters understand that passage of Paul, 'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the

understanding also,' I Cor. 14:15. That is, he would make use of this extraordinary gift Christ had furnished him with, but so as he might edify the church by it, and no otherwise. This extraordinary gift was fitted for the infancy of the gospel church, and ceased—as others of the like nature did—with it. The ordinary gift of the Spirit in prayer is that special faculty whereby persons are enabled on a sudden to form the conceptions of their minds and desires of their hearts into apt words before the Lord in prayer. This is a common gift, and is bestowed on those that are none of the best men. The hypocrite may have more of this gift than some sincere Christian. It is a gift that commonly bears proportion to natural endowments, a ready apprehension, fruitful fancy, voluble tongue, and audacity of spirit, which are all gifts of the Spirit, and do dispose a person for this. Now we see that the head may be ripe and the heart rotten; and, on the contrary, the heart sound and sincere where the head is low-parted.

Second. The Spirit helps in prayer *by his grace*. His gifts help to the outward expression, but his grace to the inward affection. By the gifts of the Spirit a person is enabled to take the ear and affect the heart of men that hear him; but by the grace of the Spirit acting a soul in prayer, he is enabled to move his own heart and the heart of God also; and this is the man that indeed prays 'in the Spirit.' The other hath the *gift*, but this hath the *spirit*, of prayer. Now, there is a twofold grace necessary to pray thus in the Spirit. 1. Grace from the Spirit to sanctify the person that prays. 2. Grace to act and assist this person sanctified in prayer. By the first, the Spirit dwells in the soul; by the second, he acts the soul.

1. There is necessary to this praying in the Spirit, *grace to sanctify the person that prays*. Before the creature is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, it can neither apprehend nor desire things aright. 'The carnal mind receiveth not the things of God,' nay, 'it is enmity to God.' And is how such a one fit to pray in an acceptable manner? First, then, the Spirit renews the creature by infusing those supernatural qualities, or habits of saving sanctifying graces, which makes him a new creature; by these he comes to dwell and live in him, and then he acts his own graces thus infused. The soul is in the body before it acts and moves it. We read of living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit, Gal. 5:25: 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.' Walking supposeth life. To pray, hear, or perform any other holy action in a holy manner, is to walk in the Spirit; but we must live in the Spirit, or the Spirit live in us—which is all one—before we can thus walk in the Spirit. There are some acts indeed the Spirit of God puts forth upon souls that are not thus sanctified—acts of common illumination, restraining grace, and assisting also. Thus many hypocrites are enabled to pray in excellent expressions. But he never did assist hypocrite, or any unsanctified person, to perform the inward part of prayer, to mourn sincerely for sin, to pant after Christ and his grace, or to cry, 'Abba Father,' believingly; these are the vital acts of the new creature, and flow from a Spirit of grace infused into the soul, which follows this 'spirit of supplication,' Zech. 12:10.

2. As habitual grace is required to sanctify the person, so *actual grace to assist him as oft as he prays*. The Spirit of God may dwell in a soul by his habitual grace, yet deny actual assistance to this or that particular duty, and then the poor Christian is becalmed, as a ship at sea when no wind is stirring. For as grace cannot evidence itself, so neither can it act itself. Hence it is that sometimes the saint's prayers speed no better, because he is not acted by the Spirit in it. Samson, when his lock was cut, was 'weak like another man.' A saint, when the Spirit of God denies his help, prays no better than a carnal man. The Spirit of God is a free agent: 'Uphold me,' saith David, 'with thy free spirit,' Ps. 51:12. He is not as a prisoner tied to the oar, that must needs work when we will have him; but, as a prince, when he pleaseth he comes forth and shows himself to the soul, and when he pleaseth he retires and will not be seen. What freer than the wind? not the greatest king on earth can command it to rise for his pleasure; to this the Spirit of God is compared, John 3:8. He is not only free to breathe where he lists, in this soul and not that, but when he pleaseth also.

[What assistance the Holy Ghost gives to a saint more than to any other in prayer.]

Question. But the question will here be, What assistance doth the Spirit of God give a saint in prayer more than another person?

Answer. The assistance which the Spirit of God gives a saint in prayer above another lies deep; *it is laid out upon the inward man, and inward part of the duty*. So that a person may come to know whether himself prays in the Spirit, but he cannot judge so easily of another. Now this special assistance consists in these three particulars.

1. The Spirit puts forth *an act of exsuscitation*^[4] *upon the soul, to stir up his affections*. Never was any formal prayer of the Holy Spirit's making. When the Spirit comes, it is a time of life. The Christian's affections spring in his bosom at his voice, as the babe in Elizabeth at the salutation of the Virgin Mary. Or, as the strings under the musician's hand stir and speak harmoniously, so doth all the saint's affections at the secret touch of the Spirit. He excite's the saint's fear, filling it with such a sense of God's greatness, his own nothingness and baseness, as makes him with awful thoughts reverence the divine majesty he speaks unto, and deliver every petition with a holy trembling upon his spirit. Such a fear was upon Abraham's spirit, when, in his prayer for Sodom, he expressed how great an adventure he made, being but 'dust and ashes, to take upon him to speak unto the Lord.' He excites the Christian's mourning affections. By his divine breath he raiseth the clouds of the saint's past sins, and when he hath overspread his soul in meditation with the sad remembrance of them, then in prayer he melts the cloud, and dissolves his heart into soft showers of evangelical mourning, that the Christian sighs and groans, weeps and mourns, like a child that is beaten, though he sees the rod laid out of his heavenly Father's hand, and fears no wrath from him for them.

The apostle tells us the groans and sighs which the Spirit helps the saint to are such as 'cannot be uttered,' Rom. 8:26; no, not by the saint himself, who, being unable to translate the inward grief he conceives into words, is fain sometimes to send it with this inarticulate voice to heaven, yet it is a voice that is well understood there, and more musical in God's ear than the most ravishing music can be to ours. In a word, he stirs up affections suitable to every part of prayer, enabling the gracious soul to confess sin with an aching heart, as if he felt so many swords raking in it; to supplicate mercy and grace, as with inward feeling of his wants, so with vehement desires to have them satisfied; and to praise God with a heart enlarged and carried on high upon the wings of love and joy. Parts may art it in the phrase and composure of the words—as a statuary may carve a goodly image, with all the outward lineaments and beautiful proportions in every part—but still it is but the counterfeit and image of a true prayer, for want of that *aliquid intus*—something within, which should give life and energy to it. This the Spirit of God alone can effect.

2. As the Spirit of God doth excite the Christian's affections in prayer, so he *regulates and directs them*. Who indeed but the Spirit of God can guide and rein these fiery steeds? He is said in this respect to 'help our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought,' Rom. 8:26. We, alas! are prone to over-bend the bow in some petitions, and want strength to bend it enough in some other. One while we overshoot the butt, praying absolutely for that which we should ask conditionally; another time we shoot beside the mark, either by praying for what God hath not promised, or too selfishly that which is promised. Now the Spirit helps the Christian's infirmity in this respect, for he 'maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God' ver. 27, that is, he so holds the reins of their affections and directs them, that they keep their right way and due order, not flying out to unwarrantable heats and inordinate desires. He, by his secret whispers, instructs them when to let out their affections full speed, and when to take them up again. He teacheth them the law of prayer, that striving lawfully they may not lose the prize. Just as the Spirit was in the 'living creatures' to direct their motion, of whom it is said, 'They went every one straight forward: whither the Spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went,' Eze. 1:12: so the Spirit, acting his saints in prayer, keeps them that they lash out neither on this hand nor on that, but go straightforward, and draw their requests by his rule.

3. He *fills the Christian with a holy confidence and humble boldness in prayer*. Sin makes the face of God dreadful to the sinner. Guilty Adam shuns his presence, and tells the reason, 'I heard thy voice and was afraid.' If the patriarchs—being conscious how barbarously they had used their brother Joseph—were terrified at his presence, and so abashed that they could not answer him; how much more confounded must the sinner be to draw near to the great God, when he remembers the horrid sins he hath perpetrated against him? Now the Spirit easeth the Christian's heart of this fear, assuring him that God's heart meditates no revenge upon him, but freely forgives what wrong he hath done him; yea, which is more, that he takes him for his dear child;

and, that the Christian may not stand in doubt thereof, he seals it with a kiss of love upon his heart, leaving there the impression of God's fatherly love fairly stamped, whereby the Christian comes to have amiable thoughts of God, is able to call God Father, and expect the kind welcome of a child at his hands. This is the Spirit of adoption which the apostle speaks of, that chaseth away all servile fear and dread of God from the soul: 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,' Rom. 8:15. And, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,' Gal. 4:6.

USE OR APPLICATION.

THIRD. I shall make some *application of the point that it is necessary that we pray in or by the 'Spirit of God.'*

[Reproof of those that mock at the need of the Spirit in prayer, with a trial whether we have him or no.]

Use First. Take heed of *blaspheming the Holy Spirit as to this work of his in his saints.* Some are so desperately profane, that they dare flout and jeer at those who show any strictness in their lives, or zeal in the worship of God, especially in this duty of prayer, with this—'These are they that have the Spirit, that pray, forsooth, by the Spirit.' Nay more—I tremble to speak it—some have called their praying by the Spirit praying by the devil. That every gracious soul hath the Spirit of God dwelling in him the Scripture tells us, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,' Rom. 8:9. That God hath promised his Spirit to help his saints in prayer is undeniable, and that he accepts no prayer but what is put up by his Spirit is as sure. Now mayest thou not know, bold wretch, what spirit thou art acted by, who makest a mock of having the Spirit and praying by the Spirit? Who but the devil would set thee on work to blaspheme the Spirit of God? But why should we wonder that the actings of the Holy Spirit in the saints should be thus scorned and blasphemed, seeing we find that the Spirit of God, working so mightily in Christ himself, was maliciously interpreted by the wicked Pharisees to be from the devil? Matt. 12:24. But let such know to their terror, that to make a jeer of the Spirit, or to attribute his works to the devil, if it be maliciously done, will be found to come near to the blasphemy of the Spirit which is unpardonable, see ver. 32, 'Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.' And this our Saviour spake upon their attributing what he did by the Spirit of God to the spirit of the devil.

Use Second. Try *whether you have the Spirit of God or no.* A prayerless state is a sad state to live in. Now thou canst not pray acceptably except thou prayest in the Spirit, and thou canst not pray in the Spirit except thou hast the Spirit in thee.

Question. But how may I know whether I have the Spirit of God or no?

I shall answer. 1. *Negatively*, by what thou must not conclude that thou hast the Spirit. 2. *Affirmatively*, by what thou mayest.

Answer 1. Negatively; thou canst not know, *because thou hast now and then some good motions from the Holy Spirit stirred in thee.* The evil spirit is found oft stirring evil motions in souls where he doth not dwell. A fowl stir he makes oft in the bosom of a saint; yet dwells not there, because he is not there *per modum quietis*—he finds no rest in these dry places. Therefore he is brought in saying, ‘I will return to my house,’ viz. to those that are yet in a carnal state, where he can rule the roost, and command as a master doth all in his house. Truly thus the Holy Spirit is often moving in the consciences and affections of carnal creatures, counselling, rebuking, and exciting them; so that, upon his suggestions, some flashy short pangs of affections are raised in them to that which is good, but presently all is quashed and comes to nothing, and the Spirit driven away by the churlish entertainment he finds.

Again, thou canst not know by the common gifts of the Spirit, illumination, conviction, restraining grace, and assistance to perform the external part of religious duties, even to the admiration sometimes of others that hear them. These are gifts of the Spirit, but such as do not prove he hath the Spirit that hath them. They are like the brightness or radiancy which we see the clouds gilt with in the morning before the body of the sun is above the horizon—they show the sun is near, but it is not yet risen for all this radiancy that is seen; so these gifts are beamed from the Spirit of God, and show the kingdom of God is come nigh such a one; but they do not demonstrate that the Spirit of God is come into that soul and taken possession of it for his house and temple. Or they are like the tokens which a suitor sends to a person whom he is wooing to be his wife—the more to insinuate upon her; but the match breaking off, all are required again. Many have these gifts sent them by the Spirit of God, with whom the match betwixt Christ and them was never made up; and if they be not called for back in this life, they shall however be accountable for them at the great day.

Answer 2. Affirmatively; by what thou mayest conclude that thou hast the Spirit of God; and that in two particulars; though here I might multiply.

(1.) If thou beest *regenerated by the Spirit.* The Spirit of God dwells only in a new creature. So long as a man continues in his carnal natural state he is destitute of the Spirit. ‘Sensual, having not the Spirit,’ Jude 19. The word is RLP46@Â, such as have no more but a reasonable soul, without a higher principle of life than nature gives to all men. St. Paul useth the word to set out a man in his mere naturals, as opposed to another that hath a principle of supernatural life from the Spirit of God; RLP46ÎH •<¬D, ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit,’ I Cor. 2:14. But here the question will be, How shall I know I am regenerate? To this I answer, Every regenerate soul hath *divinam indolem*—a divine nature and disposition like unto the Spirit of God that regenerates him. ‘That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,’ John 3:6, viz. is spiritual, the abstract being put for the concrete, to increase the force of the words. He hath a soul raised as far above natural men as they

are above the nature of beasts. When Nebuchadnezzar had the understanding of a man given him he grazed no longer among the beasts of the field, but returned to his princely throne and life. Thus the regenerate soul returns to that high and heavenly disposition which man in his primitive holy state once had. Now God and the things of God take up his thoughts; he hath a new eye to see vanity where before he placed felicity; a new gust and taste, which makes him spit out those sinful pleasures as poison that once were pleasant morsels, and count all earthly enjoyments, that before were his only feast, but dung and dross in comparison of Christ and his grace. He can no more make a meal on them than a man can with dogs' meat. 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit,' Rom. 8:5, they do *sapere*, savour the things of the Spirit. Find therefore what thy gust is, and thou sayest know what thy life is, whether spiritual, or natural.

(2.) If thou beest *led by the Spirit*. The Spirit is the saints' guide, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,' Rom. 8:14. As the soul is in the body, to direct and move it, so is the Spirit in their soul: 'Thou hast holden me by my right hand, thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,' Ps. 73:23, 24. Even as the child is led by his father's hand, so the saint by the manuduction of the Spirit. Now, to be led by the Spirit of God imports these three things:

(a) *A sense of our own weakness and ignorance*. He that thinks he knows his way, or that he is able to direct his own steps, will not accept of a guide. It is the weak child or the blind man that calls to be led. First Saul was struck blind, and then he gives his hand to be led to Damascus, Acts 9. Inquire therefore whether God hath made thee sensible of thy own ignorance and impotency. Man by nature is proud and self-conceited; he leans much to his own understanding, and stands upon his own strength, very loath to be thought out of the way or unable to go of himself in it. 'A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident,' Prov. 14:16. Tell a soul spiritually wise he is out of his way, he fears himself, hearkens to the counsel, and turns back; but a fool—and such is every carnal man—he falls out with him that counsels or reproves him, and is confident he is right, as if he knew the way to heaven as well as he doth the way from his house to the market. The first thing that the Spirit doth is to dismount the soul from his high opinion he hath of himself, thereby to make him teachable and tractable. 'Men and brethren,' say those converts, after God with one prick in their hearts had let out this wind of pride, 'what shall we do?' Acts 2:37. Their spirit now comes down, willing they are to be directed, so meek and humble that a child may lead them.

(b) He that is led by another is *ruled and determined by him that is his guide which way he should go*. Inquire, therefore, whether the Spirit of God doth thus determine thy soul in its actings and motions. If thou beest led by the Spirit, thou walkest after the Spirit, and goest the way he goes. Now you know which is the Spirit's walk. He is a Spirit of truth and leads into truth. The word of God is the road he keeps; if thou walkest not by this rule he is not thy guide. Speak therefore, what

authority and sway bears the word with thee? Dost thou consult with it and hearken to it? or is it to thee as Micaiah was to Ahab, art thou afraid to advise with it? Or, when thou dost, canst thou cast its counsel at thy heels, and venture to break its hedge, to pursue thy ambitious or covetous projects? If a word lying in thy way will not stop thee, thou art not led by the Spirit of God thou mayest be sure.

(c) To be led imports *spontaneity and willingness*. This is the difference betwixt leading and driving. The carnal heart may be driven by the rebukes and convictions of the Spirit, as a beast by switch and spur; but the gracious soul follows the Spirit as a child his father that holds him by the hand, yea, that cries after his father to take him along with him. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' The Spirit indeed 'draws,' but then the soul 'runs after him.' Mary chose the 'better part;' it was not imposed on her against her liking. The obedience of the saints is compared to a sacrifice, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice,' &c., Rom. 12:1; and it is no acceptable sacrifice that is not offered willingly. The Spirit of God makes the soul 'willing in the day of his power.' 'I will go with this man,' said Rebekah; she was as willing to have Isaac as he to have her. The gracious soul answers the Spirit's call as the echo the voice: 'Seek ye my face. Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' Now, this use of trial calls for a double word of exhortation.

[Exhortation to those who
WANT THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.]

1. O labour to *get this heavenly guest to come and dwell in your hearts*. Better it were thou hadst not the spirit of a man than to want the Spirit of God. If the Holy Spirit be not in thee, assure thyself the evil spirit is; and no way is there for thee to turn this troublesome guest out of doors but by getting the Spirit of God in. Thou mayest know where thy eternal mansion will be, in heaven or hell, hereafter, by the spirit that fills and acts thy soul here. If God takes not up thy soul as a mansion for his Spirit on earth, it shows that he prepares no mansion for thy soul in heaven, but leaves thee to be entertained by him in the other world that is thy guest in this. Thus thou seest how thy soul hangs over the infernal pit. What course canst thou take to prevent this thy endless misery that is coming upon thee? Wilt thou stand up as Haman to make request for the life of thy soul? Alas! thou canst not pray though thy life lies on it; thou wantest the Spirit of God that should help thee to groans and sighs; thou must live before thou canst breathe. Prayer, you see, is not a work of nature, but a gift of grace; not a matter of will and parts, got by human skill and art, but taught and inspired by the Holy Ghost. At the bar of man the orator's tongue may so smooth over a cause as to carry it. Rhetoric hath a kind of spell in it that charms the ears of men, he is called the 'the eloquent orator,' {Hebrew Characters Omitted}—*nekçn l~chash*—he that is skilful in a charm, Isa. 3:3. Thus Abigail charmed David's passion with a well-set speech, and returned his sword into his scabbard that was drawn to cut off her husband and his family. But words, alas! how handsomely soever they chime, make

no music in God's ear; they avail no more with him when his Holy Spirit is not with them, than Esau's prayers and tears did with old Isaac for the blessing. The same rod which wrought miracles in Moses' hand would have done no such thing in the hand of another, because not acted with the Spirit that Moses had. The same words put up in prayer by a man's own private spirit are weak and ineffectual, yea, distasteful and abominable; which, delivered by the Spirit of God in another, are mighty with God and exceedingly acceptable to him. Kings have their cooks, and eat not but what is dressed by their hands. The great God, I am sure, will not like that sacrifice which his Spirit doth not prepare and offer. Those prayers which are highly esteemed and applauded by men are sometimes a great abomination to the Lord, who sees the heart to be naught and wholly void of his Spirit and grace. And on the contrary, those prayers which are despised and harshly censured by man may be highly pleasing to God. Eli was offended with Hannah and took her for a drunken woman; but God knew her better, that she was not drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit in prayer, and therefore answered graciously her request. It was wisely done of that Grecian, who, being sent ambassador to a foreign prince, studied the language of the country that he might the more effectually persuade the king by delivering his embassy in his own tongue. O, get thou the Spirit of God, that thou mayest pray to God in the language of heaven, and no fear but thou shalt speed. Now, if thou wouldst obtain the Spirit,

(1.) Labour to be *deeply sensible of thy deplorable state while without the Spirit*. An unsavoury sapless creature thou art, God knows, unable for any duty, incapable of any comfort. The Spirit is oft in Scripture compared to water, rain, and dew. Now, as the earth is barren and can bring forth no fruit without these, so is the heart of man without the Spirit of God. O get thy soul affected with this! When the fields are burned up for want of rain, man and beast make a moan; yea, the very earth itself, cleft with drought, by opening its thirsty mouth expresseth its extreme need of some kind showers from the heavens to refresh it. And hast thou no sense of thy woeful condition? Which is worse, thinkest thou—to have the earth iron or thy heart stone? that the fruits and beasts of the field should perish for want of water, or thy soul for want of the Spirit? O couldst thou but be brought to lament thy want, there were hope for having it supplied. 'For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed,' Isa. 44:3.

(2.) When thou art inwardly scorched with the sense of thy spiritless graceless condition, *go and earnestly beg this gift of God*. Now thou goest in a good time and mayest hope to speed. Possibly thou hast heretofore prayed for the Spirit, but so slightly and indifferently that thou hast grieved his Spirit while thou hast been praying for him. But now thou seest thy need of him, and thyself undone except thou mayest get him; and therefore, I hope, thou wilt not now shut the door upon thy own prayers by being a cold suitor; which if thou dost not, thou art sure to bring him away with thee. Christ himself assures thee as much. Take it from his own mouth, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Luke 11:13. A father

may deny his wanton child bread to play with and throw under his feet, but not his starving child that cries for bread to preserve his life. God can, and will, deny him that asks the Spirit to pride himself with his gifts, but not the hungry soul, that pinched with his want of grace, humbly yet vehemently cries, 'Lord, give me thy Spirit, or else I starve, I die.' Nay, let me tell thee, thy strong cries and earnest prayers for the Spirit would be a sweet evidence to thee that thou hast him already within thee.

(3.) *Plant thyself under the word preached.* This is *vehiculum Spiritus*—the Spirit's chariot in which he rides, called therefore 'the ministration of the Spirit.' The serpent, that evil spirit, wriggled into Eve's heart by her ear; and the Holy Spirit ordinarily enters in at the same door, for he is received 'by the hearing of faith,' Gal. 3:2. They that cast off hearing the word to meet with the Spirit do as if a man should turn his back off the sun that it may shine on his face. The poor do not stay at home for the rich to bring their alms to their house, but go to their door and there wait for relief. It becomes thee, poor creature, to wait at the posts of wisdom, and not expect the Spirit should lacquey after thee. If the master come to the truant scholar's house it is to whip him to school.

(4.) *Take heed of resisting the Spirit when he makes his approaches to thee in the word.* Sometimes he knocks, and, meeting a repulse, goes from the sinner's door. This is dangerous. He that hath promised to come in if we open, hath not promised to come again though we unkindly send him away. He doth indeed oft return after repulses; but sometimes, to show his liberty, he doth not, nay, leaves a padlock, as I may so say, on the door, a judiciary hardness and unbelief, which no minister's key can open. Thus Christ dealt with them that so mannerly excused themselves to his messengers that invited them. 'None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper,' Luke 14:24. Doth the Spirit move on thy heart in an ordinance? Haply it is by some secret rebukes directing the minister's finger unawares to touch thy sore plat. O beware how thou now behavest thyself towards the Spirit. Quarrel not with the preacher, as if he had a spite against thee and came for a spy to find out the nakedness of thy soul. Struggle not with thy convictions, smother not the motions of the Holy Spirit in thy next pillow at night, but rather cherish and improve them. It is no little mercy that, as the Spirit went by in his chariot, he would call at thy door and give thee so merciful a warning, which, if kindly received, may bring on a treaty of peace betwixt God and thee that may end in thy conversion here and salvation hereafter. It heightened the favour which God bestowed on the widow of Sarepta that there were many other widows in Israel at the same time, but the prophet was sent to her and not to them. So it enhanceth this mercy vouchsafed to thee, that there should be many other sinners in the congregation, and yet the Spirit not sent to them, but to thee; that his arrows should fly over their heads, and be shot at thy window with a secret message from heaven, to rouse thy sleepy conscience and woo thy affections from sin to Christ. Verily the kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto thee. Be but friendly to these his motions and thou shalt have more of his company.

(5.) *Converse with the saints that have the Spirit of God in them.* They that would learn a foreign language associate with men of that country whose natural tongue it is. Wouldst thou have the Spirit, and so learn to speak to God in heaven's language? Consort with those who by reason of their heavenly nature will be speaking of God and the things of God unto thee. It is true, they cannot derive and propagate this their spiritual nature; but it is as true, that the Spirit of God may make the gracious discourses which they breathe forth vital and quickening to thee. While thou art with such, thou walkest in the Spirit's company. Joseph and Mary sought Christ among his kindred, supposing it most likely to find him among them. And it is more probable to find the Spirit of Christ among the saints, his spiritual kindred, than among strangers. The Spirit of God came upon Saul when among the prophets; at the hearing of them prophesy and praise God, his spirit was moved also to do the same. Who knows but thy heart may be warmed at their fire, and from the savour of their graces be drawn thyself to the love of holiness? But, above all, take heed of profane company; this is a great quencher to the Spirit's work. When David resolves for God and a holy life, he packs the wicked from him: 'Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God,' Ps. 119:115. The husbandman busheth his young plants about to keep the cattle off. If there be any buddings and puttings forth of the Spirit of grace in thee, as thou wouldst not have all cropped and bit off, choose not men of a profane spirit for thy associates. They are like the north wind that blows away the rain. When the Spirit of God hath been moving on a soul, the clouds begin to gather in his bosom, and some hopes of a shower of repentance to follow; then comes wicked company and drives all these clouds away, till there be no show left upon his heart of what before there was great hopes.

*[Exhortation to those who by the rules of trial
FIND THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS IN THEM.]*

2. *To the saints;* the word I have for you is to beseech you *not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit in your bosoms.* Thou canst not fadge to live long without prayer if a saint, nor art thou able to pray to purpose without him. When he withdraws, thy hand presently will forget its cunning. Such a chillness will invade thy soul, that thou wilt have little list to pray, for it is he that stirs thee up to the duty; and if thou creepest to it, thou wilt not be warm in the work, for it is his divine breath that must make thy green-wood burn, thy affections enkindle. Clothes do not warm the body, till the body warm them; and the body cannot warm them, except the soul, which is the principle of life, warm it. If there be no warmth in the heart, there can be no fervency in the prayer; and without the Spirit of God—who is the Christian's soul and what his soul is to his body—no kindly heat can be in the soul. O take heed therefore thou dost not grieve him, lest being distasted he refuse to assist thee. Now three ways the Spirit of God may be distasted by a saint, so as to cause him to deny his wonted assistance in prayer.

(1.) By *some sin secretly harboured in the heart*. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,' Ps. 66:18. Now when God refuseth to hear, we may be sure the Spirit refuseth to assist, for God never rejects a prayer that his Spirit indites and his Son presents. Sin is so offensive to the Holy Spirit, that wherever it is bid welcome he will show his distaste. If you would have this pure dove stay with you, be sure you keep his lodging clean. Hast thou defiled thyself with any known sin? think not to have him help thee in prayer till he hath helped thee to repent of it. He will carry thee to the laver before he go with thee to the altar. The musician wipes his instrument that hath fallen into the dirt before he will set it to his mouth. If thou wouldst have the Spirit of God breathe in thy soul at prayer, present it not to him besmeared with any sin unrepented of.

(2.) By *frequent resisting or putting off his motions*. As the Spirit helps in prayer, so he stirs up to prayer; he is the saint's remembrancer and monitor: 'He shall bring all things,' saith Christ of the Spirit, 'to your remembrance,' John 14:26. God called Jacob up to Bethel, so the Spirit prompts the saint to duty. Such a mercy thou hast received—up, Christian, praise thy God for it while it is fresh in thy memory and warm in thy heart. Such a temptation lies before thee—go pray thou mayest not be led into it. Thy God waits for thy company, and expects thy attendance; now is a fit time for thy withdrawing thyself to hold communion with him, and pay thy homage to him. Now, when the Christian shall shift off these motions and not take the hint he gives, but from time to time neglect his counsel, and discontinue his acquaintance with God, notwithstanding these his mementos, he is exceedingly distasted, and, taking himself to be slighted, he gives over calling upon him, and leaves the soul for a time, till his absence, and the sad consequences of it, bring him to see his folly, and prepare him to entertain his motions more kindly for the future. Thus Christ leaves the spouse in her bed, when she would not rise at his knock, and makes her trot after him with many a weary step before he will be seen of her. It is just that God should raise the price of his mercy, when we may have it at an easy rate and will not. Christ thrice calls up his drowsy disciples to 'watch and pray,' that they might not 'enter into temptation,' but finds them still asleep when he comes; what saith he then? Truly he bids them 'sleep on,' as if he had said, 'Take your course and see what will become of it.' Indeed they soon saw it to their sorrow, for they all presently fell into that very temptation which their master had so seasonably alarmed them by prayer to prevent, and this waked them to purpose.

(3.) By *priding ourselves in and with the assistances he gives*. Pride is a sin that God resists wherever he meets with it; for indeed it is a sin that justles with God himself for the wall. It is time for the Spirit to be gone when his house is left over his head. He takes it as a giving him warning to be gone, when the soul lifts up itself into his seat; if he may not have the honour of the work he will have no hand in it. Now the proud man makes the Spirit an underling to himself, he useth his gifts to set up himself with them. Three ways pride discovers itself in prayer, and all to be resisted if we mean to have the Spirit's company.

(a) When the creature ascribes the Spirit's work to himself, and sets his own name upon the duty, where he should write the Spirit's; like Caligula, who set the figure of his own head on the statue of Jupiter. Instead of blessing God for assisting, he applauds himself, and hath a high opinion of his own abilities, pleasing himself with what expressions and enlargements of affection he had in the duty. This is plain felony, a sin which every gracious soul must needs tremble at. Church robbery is a great wickedness: O what then is spirit robbery! 'I live,' saith Paul, 'yet not I,' Gal. 2:20. 'I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me,' I Cor. 15:10. Thus shouldst thou, Christian, say, 'I prayed, yet not I; I laboured and wrestled, yet not I, but the Spirit of God that was with me.' Applaud not thyself, but humbly admire the grace and dignation of God, to help such a poor creature as thou art. Thus David did: 'Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee,' I Chr. 29:14. That steward deserves to be put out of his office, that brags of his master's money as his own.

(b) When we go to duty in confidence of the gifts and grace we have already received, and do not acknowledge our dependence on the Spirit, by casting ourselves after all our preparations upon him for present assistance. As we must pray by the Spirit, so we must ask for him that we may pray by him: 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,' Luke 11:13. And it is not once asking for all will serve the turn. Thou mayest have his help in the morning and want it at night, if thou dost not humbly ask again for his aid. You know how Samson was served when he thought to go out as he used to do. Alas! poor man, the case was altered, he was weak as water; the Spirit was gone and he had carried away his strength with him. God will have thee, O Christian, know the key to thy heart hangs at his girdle, and not thy own, that thou shouldst be able to open and enlarge it at thy pleasure. Acknowledge God, and his Spirit shall help thee; but 'lean to thy own understanding,' and thou art sure to catch a fall. When pride is in the saddle, shame is in the crupper; if pride be at the beginning of a duty, shame will be at the end of it.

(c) When we rely on our prayers, and not entirely on Christ's mediation, for acceptance and audience; this is pride with a witness, and highly derogatory to the honour of Christ. God indeed accepts the saints in prayer, but not for their prayer, but for Christ's sake. Now the Spirit, who is Christ's messenger, will not, you may be sure, give his assistance to rob Christ of his glory. When he helps thee to pray, if thou wouldst harken to his voice, thou mayest hear him calling thee out of thyself, and confidence of thy prayers, to rely wholly on the mediation of Christ. Wrong Christ, and you are sure to grieve his Spirit.

DIVISION FOURTH.—THE GUARD OF PRAYER.

'And watching thereunto.'

These words present us with the fourth branch in the apostle's directory for prayer, which I called *prayer's guard*. Prayer to the saints is as the great artillery to an army—of great use to defend them, and of as great force to do execution upon their enemies; it therefore needs the stronger guard to be set about it, lest it be taken from them, or turned against them by the enemy. Now the guard which the Spirit of God here appoints this great ordinance of prayer, is watching—'*watching thereunto.*' Watching is either or improper, literal or metaphorical. FIRST. Watching, literally taken, is an affection of the body. But, SECOND. Watching is taken metaphorically for the vigilancy or watchfulness of the soul.

[The duty of watching unto prayer.]

FIRST. Watching, *literally taken, is an affection of the body*. That only can properly be said to watch which is subject to sleep; and so the body is, but not the soul. Thus, to watch in a religious sense is a voluntary denying of our bodies sleep, that we may spend either the whole or part of the night in pious exercises. Thus the Jews kept the night of the passover holy, Ex. 12:42. Our Saviour oft spent the night in prayer, Matt. 14:23; 26:38. We find Paul treading in his Lord and Master's steps, 'In watchings, in fastings,' II Cor. 6:5. Many a sweet spiritual junket holy David's devout soul got in the night, when others lay in their bed: 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,...when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches,' Ps. 63:5, 6. No doubt, for a devout soul, upon some extraordinary occasions—so superstition be avoided and health regarded—thus to watch unto prayer is not only laudable but delectable. *Vigiliæ in quantum valetudinem non perturbant, si orando, psallendo, legendo sumantur, in delicias spirituales convertuntur*—happy soul, that can thus steal in the dark into the arms of his beloved, and watch for devotion while others watch to do mischief or fill themselves with impure delights (Augustinus). This is the Christian, whose soul, like Gideon's fleece, shall be filled with the dews and influences of heaven above others. But,

SECOND. Watching is taken *metaphorically for the vigilancy or watchfulness of the soul*. This is principally meant here, and in other scriptures, where we are commanded to watch, Mark 13:35; Rev. 16:15; I Thes. 5:6; I Peter 5:8; *cum multis aliis*—with many others. Now we shall the better understand what duty is imposed

upon the Christian under this word [watching], if we consider what bodily watching is. Two things it imports—waking and working. When a man wakes in the night to attend some business then to be done, such a one only truly watcheth; a man that sleeps not in the night, but to no purpose, for no business he hath to despatch, he may be said to wake but not to watch, for this relates to some employment he hath in charge to look to. Thus the shepherds are said to ‘keep watch over their flock by night,’ Luke 2:8, and the disciples ‘watched’ with Christ while they sat up to wait on him the night before his passion, Matt. 26:40. So that, for a Christian to watch in a spiritual sense is to preserve his soul awake from sin in the height of this world, that he may keep the Lord’s charge and do the duty imposed upon him as a Christian. Now prayer being one principal duty he is to attend and intend with all his might, therefore watching is very often joined with it, Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; Col. 4:2; I Peter 4:7. In handling this duty of watching unto prayer, I shall show, *First*. Why the Christian is to watch unto prayer. *Second*. Wherein the duty of watchfulness, in reference to prayer, consists. *Third*. I shall set the Christian’s watch for him, by giving some little counsel and help towards his performing this duty of watchfulness; for it is not a temporary duty, but for his whole lifetime.

[WHY *the Christian is to watch unto prayer.*]

First. I shall show *why the Christian is to watch unto prayer.*

1. *Reason*. Because of the *importance of the duty of prayer*. No one action doth a Christian meet with in his whole life of greater weight and moment than this of prayer is; and that in regard of God or himself.

(1.) In regard of *God*. Prayer is an act of religious worship; we have immediately to do with the great God, to whom we approach in prayer. Now religion is as tender as the eye; it is not a thing to be played with or handled without great care and heedfulness. Prayer is too sacred a duty to be performed between sleeping and waking, with a heavy eye or a drowsy heart. This God complained of, ‘There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of me,’ Isa. 64:7. He counts it no prayer where the heart is not stirred up and awake. No way can we more honour or dishonour God than in prayer. O how then ought we to watch to this duty!

(2.) Again, in regard of *ourselves*; for our behaviour in prayer hath a universal influence into all the passages of our whole life. As a man is in this duty so he likely to be in all the rest. If careless in praying, then slighty in hearing, loose in his walking; he shall find that he miscarries in all his enterprises, is ensnared in all his enjoyments, baffled with every temptation, and discomposed at every affliction that meets him. And the reason of all this is—because our strength both to do and suffer comes from God. Now God communicates his assistance to his children in a way of communion with them. They ask, and they have; they seek, and find; knock, and the treasury of mercy is opened to them. Prayer is the channel in which the stream of divine grace, blessing, and comfort runs from God the fountain into the cistern of their

hearts. Dam up the channel and the stream is stopped. If the stomach doth not its office all the members want their nourishment. If the trade fails in the shop there is but a poor house kept within.

2. *Reason.* Watchfulness is of *as great importance to prayer as prayer is to all our other duties.* No duty can be despatched well without prayer, nor prayer without watching; for it is not prayer, but prayer performed in a holy spiritual manner, that is effectual. Now, this cannot be done when the is off his watch. Take the Christian napping, with his grace in a slumber, and he is no fitter to pray than a man is to work that is asleep. Whatever a man is doing, sleep, when it comes, puts an end to it. Sleep is the great leveller of the world, it makes all men alike. The strong man is as unable to defend himself from an enemy in his sleep as the child. The rich man asleep and the poor man are alike; he enjoys his estate no more than if he had none. Thus the Christian, while his graces are asleep, is even like another that hath no grace—as to the present use of them, I mean—he will pray as the carnal man doth, enjoy God no more in the duty than such a one would do. O how sad is this! and yet how prone are we to give way unto this drowsiness of spirit in prayer! It creeps insensibly upon the soul, as sleep doth upon the body; the heart is gone before the Christian is well aware. The more need therefore there is to watch against it.

3. *Reason.* Because *Satan is so watchful against prayer,* therefore it behoves the Christian to watch unto prayer. Where should the strongest guard be set but where the enemy maketh his fiercest assault? This is the fort he batters and labours with all his might to beat the Christian from, well knowing the shot which gall him most come out of it. What he doth otherwise against the Christian is on a design to hinder his prayers, I Peter 3:7, as an enemy falls upon one part of the city to draw their forces from another place which he chiefly desires to gain. Indeed the soul never falls fully into his hands till it throws up this duty. 'Pray that ye enter not into temptation.' Sometimes the city is taken, and the enemy is forced back again, by those in the castle which commands the city. Prayer is like such a castle. Sometimes the Christian hath nothing left him but a spirit of prayer, and with this he beats back the devil out of all his advantages, and wrings out of his hands his new-gotten victories.

[WHEREIN *watchfulness unto prayer* consists.]

Second. The second thing I promised was to show *wherein the Christian is to express his watchfulness in reference to this duty of prayer.* Take it in these three particulars. 1. He is to watch before prayer. 2. He is to watch in prayer. 3. He is to watch after prayer.

1. The Christian is to show his watchfulness *before prayer*; and that,

(1.) By watching for the *fit season to pray in.* We cannot be always on our knees. We may *serve* God all the day, but worship him we cannot; this is a duty that requires some set times for its exercises. Now it is our duty to watch for the season of prayer as the merchant watcheth for the exchange hour; he orders his other

occasions so that by no means he may miss that. Thus the Christian should endeavour to dispose his occasions so that his devotions be not shut out or crowded up into straits of time by his improvidence; no, nor interfere with other necessary duties. Many a fair child is lost by an untimely birth, and good duty spoiled by being unseasonably performed.

(2.) By keeping a *strict watch over himself in his whole course*.

(a) By *shunning all that may defile his conscience*, and so render him unmeet for communion with God. Thus the priest was to watch himself that he touched no unclean thing, God thereby signifying that he will have them to be holy in their lives that approach near to him in the duties of his worship.

(b) By a *holy care to observe and lay up the most remarkable passages of God's providence to him*, as also the frame and behaviour of his own heart to God all along the interval between prayer and prayer. The want of this part of watchfulness is the cause why we are so jejune and barren in the performance of this duty. It is no wonder that he should want matter for his prayer at night, and trifle in it with impertinences, who did not treasure up what passed in the day betwixt God and him. Though the minister be not making his sermon all the week, yet by observing in his other studies what may be useful for him in that work, he is furnished with many hints that help him when he goes about it. Such an advantage the Christian will find for prayer by laying up the remarkable instances of God's providences to him and of his carriage to God again under them; these will furnish him with necessary materials for the performance. The bag is filling while the kine are feeding or chewing the cud, and accordingly yields more plentifully when milked at night. Truly thus it is here. That Christian must needs be most fruitful and plentiful in his devotions, when he comes to pour out his heart to God in prayer, that hath been thus filling it all the day with meditations suitable and helpful to the duty. Would he praise God? He hath the preservations, deliverances, and assistances which God hath given into him at hand, in the commonplace-book of his memory, which another hath lost for want of writing them down in this book of remembrance. Would he humbly confess the sins of the day? He presently recalls, 'In this company I forgot myself and spake unadvisedly with my lips; in that enjoyment I observed my heart to be inordinate; this duty I omitted; that I was remiss and negligent in doing.' Now what a wonderful help hath such a soul above another that walks at random to get his soul into a melting mournful frame? The eye affects the heart. The presence of the object actuates the affection. The sight of an enemy stirs up anger; the sight of a dear friend excites love, and puts a man into a sudden ravishment —whom, may be, he should not have thought on, if he had not seen him. How can they mourn for the sins of the day at night who remember them no more than Nebuchadnezzar his dream?

(c) By the *frequent exercise of ejaculatory prayer*. He doth not watch to pray that never thinks on God but when he is on his knees; for, by this long discontinuing his acquaintance with God, he indisposeth himself for the more solemn addresses of his soul to him. Long fasting takes away the stomach. The Christian will find that the

oftener he is refreshing his spirit with those little sips and short gusts of heaven, the larger draught he will be able to take when he returns to his set meal of morning and evening prayer. For, by the means of these he will be secured from worldly affections, which exceedingly deaden the heart, and also be seasoned and prepared for further communion with God. These short walks often taken keep the soul in breath for a longer journey.

2. The Christian must watch *in prayer*. It is not enough to watch the child that he goes to school, but the master's eye must watch him in school; to be idle at school is as bad as to truant from it. Thou dost well, Christian, to take care of thyself before prayer, and to see that the duty be not omitted; but wilt thou now leave it at the school-door? Truly then all thy former care is to little purpose.

(1.) Thou must *watch thy outward man*, and rouse that up from sleep and sloth. If the body be heavy-eyed in prayer the soul must needs be heavy-heeled; the pen drops out of the writer's hand when he falls asleep. 'Watch and pray,' saith Christ to his disciples; he knew that they could not do that work nodding. And yet, how many do we see at the very time of prayer in our congregations so far from watching, in this sense, that they invite sleep to come upon them by laying themselves in a lazy posture? Certainly, friends, communion with God is worth keeping our eyes open. Little do these drones think what contempt they cast upon God and his ordinance. I wonder any can sleep at the worship of God and not dream of hell-fire in their sleep. But it is not enough to keep thy awaked, if thou sufferest it to wander. 'Turn away mine eyes,' saith David, 'from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way,' Ps. 119:37.

(2.) Thou must *watch thy soul in prayer*. The soul is the man, and the soul in prayer is the very soul of prayer. Watch what its ends and aims are, that it shoots not beside the mark. Watch what strength and force thy soul puts to the work. Our prayers miscarry by shooting short as well as wide. In a word, thou must keep thy heart with all diligence from one end of the duty to the other, or else it will give thee the slip before thou art aware. How oft, alas! do our souls begin to speak with God in prayer, and on a sudden fall a chatting with the world! One while, our hearts are warm at the work, and we pursue hard after God with full cry of our affections; but instantly we are at a loss and hunt cold again. Holy David was sensible of this, and therefore we have him in the midst of this duty begging help from God to call in his gadding heart: 'Unite my heart to fear thy name,' Ps. 86:11.

3. The Christian is to watch *after prayer*.

(1.) By calling his soul to *a review concerning the duty*, how it was performed by him. God himself, when he had finished the works of creation, looks back upon them, 'And God saw every thing that he had made,' Gen. 1:31; that is, he viewed his work, as an artist would do a piece he had drawn. He hath given us all a faculty to reflect upon our actions, and looks we should use it, yea, complains of those that do not 'consider their ways and doings.' Many duties depend upon this. He that looks not back how he prayed, can he be humbled for the sins that cleaved to it? And will God pardon

what he takes no care to know, that he may show his repentance for them? Or will he mend those faults in the next prayer which he found not out in the former? No, but rather increase them. We need not water weeds; let them but stand unplucked up and they will grow alone. This is the sluggard whose soul will soon run into a wilderness, and be overgrown with those sins in prayer, which at last may choke the very spirit of supplication in him.

(2.) By observing what is the *issue and success of his prayer*. As he is to look back and see how he prayed, so forward to observe what return he finds of his prayer. To pray, and not watch what becomes of our prayer, is a great folly and no little sin; like children that throw stones into a river, which they never look to see more. What is this but to take the name of God in vain, and play with an ordinance that is holy and sacred? Yet thus, alas! do many knock at God's door—as idle children at ours—and then run away to the world, as they to their play, and think no more of their prayers. Or, like Pilate, who asked Christ, 'What is truth?' and, when he had said this, went out to the Jews, forgetting what he asked. Holy David did not think prayer such an idle errand. 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up,' Ps. 5:3. First, he is careful to take his aim right in delivering this arrow of prayer, which he sends with a message to heaven, 'I will direct my prayer unto thee.' Then he is as careful to observe where his arrow lights, and what answer is made to it, 'and I will look up,' which amounts to as much as that expression, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak,' Ps. 85:8, that is, to me, concerning the prayer which in those words immediately foregoing he had made, 'Show us thy mercy, O lord, and grant us thy salvation.' When the merchant hath sent his ship to sea, he is inquiring at the exchange after her, to hear how she got to her port, whether on her return, and with what lading. When the husbandman hath cast his seed into the ground, then he comes every day almost to see how it comes up. This, Christian, is to watch unto prayer, to wait for answers to prayer. Mordecai, no doubt had put up many prayers for Esther, and therefore he waits at the kings gate, looking what answer God would in his providence give thereunto.

*[The Christian's guard or watch
about prayer SET FOR HIM.]*

Third. The third thing I promised was to *set the Christian's watch for him, by giving some little counsel and help towards his constant performing this duty of watchfulness.* In doing this, we take the following particulars.

1. *Particular.* Harbour not any known sin in thy bosom. Sin hath two contrary effects on the conscience, and both sad enough. Either it fills the conscience with horror, or benumbs and stupifies it; it breaks the soul's rest, or takes away its sense. The latter is the more common. Suffer the devil to anoint thy temples with this opium, and thou art in danger to fall into the sleeping disease of a stupid conscience;

little list then thou wilt have to pray. Or if it hath the other effect upon thee, thou wilt be as much afraid, as now thou dost little desire, to pray.

2. *Particular. Beware of any excess in thy affections to the creature.* A drunken man, of all other, is most unfitting to watch. Such a one will be asleep as soon as he is set in his chair. Now all inordinacy of affection is a spiritual drunkenness. Christ joins both together, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares,' Luke 21:34. It is a preservative against drowsiness of spirit, that the day of the Lord might not take them napping. And of the two, the drunkenness of the affection is the worse. He that is bodily drunk over-night, is sober by the morning; but he that is overcharged with the cares or love of the world, rises as drunk as when he lay down; and how can he then watch unto prayer? We have therefore these two often joined together, 'Let us watch and be sober,' I Thes. 5:6; 'Be ye therefore sober, and watch,' I Peter 4:7. Whatever the affection is, the intemperance of it lays the soul under a distemper, and indisposeth it to prayer. Is it sorrow? Our Saviour finds his disciples 'sleeping for sorrow,' when they should have watched and prayed, Luke 22:45. Is it love? This laid Samson asleep in Delilah's lap. The heart of man hath not room enough for God and the world too. Worldly affections do not befriend spiritual. The heart which spends itself in mourning for worldly crosses, will find the stream runs low when he should weep for his sins. If the cares of this life fill his head and heart he will have little list to wait on God for spiritual purposes. It is no wonder that the master finds his servant asleep in the day, when he should be at work for him, if he sat up revelling all the night.

3. *Particular. Resist this spiritual drowsiness when it first creeps upon thee.* Sleep is easier kept off when approaching, than shaken off when it hath got possession and bound the senses. This sleepy disease of the soul steals insensibly upon us, even as the night steps in by little and little. When, therefore, thou findest it coming, rouse up thyself; as a man who hath business to do would start up from his chair to shake off his drowsiness. Now thou mayst observe these few symptoms of this distemper invading thee.

(1.) *An unwillingness and backwardness to duty.* If thou findest this, it appears thou beginnest to be heavy-eyed. When grace is wakeful, the Christian needs not many words to persuade him into God's presence. 'Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said, Thy face, Lord will I seek.' therefore, conclude thou mayest that some vapours have fumed up from thy corruptions, to dull and deaden thy heart to the work. He that would run to the door, when awake, at the first knock of his dear friend to let him in, may, when between sleeping and waking, let him stand too long. This was the spouse's case, and it lost her the company of her beloved. It showed plainly she was in a sleepy distemper, in that she was so backward to duty; for that was the door that Christ would have met her at.

(2.) *Formality in prayer* is a certain symptom that a sleepy distemper hangs about thee. Grace awake is full of life and activity; at least it discovers itself by making

the soul deeply sensible of its deadness and dulness. *Vigilantis est somnium narrare.* saith Seneca—it shows the man awake that tells his dream, what he did in his sleep; and it proves the soul awake that can feelingly and mournfully confess his deadness.

(3.) *Prevalency of wandering thoughts.* In sleep, fancy and imagination rules and ranges without any control. If thy thoughts range and scatter into impertinences in time of prayer, and meet with no check from thee, it shows thy grace, if thou hast any, is not well awake.

4. *Particular. Express a conscientious diligence at thy particular calling in the intervals of prayer.* They that sit up to watch had some need of work to keep them awake. Idleness is but one remove from sleep. I cannot believe that he who lazeth a day awake in idleness, should find his heart awake to pray at night; for he hath that day lived in the neglect of a duty as necessary as this, and it is bad going to one duty through the neglect of another. There is a generation of men indeed, that under a pretence of watching and praying always, betake themselves to their cloisters, and renounce all secular employments, as if it were easy to put off the world as to change their clothes, and get on a cowl or a religious habit; but the world hath found those places commonly to have proved, not so much houses to pray in, as dens to draw their prey into. It is more like that those who are pampered with sloth and fulness of bread should be eaten up with luxury and sensuality than with zeal and devotion. The air, when still, thickens and corrupts; the spirits in our body are choked with rest; and the soul needs motion and exercise as much as either. In spiritual offices it cannot hold out without intermittings; therefore, God hath provided our particular callings as a relief to our spiritual devotions. Only, our care must be not to overdo. The same thing may quicken and weaken, wake us and lay us asleep. No greater help to our religious offices than a faithful discharge of our particular calling; no greater duller of the Spirit of prayer than the same when inordinately pursued. The same oil feeds the lamp and drowns it if excessively poured on. Hold the candle one way, and the wax nourishes the flame; turn the other end up, it puts it out.

5. *Particular. Preserve a sense of thy spiritual wants.* As fulness inclines the body to sleep, so doth a conceit of spiritual fulness the soul. When the belly is full then the bones would be at rest—the man hath more mind to sleep than work; whereas he that is pinched with hunger, his empty craving stomach keeps him awake. If once thou beginnest to have a high opinion of thyself, and thy spiritual hunger be a little stayed—from a conceit of thy present store, and sufficiency of thy grace—truly then thou wilt compose thyself to sleep, and sing the rich man's lullaby to thy soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease.' The Corinthians are a sad instance for this purpose. 'Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us,' I Cor. 4:8. Paul is now nobody with you. The time hath been you could not be without his pains. The hungry child did no more cry for the breast than you for the word preached by him. But now your stomach is stayed, you are full and can live without him. Whereas, God knows, it was a fulness of wind of pride, not of solid grace. It is the nature of grace to dilate the heart and make room

for more, but of pride to cloy and glut the soul. God hath long kept open house in England; the wine-cellar door of his ordinances hath not been shut upon us; we have had free access to drink, and that abundantly, of their sweet wine. But, alas! may it not be for a lamentation to see how many are drunk with spiritual pride, rather than filled with grace, after so long an enjoyment of them!—insomuch that some have attempted to stave the very vessels from which they have drawn this wine! Such are they that decry all ordinances, and would down with ministers and ministry; yea, who can live without public preaching and private praying also. Others, not so mad drunk as the former, are yet fallen asleep under the tap; they have lost their first life in and love to ordinances; they sit with sleepy eyes and dead hearts under them. Well, Christian, if thou wouldst keep thy soul awake for this or any other ordinance, take heed thou lovest not the sense of thy wants. Begging is the poor man's trade. When thou beginnest to conceit thyself rich, then thou wilt be in danger to give it over, or be remiss in it.

6. *Particular. Retire often to muse on some soul-awakening meditations.* We seldom sleep when we are thoughtful, especially if the thoughts we muse on be of weight and importance enough to intend and occupy the mind. Indeed, idle trivial thoughts such as have nothing to invite attention, are given as a ready means to bring a man asleep—I mean bodily sleep. That Christian who neglects frequently to meditate on spiritual things, and lets his thoughts walk all day in the company of carnal worldly occasions, I should wonder if he finds his heart awake at night to pray in a spiritual manner. Give me therefore leave to present a few subjects for thy meditations to insist upon, and they will be as the brazen ball which some philosophers used to hold in their hand that they might not sleep too long, or as the alarm which men set overnight to call them up to their business early in the morning.

(1.) Meditate of *Christ's coming to judgment*. Surely thou wilt not easily sleep while this trumpet, that shall call all mankind to judgment, shall sound in thy ear. The reason why men sleep so soundly in security is, because they either do not believe this, or at least do not think of it seriously so as to expect it. The servant that looks for his master will be loath to be found in bed, when he comes; no, sits up to open the door for him when he knocks. Christ hath told us he 'will come;' but not *when*, that we might never put off our clothes or put out the candle. 'Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come,' Matt. 24:42. There are indeed negative signs concerning his coming to the general judgement of the world, by which we may know he will not yet come; as the fall of Babylon, the calling of the Jews, and other prophecies, that must be fulfilled; before which he will not come. But there are none such, from which we may conclude that his coming to any of us in particular, to take us away by death, and summon us to our particular judgment before his bar, shall not yet be. Thou art young; thou canst not therefore say thou shalt not die as yet. Alas! measure the coffins in the churchyard, and thou wilt find some of thy length. Young and old are within the reach of death's scythe. Old men indeed go to death; their age calls for it. But, young men cannot hinder death's coming unto them. Thou art rich,

will this excuse thee? Rich men indeed can get others to serve in their arms here, when their prince calls them forth to war; but 'there is no discharge in this war.' Solomon tells us 'Thou must personally do this. Thou art strong and lusty, thou canst not therefore say that death will be longer at work to fell thee down. Some indeed he cuts down by chips in consumptive diseases —they die by piecemeals; others he tears up in one night, as a tree by a tempest. O think of this, and thy sleep will depart from thee!

(2.) Consider *the devil is always awake*. Is it time for them in the city to sleep, when the enemy without watch, and may be are climbing the walls? Our Saviour takes it for granted, 'If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up,' Matt. 24:43. Of all the nights in the year he would not then have slept. Would Saul have slept in his trench, if he had thought David had been so near? Or Sisera have lain down to rest, if he had seen the hammer and nail in Jael's hand to drive through his temples? 'Hannibal is at the gates!' was enough to wake the whole city of Rome, and call them to their arms. And is not *diabolus ad ostium*—the devil is at thy door, enough to keep thee out of thy bed of sloth and negligence? What day in all the year is no term to Satan? What place or company art thou in, that he cannot make a snare to thy soul? What member of thy body, or faculty of thy soul, which is not in danger to be abused by him? Hast thou not an inmate in thy own bosom that watcheth to open the gate to him? and is there not a constant correspondence between them? O how oft doth he beat us—as Bernard saith—with our own staff; and as the thief sometimes serves the traveller, binds us with our own garters! Shall we not always watch to pray, when he watcheth to tempt? Shall not we keep our correspondence with God, and Christ, our allies in heaven, as he doth with our flesh that is his confederate?

*Ut jugulent homines surgunt de nocte latrones;
Ut t'ipsum serves non expergisceris;—*

—shall thy enemy be awake to seek to cut thy throat, and wilt not thou rise to save it?

(3.) Consider *wicked men are awake, and hard at work for Satan and their lusts*. The philosopher blushed that the smith should be up and have his hammer in his hand before he had his book. O may it not put the Christian to shame! Consider how watchful the men of the world are to follow their worldly business. Do they not rise early, and go to bed late, grudging the very time that is spent to refresh nature in the night with sleep, so bent they are upon their carnal projects! The philosopher observed this, and shamed himself for suffering the smith to be at his anvil in the morning sooner than he was at his book. O Christian! should it not make thee blush much more to see the whole town up and as busy as bees about a garden, one flying this way, another that way—and all to bring a little more of this world's perishing pelf into their hive, out of which death, ere long, will smoke them, and force them to leave

what with so much pains they have gathered for others they know not who, possibly their greatest enemies—while thou, Christian, sleepest away thy precious time, though thou art sure to carry thy gettings into the other world with thee, and there enjoy the fruit of thy short labour here with everlasting glory! Nay, consider how watchful the wicked are to take all opportunities to pursue their works of darkness. The adulterer watcheth for the twilight to meet his minion; and wilt not thou watch unto prayer, that thou mayest fill thy soul with spiritual loves in communion with thy God? The thief is up at midnight to get his prey; and wilt not thou break thy rest a little for to obtain a richer treasure than is to be found in the coffers of the richest princes that the world boasts of? Shall these be at so much pains to satisfy their lusts, and thou take none to honour and enjoy thy God? O what a shame was it to the heavy-eyed disciples that they could not watch to pray with their Master, when Judas that bold traitor was so wakeful to be up in the dead of the night to betray him into his murderers' hands!

(4.) Consider *how short the time is that thou art desired to watch*. 'Could you not watch with me one hour?' saith Christ,' Matt. 26:40. Ere long, Christian, thou shalt be called off thy guard, and then thou shalt have all rest, though no sleep. It is but for this short life thou art put to stand upon this hard duty; and is that so long? Others do not count it so. O how soon is a day, a year, yea a life, passed at play or sin? The great complaint that such make is, 'Time is short.' They wish they could clip its wings, and take off the weights from this clock that make it post away so fast. Is time so short and sweet to spend in sin, and can it be tedious to thee to bestow it in devotion? Why should an hour in the closet be thought by a saint long, when day and night spent in an ale-house is too short for the sinner? But, above all, consider whether it be not better to watch and pray here on earth for a few days than to wake and roar in hell under endless and easeless torments!

(5.) Consider seriously *how great a loser thou hast been already in thy heavenly trade for want of watching*. It is with the Christian as with some negligent merchant, who takes notice of some one loss of a round sum that befalls him—may be some hundreds at a clap. At this he cries he shall be undone; but regards not the pence and shillings that he idly spends, nor considers his loss which follows upon his daily negligence. Here his estate melts insensibly, and he is not aware of it; whereas, would he count what in this dribbling way is lost by retail, he might find it amounts to more than the other. Thus the Christian sometimes is troubled for one great sin into which he hath fallen—and that not without reason—but withal, he observes not how he neglects this duty to-day, and negligently performs that at another time; how he now prays coldly for want of due preparation, and what little fruit comes of another for want of watchfulness after it; whereby in time he falls low, though with an easy descent, step by step; whereas, if he could bring the several items of these his particular losses together, he would find them swell into a sad reckoning, except with these his losses he hath also lost—which is the greatest—the tenderness of his conscience. Now, Christian, hast thou not a mind to thrive at last? And shall a

careless Christian add to his stock? Did you ever go by the sluggard's field and not find it overgrown with thorns? Wouldst thou but be persuaded to make it thy business daily to watch thy heart—how thou prayest, and how thou walkest after thou hast been at prayer—thou shouldst find a blessed change in thy spiritual affairs. This strictness will at first be uneasy, like a new suit; but every day that will wear off, and a sweet facility follow when thou shalt see thy gains come trowling in by it. He that finds how well he is paid for his diligence by the increase of his estate, will not grudge the sluggard his ease when he shall see him walk by his door in rags. It was the saying once of a rich man, who, by God's blessing on his diligence, had raised a vast estate, that at his first setting up in the world he got a little with much trouble, but afterwards he got his great gains with little trouble. And thou, Christian, wilt find the same in thy spiritual trade. Thy trouble will be most at first, but thy gains most at last; and the trouble less, because the way of godliness, by use and experience, will be naturalized to thee, and consequently become easy and delightful.

(6.) Consider *what others lose by thy not watching*. He that lives in a town wrongs his neighbour as well as himself by not looking to his fence: thus one Christian may injure many by not keeping his own watch.

(a) *Thy very example is a wrong to others*, for this sleepy disease is catching; thy loose conversation may make others so, as one learns to yawn of another. It is no small blessing to live among active Christians, whose zeal and forwardness in the ways of God is exemplary; this puts mettle in those that follow them; the heavenly holy conversation of a master is a help to the whole family.

(b) *Thou indisposest thyself for doing thy duty to them*. We are commanded to watch over one another in love, as those that are concerned in our brethren's welfare. Now, how unfit is he to watch over others that doth not watch himself? to 'provoke to love and to good works,' who needs himself the spur? Can one asleep wake another that is so?

(7.) Lastly, Consider *Christ's care over thee*. Look upon him in his providence. That eye which neither sleeps by night nor slumbers by day is thy constant keeper. Consider him in his intercession. There he prays for thee, 'watching thereunto with all perseverance.' It is his trade and business in heaven, for he lives to make intercession for his saints. Consider him in his Spirit. What is he but Christ's messenger sent as our guardian to take care of the saints in his absence? In a word, consider him in the gospel ministry, which is set up for this very purpose, to 'watch for your souls.' Yea, every private saint hath a charge to be his brother's keeper. This well considered would make thee,

(a) *Watchful to promote his glory* that so carefully provides for thy safety. What put David into such a rage against Nabal but the disrespect that his servants found at his hands to whom he had been so serviceable? 'In vain have I kept all that this fellow hath.'

(b) It would make thee the *more watchful over thy own soul*, if thou hast so much ingenuity as to fear grieving thy God, who expresseth this tender care over

thee. What greater grief can the indulgent parent have than to see his child not mind his own good after all his care and cost laid out upon him? He joys to see the money he gives him improved and increased by his diligence; but it breaks his very heart with sorrow when it is all wasted and squandered away by ill husbandry.

DIVISION FIFTH.—THE CONSTANCY PROPER TO PRAYER.

'With all perseverance.'

These words, *'with all perseverance,'* contain the fifth branch in the apostle's directory for prayer—THE CONSTANCY PROPER TO PRAYER—which I shall despatch briefly in these four heads. FIRST. By giving the importance of this phrase, *'all perseverance.'* SECOND. By giving the reason why we are to pray *'with all perseverance.'* THIRD. I shall cast in some considerations to move us to the duty. FOURTH. Wind up the discourse with a word of counsel and direction for the help of the weak Christian therein.

[Import of the phrase 'WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE.']

FIRST. Let us explain *the importance of the phrase* *'with all perseverance.'* Here is perseverance, yea *'all perseverance,'* required in prayer. *First.* Let us inquire what is meant by *'perseverance.'* *Second.* What is meant by *'all perseverance.'*

First. What is meant by *'perseverance.'* The word *perseverance* here used comes from *persevere*, the same with *persevere*—a letter only transposed to melt the sound. It signifies strength and victory; hence its compound *persevere*, is to prosecute any business with an unwearied constancy till all difficulties be conquered and the thing at last be accomplished. It is used for the diligence and labour of hunting dogs that follow the chase till at last they get the game pursued; it is applied also to lackeys that with great labour run after their masters and are at their hand in a journey. In Scripture it is frequently applied to the duty of prayer, as Acts 6:4; Col. 4:2; Rom. 12:12, and signifies that invincible patience, courage, and constancy which a Christian is to show in upholding this duty of prayer.

Question. But are *'praying always'* in the beginning of this verse, and this *'praying with perseverance,'* the same? If not, wherein lies the difference?

Answer. It cannot be thought the apostle, being giving directions for prayer, would let them interfere one with another, and in so short a space repeat the same direction over again in other words; the rest are all distinct, so therefore will we take these. Calvin makes this to be the difference:—By ‘praying always,’ saith he, he exhorts us to pray in prosperity as well as adversity; and not then to intermit the practice of this duty because not driven to it by such outward pressing necessities. But, by ‘praying with perseverance,’ *admomet ne defatigemur, instandum esse alacri animo; infracto studio continuandas esse preces, si non statim consequamur quod volumus*—he admonisheth that we be not weary of the work; but continue instant and constant in its performance, though we have not presently what we pray for. By ‘praying always,’ we are exhorted to the daily constant exercise of the duty of prayer, not to neglect the seasons the seasons for prayers as they return upon us. By ‘praying with perseverance,’ we are pressed to bear up against discouragements as to any particular suit or request we make at the throne of grace, and not to give over though we have not a speedy answer to it. So that the former is opposed to a neglect of duty in its stated seasons, and the latter to a fainting in our spirits as to any particular suit we put up. We may keep our constant course of prayer, and yet not persevere in prayer for this or that mercy, which God withholds sometime for the exercise of our grace.

Second. I shall show what is meant by ‘all perseverance.’

1. By ‘all perseverance’ is meant *such a perseverance as holds out to the end*—till God doth give the thing we pray for, or takes away the subject of our prayer, as he did in David’s case for his sick child by his death. It is possible a soul may continue long, yet at last faint when it sees the time for answering still protracted. God still stays, and no news of his coming, after many a despatch sent to heaven upon that occasion. O it is hard to hold up our hands, with Moses, ‘to the going down of the sun!’ Christ complains how rare and scarce such a faith is to be found, when he bears long before he throws in the mercy prayed for. ‘Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?’ Luke 18:8. Shall he find so much faith as to keep his people at prayer in expectation of his coming to their relief?

2. By ‘all perseverance’ is meant a *perseverance of the whole man in prayer*. We must not only persevere to hold up the outward performance of the duty of prayer; but persevere to exert the inward powers of our souls and their graces in the duty. The duty may be kept up, and the heart be down in performing it. The faith, zeal, and other graces of the soul may be gone or act but feebly. Like an army that hath not yet quitted the field, but their powder and are even all spent; there they stand, and set a good face on it, but can do little or nothing to offend the enemy or defend themselves. Thus many in afflictions pray still. They have not yet given over the duty and run out of the field. But alas! their faith fails and their heart quails; there is little life and vigour to be seen in the performance. Here is some kind of perseverance, but not this ‘all perseverance,’ which above all requires the perseverance of grace in its actings at the duty. So we translate the word, Rom. 12:12. What is here

'with perseverance,' is there 'continuing instant in prayer;' the word is BD@F6"DJ,B@Ø<J,H. Some are 'instant,' but it lasts not. If they find the mercy comes, they draw hard; but if their chariot of prayer be set, and after a pull or two the mercy comes not, their faith jades, and they give over the work. Others are constant, but not instant; they continue to pray, but pray themselves cold; they grow lifeless and listless in the work, as if they looked for nothing to come of it. We must join both together, or expect benefit from neither.

[WHY we are to pray 'with all perseverance.']

SECOND. I proceed to the second thing promised, viz. to show *why we must pray 'with all perseverance,'* which take in these particulars:—

First. It is *strictly commanded.* 'Pray without ceasing,' I Thes. 5:17; that is, without fainting. So our Saviour, Luke 18:1, 'And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.' Mark, not only that they might, but 'ought.' It is indeed a high privilege to us, and a low stoop in the high God, to give us leave thus to lie at his door, and to suffer the cry of our prayers to be ever sounding his ears. We, I ma sure, could not like to have beggars knocking day and night at our doors; but so infinitely good is God, that he doth not only allow us this boldness, but also commands it, that the fear of a sin might move us, if the loss of a privilege will not.

Second. This perseverance in prayer is *highly recommended.* Indeed perseverance crowns every grace and commends every duty. It is not our faith and hope, but to 'hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end,' that God looks at, Heb. 3:6. Not the seeming zeal and swiftness of our motion in the ways of God at our first start and setting forth, but the constancy of a well-breathed soul in holding on his course till the race be finished, that Christ commends: 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed,' John 8:31. So in prayer. Not the short spurts of an inconstant zeal, that begins to pray as they say the French do to fight—like thunder and lightning, but if the first charge carries it not, then they quail, and are quite cowed in their spirits. No; it is not this soft metal, whose edge is thus easily turned, that God likes in prayer, but a zeal tempered and hardened so with resolution that makes it cut through all delays and difficulties. This God highly commends. It got Jacob the name of a prince, so nobly he behaved himself in this duty, holding it out till break of day with God, and then would not let him go till he had blessed him.

Third. It is *that which God intends by his delays and seeming denials.* Why deals he thus with his people? Surely it is to put their graces to the trial, whether they will quit the siege for a few repulses or fall on with more courage. He holds his peace, to make them cry the louder; steps aside, to make them hunt more eagerly after him. He lays blocks before the wheel of their prayers, to try their mettle how well they will draw, when it seems a dead pull, and the mercy comes not at their prayer. Now two

things God aims at by his people's perseverance in prayer. 1. His own glory. 2. Their advantage. These two are never severed.

1. *His own glory.* What fairer occasion can the Christian have in his whole life to honour God, than by holding fast his integrity, and keeping his allegiance to God firm, when he seems to be neglected, yea, forsaken of him? Certainly God would never have put Job to so much trouble, nor have made him pray and stay so long for the gracious issues of his providence, but to glorify himself in the faith and patience of his faithful servant. 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord,' saith the apostle James, ch. 5:11. Truly, we could not have heard so much of his patience, if we had not heard so much of his troubles. Had God put an end sooner to them, he might have found more ease, but not God more honour. This was it that God was pleased with and counted himself highly honoured by—that Satan with all his wits and wiles could not make Job give over praying, much less fall of cursing God; no, not when God broke him with his tempest, and seemed not to regard him or his prayers. It pleaseth us most when our prayers make the shortest voyage—when they are at heaven and back again with an answer quickly; but it glorifies God most when he lays an embargo—as I may so say—upon our prayers, that no answer comes from heaven to us, and yet we will send more after them, as Jacob did Benjamin after his other son, who was then prisoner in Egypt. When the poor soul will not be taken off the duty by any intervening discouragements, but presseth harder upon God from his seeming denials, this is indeed to give glory to God. 'Blessed is he that hath not seen, and yet' thus 'believeth.'

2. God, by his people's persevering long in prayer before he gives in his gracious answer, intends *their advantage*.

(1.) He usually pays them *use for their forbearance*. The longer they pray, the more redundant the mercy is when it comes. Such a mercy, that comes as an answer of persevering prayers, is compared to the husbandman's gains at harvest, which abundantly recompenseth his whole year's patience. 'In due season we shall reap, if we faint not,' Gal. 6:9. The breast is filling for the child while the mother is sleeping. God sometimes seems to sleep and forget his poor children that cry to him, but he is preparing the fuller mercy for them.

(2.) Such mercies are got with longest and greatest difficulties, they come with *sweetest manifestations of divine love*: 'O woman, great is thy faith,' Matt. 15:28. This poor woman had not her request so soon granted as some others, but she lost nothing by it; for, with the recovery of her child—which was all her errand—she carries away with her a high testimony from Christ's own mouth to the truth and eminency of her grace. She who was at first called a dog is at last owned for a dear child.

(3.) Such mercies as are the issue of persevering prayers, they are *received usually with more joy and thankfulness than others*. Partly they are so, because the Christian's desires are more intense and sharp by long staying and earnest praying for them—and so he tastes more sweetness in the mercy, as he that comes hungry from a long journey at plough relisheth his food better than another that hath not

whetted his appetite with any labour or exercise; and also because such mercies give disappointment to the Christian's many fears, which their long stay occasioned. When God is long a coming, we are prone to question whether he will come at last or no: 'Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?' Ps. 77:7, 8. See how many sad thoughts gathered about this good man's heart; which, though they did not overthrow his chariot of prayer, yet clogged his wheels, and made him drive with a heavy heart. Now, for a mercy to break out of so dark a cloud, it must needs bring such a glory with it as to ravish the soul with joy and enlarge it into thankfulness. Those judgments amaze and dispirit sinners most which come after long peace and prosperity, when they think the danger is over and bitterness of death is even past; as in Haman's case, who was sent to the gallows after he had vaunted how he was invited to the queen's banquet. This strange turn of his affairs made it a double death to him. So, mercies that surprise the saint after he hath prayed long, and can hear no tidings that they are on their way, O how it affects his heart with joy and gratitude! The church had prayed 'without ceasing' for Peter in prison, but still he is there, even to the very time when Herod would have brought him forth—probably to his execution. Now, when he came himself to bring the joyful news their prayers were heard—while they were instant at the work—it is said 'they were astonished,' Acts 12:16.

(4.) They were usually *more holily used and improved*. For God holds his people long at prayer for a mercy many times for this very end—to prepare and season their hearts, that, when they have it, they may know the better how to employ it for his glory and their own good. None are more careful to husband a great estate than those who are at most pains to get it. Hannah prayed long for a son, but none is given. This makes her add a vow to her prayer: 'If thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life,' I Sam. 1:11. Happy was it for this good woman she had not her desire sooner. If she had received him at first, haply she had never given him back to God again. The Lord sometimes forbears to give a mercy to us, only to get us deeper into bonds to lay it out for him when we have it.

(5.) The last advantage that comes to the Christian by perseverance in prayer is, *when the mercy is at last denied*. And it is this—it will enable and dispose him to bear the denial more meekly and holily than another. He that is short-spirited, and cannot wait on God for a mercy, will not easily submit to him in a denial; whereas, he that keeps up a spirit of prayer for it, when God comes to take away the subject of his prayer, will acquiesce, now he sees God hath fully declared his will in the thing. David and Job are pregnant instances for this. Job lets not a day pass without prayer for his children; and how does the man behave himself when they are slain? Doth he fret and fume? Doth he curse God for making them a sacrifice for whom he had offered so many sacrifices? No; he meekly submits to his holy will; he opens not his mouth against him, but in praises to him. So David, when his child was dead—for whom,

while living, he ceased not passionately to pray—to show how well satisfied he was with divine providence, he washeth his blubbered cheeks, puts off his mourning apparel, and goes to the house of God to worship, II Sam. 12:20. Prayer is a great heart-easer; it breathes out those distempered passions which, being bound up in others, break out when God at any time crosseth them in their wills.

[SOME CONSIDERATIONS *pressing the duty*
of persevering prayer.]

THIRD. Having shown why we are to persevere in prayer, I come now to the third place, to cast *in some considerations to move us to the duty*. Christ bestowed a parable on his disciples for this very end, to show that ‘men ought always to pray and not to faint.’ Surely, then, it deserves an exhortation. Now to enforce the exhortation, take these five particulars into your consideration.

First Consideration. The *prevalency of perseverance in prayer*. This is emphatically expressed by that question of our Saviour in his parable upon this subject: ‘Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?’ Luke 18:7. As if he had said, Can you think that God will send away those who are so near and dear to him, his own elect, with a denial and that when he hath made full proof of their faith and patience in waiting long upon him for an answer? ‘I tell you,’ saith Christ, ‘that he will avenge them speedily.’ Men seek to please their old customers that are constant to their shop, whoever else they send away; so will God those that are in constant trading with him at the throne of grace. ‘They that wait upon the Lord are not ashamed.’ David is careful for our encouragement to let us know how well he sped after his long waiting at God’s door: ‘I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry,’ Ps. 40:1; Hebrew ‘in waiting I waited;’ that is, I stayed waiting long, and at last he came. But David was a favourite; may others look to speed as he did? See ver. 3, ‘Many shall see it,...and shall trust in him.’ Answer of prayers is a covenant privilege. It is not a monopoly given to one or two, but a charter granted to the whole corporation of saints to the end of the world: ‘He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer,’ Ps. 102:17. Now mark what follows, ‘This shall be written for the generation to come,’ ver. 18.

Second Consideration. Thy perseverance in prayer *will help to evidence thy state to be gracious*. The hypocrite is oft uncased here; will he pray always? Job 27:10. Many will come into a workman’s shop, and take up his tools to work with them for awhile, and lay them down again by and by, who would never yield to be bound to his trade and serve out an apprenticeship at it. Thus an unsound heart will be meddling with this duty now and then, but grows weary of the work at last, especially if he be made to wait long for an answer. Saul prays to God, and because he hears not from him, goes at last to seek to the devil. Observe what effect God’s silence, frowns, and seeming denials produce in thy heart, and thou mayest know the

temper of thy spirit thereby. Do they wear off thy edge to prayer, or sharpen it? Do they make thee fall off, and send thee away from God's door—as some sturdy beggars go from ours when denied an alms—with clamours in thy mouth, and discontent in thy heart, resolved to beg no more there? Or do they make thee fall on with more courage, and enkindle thy affections to God and this duty more ardently? as the suitor, whose love is heightened by repulses, and importunity doubled by being obstructed and opposed. Truly, if thou findest the latter, thou mayest conclude, if this instant constancy in prayer be for spiritual blessings—Christ and his sanctifying graces—that divine virtue, and that good store hath gone from Christ into thy soul. 'O woman, great is thy faith!'

Third Consideration. Consider *the great folly of fainting in prayer.* Thou dost a foolish and irrational act. Haply thou art in a deserted condition, prayest for comfort, but none comes; for victory over such a temptation without or corruption within, but art foiled in both, for all thy praying; therefore thou first faintest in the duty, and then givest it over. What egregious folly is this! Because mercy comes not in all haste to thee, therefore thou wilt run from it—which thou dost in ceasing to pray! When the fisher misseth his draught, he doth not presently give over his trade, but falls a mending his net. O cease not to pray, but mend thy praying! See at what hole the fish went out—the mercy was lost; double thy diligence, and all shall be well at last. If thy pain continues while the plaster is on, dost think it will cease when it is taken off? Whatever the mercy is thou wouldst have, must it not come from God's hands? Now will God give the mercy to thee who rejectest his counsel for the obtaining of it? Is not prayer, and that 'with all perseverance,' the way he directs all his people to take? Suppose a physician, who is sent for to a sick patient, should give the messenger an electuary to carry back with him, and saith, It will be some time before I come myself to the sick man, but charge him to take a good quantity of this as oft as he finds himself ill, every day, till I come, and he shall do well. Now the patient begins to follow his physician's directions, but, staying longer than he likes before he comes, and finding his trouble continue, sets it away, and takes no more of it. The physician at last sets forth, and, as he is on his way to him, hears of it, turns back, and comes not at him; so the poor man dies by his own hasty folly. Truly this is our case. God, for reasons best known to himself, stays some while before he comes to his tempted distressed servants, for their deliverance, but leaves order when any of them ail anything—so the word $\text{6}^{\text{6}}\text{B}^{\text{2}}, \text{Ã}$, James 5:13, signifies—that they should pray, apply themselves to the use of this duty; yea, continue the spiritual constant use of it till he comes; and withal assures us he will come soon enough to save us. Now, what folly is it to cast off this means so strictly prescribed? Surely, thought there were nothing else, this is enough to turn God back when on his way of mercy to do us good.

Fourth Consideration. Consider it is *as sinful as foolish to give over this duty.* 'Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God,' Job 15:4. It is a high crime for one trusted with a castle for his prince to deliver it cowardly into his enemy's hand, especially if he hath provision wherewithal to defend it. Now hath not

God provided sufficiently to enable the Christian to maintain this duty against all the armies of men and devils, afflictions and temptations, that can oppose it? Princes are most careful to enforce and supply frontier castles above others with all necessaries for defence, because most assaulted. Prayer is a duty that is as hard laid at by Satan as any, and hath many other difficulties that render it no easy matter for the Christian to be instant and constant at it. God hath considered this, and accordingly provided succour. He gives his Spirit to help the Christian—because of his many infirmities—what and how to pray; who, if he be used kindly, will not be wanting to lift with him in the work. And, while the Spirit is ready to pray in him, Christ is as ready in heaven to pray for him; who also sends the precious promise of the gospel—as messengers into a besieged town—to assure the soul relief is coming from heaven to him, be the affliction or temptation never so great and formidable that besets it. Now, to faint in the work, and, by giving over the duty, to open the city gates of his soul, for Satan to enter and triumph over God with his insulting blasphemies—O what gracious soul, that hath any spark of loyalty in his breast unquenched to his God, doth not tremble at the thought of such a treasonable action! We cannot cast off prayer, but we cast some dishonourable reflection upon God; for, as one saith well, every real defect in the creature proceeds from an imaginary defect which he falsely supposeth to be in God. Men first conceive unworthily of God, and then carry themselves unworthily and undutifully to him. Now the causes from which this fainting in prayer proceeds are all evil and bitter, as by and by will appear.

Fifth Consideration. As it is foolish and evil, so it is *of dangerous consequence to ourselves, to faint, and cease to pray.*

1. It is the *ready way to bring some stinging affliction upon us.* This is the best that can come of it. Art thou a servant of God, and fleest from his face? Art thou a child, and playest the truant? Look that thy heavenly Father will send thee to school with a rod at thy back.

2. Cease to pray, and thou wilt *begin to sin.* Prayer is not only a means to prevail for mercy, but also to prevent sin. 'Pray that ye enter not into temptation.' The thief comes when the candles are out and all the house in their beds. Christ could not keep his disciples awake at their devotions; and how soon were they put to the rout when the tempter came! When the courtier in a discontent withdraws, and gives over his attendance at court, he is more easily wound in to disloyal practices against his prince. Discontent softens the heart to receive sinful impressions from the tempter. 'Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God,' Job 15:4. Eliphaz's doctrine was true, though his application was false. When Saul gave over in a pet to pray to God, then he sought to a witch. Sins of commission are the usual punishments that God inflicts on persons for sins of omission. He that leaves a duty may fear to be left to commit a crime; he that turns his ear from the truth takes the ready course to be given over to believe fables, II Tim. 4:4. He that casteth off prayer, it is a wonder if you find him not ere long cast into some foul sin.

[COUNSEL AND DIRECTION *for the weak Christian
in persevering prayer.*]

FOURTH. I shall wind up the discourse with *a word of counsel and direction for the help of the weak Christian therein*. Now this will, I suppose, be best performed by laying before you the several causes of a person's falling off from this duty, or fainting in it, and so to fit the directions accordingly. All diseases are not cured with the same medicine, neither are catholic remedies so effectual as those which respect the particular humour from which the distemper ariseth. Now the CAUSES of non-persevering in prayer are diverse.

First. Sometimes the cause is *want of a lasting and enduring motive or principle to keep and hold us constantly to the duty*. When the spring is down the watch must needs cease going, for that fails that gave the wheels their motions. That sometimes which sets the creature to prayer, is not pure obedience to the command, but a desire to some particular mercy, which, if obtained, the fish being caught, the net is laid aside; or, if he prays long, and hath it not, he grows weary of the work, and lets it fall. Be sure, Christian, therefore to pray in obedience. Bind the duty upon thy conscience, and thou wilt not easily shake it off. 'God forbid that,' saith Samuel, 'I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you,' I Sam. 12:23. He had little encouragement, from them he prayed for, to continue at the work, but his obedience to God, to whom he prayed, held him to it. This is a strong fence to hedge in the heart indeed. We cannot break through this hedge but we shall feel the thorns in our side. A gracious soul dreads nothing more than guilt. Tell him it is a sin to cease praying, and you say enough. What though God answers not my prayer, his silence to my prayer must not make me silent not to pray. Prayer is still a duty. God is not bound to answer presently when we pray, but we are bound to pray though he doth not answer. 'All this is come upon us,' saith the church, 'yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant,' Ps. 44:17. Remember, Christian, thou art a covenant servant, and one thing thou art as such bound to do is, to pray to thy God without ceasing, I Thes. 5:17. This will defend thee against any motion that the tempter suggests to the contrary. the beggar knocks awhile at the rich man's door, and, if he be not served, away he goes. But the servant in the house, though he be hungry, doth not run away presently from his master, because he hath not his dinner so soon as he desires.

Second. Sometimes this not persevering in prayer *comes from pride*. 'This evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?' II Kings 6:33. What a haughty spirit was here! Pride likes not to wait, but to be waited on. He in the gospel was ashamed to beg, much more to stand long at the door upon a begging errand. Now, though this be a disease which a saint is more free from than other men, yet there are dregs enough still within him to royle and distemper his spirit, if he be not daily evacuating and purging them out. It will not therefore be amiss to leave a few soul-humbling considerations in your hands, which you may be often taking,

especially when you feel any grudgings of this sin about you, and your hearts begin to grow discontented that God makes you stay so long for any mercy prayed for.

1. Consider *what it is to pray*. It is to go a begging for an alms, not to demand a debt. Now, doth it become thee in so poor a condition, and about such a work, to be so quick and short with thy God? If you can live without being beholden to God, why then do you at all come to his door? If you cannot, why then do you not wait more patiently for his pleasure? Should he wrong thee if he beat thee from his door? Why then art thou no more thankful for his leave to wait there, though thou beest not presently served?

2. Consider *who he is thou prayest to*. Is he not the great and glorious majesty of heaven and earth? And is not this one piece of the state he looks to be served in by his poor creatures? How long did Mordecai sit at the king's gate before he had that which he waited for? Is it not time enough for the servant to be set at dinner after he hath waited at his master's table? Were it not unsufferable sauciness in the servant to complain his master sat too long and required too much waiting at his hands? This is the language of our hearts, when we think much to stay God's time for a mercy. Is he not a righteous holy God? Surely he doth thee no wrong to make thee pray, and that long, for a mercy which thou deservest not when it comes at last. Is he not wiser than thou, to know how to time his mercies? 'Shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?' Job 18:4. Wilt thou have God overthrow the course of his providence, which he thinks fit, to gratify thy impatient spirit? Surely this is to charge God foolishly with some error in his government. In a word, is not he a faithful God, though he comes not so soon to thy relief as thou wouldst have him? where did he give thee leave to date his promises and set the day of payment? No; he hath promised to answer his children's prayers, but concealed the time of performance of his promise, on purpose to keep them in a waiting posture; and therefore he breaks not his promise when he detains a mercy, but thou forgettest thy duty not to wait. God is not unfaithful, but thou art faithless and unbelieving.

3. Have not *as good as thyself prayed, and that as long as thou, before they have received an answer*, and yet have not thus behaved themselves? Look into the generation of seekers, and thou wilt find that God hath exercised their patience as well as thine. Hast thou stood at God's door longer than many of thy brethren have done? Remember Job, David, and Heman, how many troubles came over their heads! what sad tidings did they hear! Dismal afflictions did they endure they endure before the day broke and divine providence cleared up! Shall God raise a causey^[5] for thee to walk by thyself dryshod, while these, and thousands besides, have taken many a weary step through the deep sloughs of affliction, before they could come to fair way? When God led Israel far about, and made it a journey of forty years from Egypt to Canaan, it had been great pride for any among them to have desired God to lead them a shorter way thither than all his brethren. David desired no more at God's hands than to fare as his fellow-saints did: 'Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name,' Ps. 119:132. Nay, doth not Christ himself and example

beyond all example, wait, and that long, even in heaven itself for an answer to his prayers? He hath been already above a thousand years there at prayer for his church, and against his enemies, and hath not as yet received the full of his desires; but still is expecting till the one be saved, and the other be made his footstool. Who art thou that thou shouldst have so high an opinion of thyself, as to look God should make all stay, and trade for time, while thou alone for ready money?

4. Consider *whether thou didst never make God wait on thee before his suit could be heard*, though he begged not for his benefit but thy own. Did God wait in thy carnal state upon thee, that he might at last be gracious to thee, and thinkest thou much to wait at prayer now on him?

Third. This not persevering in prayer *proceeds oft from unbelief*. The creature prays, God is silent, and no answer comes. Now, thinks Satan, is my time come to do this person a mischief; and therefore he labours to persuade the creature that there is no mercy to be expected from God. If, saith the tempter, God had meant to come, he would have been here before now. So many days and months are now gone, and no news of his approach. Thou hast stayed too long to meet with disappointment at last; give over, and take some other course. Thus he dealt with our Saviour. No enemy appeared in the field for forty days, and then he appears. This is his way with the saints also. He lets them alone while he thinks they are softened into a compliance by long standing upon duty, and hopes their ammunition grows low; then he comes to parley with them, and take them off from waiting upon God, by starting many fears and doubts in their thoughts concerning the power, mercy, and truth of God; so that the poor Christian is at last put to a stand, and knows not whether he should pray or not pray. Or if he holds up the duty, yet not his heart in it; he prays faintly, and with a kind of despair, as the poor widow made ready her last handful of meal with no other thoughts than of dying when she had ate it. Thus he prays, but lots upon nothing but death and misery to follow it. O this is sad praying, to expect no good from God in the performance! Unbelief is a soul-enfeebling sin; it is to prayer as the moth to the cloth, which bites the very threads asunder, and crumbles it to nothing; it wastes the soul's strength, that it cannot look up to God with any hope. 'For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened,' Neh. 6:9. Resist therefore Satan, steadfast in the faith. Never let thy heart suffer the power, mercy, or truth of God to be called into question; thou hadst as good question whether he can cease to be God. These attributes of the divine nature are to thy faith like the stone to Moses, which Aaron and Hur put under him to sit upon; they will sustain thy spirit, that thou shalt not faint or grow weary at the work, though God makes thee wait till 'the going down of the sun.' O this waiting posture highly pleaseth God, and never puts the soul to shame. Mary, that stayed by the sepulchre, though she missed her Lord there, got at last a happy sight of him. *Quæramus et nos Christum*, saith one upon the place, *ex fide, et astabit nobis licet non illicò eum agnoverimus*—let us but seek Christ in faith, and he will at last be with us, though we do not presently see him.

Fourth. Some persevere not in prayer, because they have their eye upon some other than God from whom they expect help. It is no wonder he gives over praying who thinks he hath another string to his bow. While the carnal heart prays for deliverance, he hath other projects in his head how to wriggle himself out of the briers in which he is caught, and on these he lays more stress and weight than on God to whom he prays; therefore, at last, he leaves praying, to betake himself to them. Whereas another, that looks for all from God, and sees no way to help himself but by calling in God to his aid, will say as Peter to Christ—asking his disciples whether they would leave him as others had done—‘Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life.’ I know not another door to knock at—saith the poor soul—but thine; the creature hath it not to give, but thou hast; I will therefore never leave thee. We know not what to do, said good Jehoshaphat, but our eyes are up unto thee.

Fifth. It proceeds from a want of inward complacency which the creature should have in God, and communion with him. ‘Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?’ Job 27:10. He will not always call upon him, because he never did ordinarily delight in him. We easily let go what we take no great content to enjoy. The sincere soul is tied to God by the heart-strings, his communion is founded in love; and ‘love is stronger than death,’ ‘many waters cannot quench it.’ A stranger may have an errand that brings him to a man's house; but that done his acquaintance ceaseth. But a friend, he comes to sit with him, and the delight he takes in his company will not suffer him to discontinue his acquaintance long. Get therefore thy affections but once placed upon God as thy chief good, and the spark or stone will as soon forget the way to their centre, as thou the way to thy God in prayer. The hypocrite useth prayer as we use physic—not because he loves the taste of it; the sincere soul as food—it is sweet to his gust^[6]. David, from the inward satisfaction he found in the presence of God, cries out, ‘It is good for me to draw near to God;’ Ps. 73:28, as one that, tasting some rich wine or sweet morsel, lays his hand on his stomach—where he finds the cheering of it—and saith to the standers-by, ‘O it is good!’ Never will such a soul part with it. No, he will say, as the fig-tree in Jotham's parable, Shall I forsake my sweetness, and the good fruit I have found in communion with my God! I will never do it.

DIVISION SIXTH.—THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF PRAYER.

'And supplication for all saints.'

These words contain the sixth and last branch in the apostle's directory for prayer, and that is, *the comprehensiveness of the duty*, or the persons that are to be the subject of our prayers—'*supplication for all saints.*' But what! would he have us pray for none but saints? Thus cannot be the apostle's meaning, it being so contrary to the mind of Christ, from whom he hath his message. Christ both bids us pray for our enemies, and is himself our pattern for it; yea, Paul himself teacheth contrary doctrine to this: 'I exhort therefore, that, first of all, prayers and supplications be made for all men,' I Tim. 2:1, that is, all sorts of men, faithful and infidels, friends and enemies. So then saints are not here named as the adequate and only subject of our prayers, but as a principal species, a sort of persons whom we are in an especial manner to carry in our prayers to God, whom if we do but remember, we shall not easily forget to pray for others also; because, as Augustine saith, *numerus sanctorum de numero impiorum semper est auctus*—the saints' number is increased and taken out of the number of the wicked. In praying for Babylon, we pray for Jerusalem. The more that are prayed out of sin, the more are prayed into Christ. We shall wind up our discourse upon this subject upon these THREE PROPOSITIONS or bottoms. FIRST. We must show a public spirit in prayer, by praying for others as well as ourselves. SECOND. Of all whom we remember in our prayers, saints must not be forgot. THIRD. In praying for saints, we must be careful to comprehend and encircle all saints.

FIRST PROPOSITION.

[A PUBLIC SPIRIT *must be shown in prayer.*]

We must show a public spirit in prayer, *by praying for others as well as ourselves*. This is a duty of common interest, in which others are to share with ourselves. Like the buckets that hang in our houses, which are for the use of the whole town when any house is on fire, the spirit of prayer is a public treasure, though laid up in some few hands. All cannot pray, therefore all should be prayed for. I say it is the saints' duty, not a favour upon courtesy, which may *ad libitum*—at pleasure, be done or left undone. We sin and transgress the law of prayer if we do it not. 'God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you,' I Sam. 12:23. Paul writes himself a debtor to his brethren in this respect, 'We are bound to thank God

always for you,' II Thes. 1:3. He acknowledges it due debt. In another place he 'thanks God that he hath them in remembrance always.' So sensible he was of the weight of this duty, that he thanks God for giving of him a heart to perform it.

[WHY a public spirit must be shown in prayer.]

First. It is one end why the Spirit of prayer is given us. The gifts of the Spirit are to be employed according to the mind and intent of the Donor. If a man bequeaths house and land to another, but charges the estate with such a payment for the use of the poor, he forfeits his legacy that fulfills not the will of the dead. God intends the good of others in all his gifts to particular saints; the way to lose our gift is to hoard it up, and not lay it out for the end it was given. 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,' I Cor. 12:7. How should we profit others by this gift of the Spirit, if not by praying for them? That Spirit which stirs us up to pray for ourselves, will, if we quench it not, send us on the same errand for others; yea, in some cases, for others before ourselves—for their spiritual good, before our own temporal; for the public good of a community, before the private good of our single person; as in Moses' case, who would not be taken off praying for Israel to be made great upon their ruins. Indeed that offer from God, 'Let me alone, and I will make of thee a great nation,' was only probatory, to try whether Moses would prefer his own stake before the people's, and God was highly pleased with his self-denial.

Second. The law of love binds it as a duty upon us. We are commanded to 'love our neighbour as ourself.' That 'as' imports a parity for kind, though not for proportion; for manner, though not for measure. I must love my neighbour as truly, though not as strongly, as myself. Now, how do we show real love to ourselves, if we pray not for ourselves? Our Saviour expounds our love to our enemy by praying for him: 'Love your enemies,' and 'pray for them which despitefully use you,' Matt. 5:44. We may give an alms to an enemy, and not love him. It is easier to draw out our purse than to draw out our soul to the hungry; as the prophet phraseth it, in prayer we draw out our souls. If a man ever speaks or does anything sincerely, surely it is when he directs his speech to God in prayer, saith Lucas Brugens, upon the place. Therefore, God chooseth this of praying for our enemies as the surest testimony for our loving of them. And truly he that wisheth well only to himself may well be reckoned among the most degenerate of mankind. One well compares such a self-lover to the hedgehog, that laps himself with his own soft down, and turns out bristles to all the world besides.

Use. This shows the largeness of God's bountiful heart. He gives his children not only leave to ask for themselves, but for others. This is not the manner of men; we count it too much boldness to beg for themselves and others also. If a poor man, when he hath got his alms, should then beg for all his neighbours, where should he find the man that would bid him welcome? But behold here the immensity of divine goodness, who gives us leave to bring our neighbour's pitcher with our own to his

door, yea commands it, and then takes it ill when we steal to prayer upon our own private errand, and leave the thought of others' necessities behind us. Why shouldst thou, Christian, stand in doubt whether God will supply thy own wants, when he commands thee to intercede for others?

*[Lamentation for the want of
a public spirit in prayer.]*

A lamentation may be taken up for *the narrowness of our spirits in prayer*. Some, indeed, are so far from praying for others, that they have not learned to show so much mercy to themselves; yea, live in such an estate of alienation from God, wherein they cannot pray for themselves or their dearest relations. O how many prayerless fathers have we that are cruel to their own flesh! husbands to the wives of their own bosom! Ask whether they love them; they will tell you, Yes, that they do as their own souls. And you may believe them, for they serve them no worse than they do their own souls. A time is coming wherein they will know, one hearty prayer found upon the file for their relations would speak more for their love they pretend towards them, than all the bags of money which they fill for them. Others, if they show a little natural affection to their own flesh and domestic relations, yet their love hath much ado to get over their own thresholds, to inquire how it fares with others. O how little do they feel their neighbours' pains! how seldom do they spread them with any real sense upon their hearts before the Lord! Or, if their eye affects their heart with what is presented so near unto them in the afflictions of their next-door neighbour, yet how few discover such a public spirit as to carry upon their hearts the miseries of those that are at further distance, so as to be faithful remembrancers to the Lord for them? Blessed Paul was afflicted with, yea, had 'a great conflict for, those that had never seen his face in the flesh.' Even among those that are Christian, O what a decay is there of this public spirit! There is great complaint in the world among men of their great losses in our late times of confusion; but I think the saints are the greatest losers, who have lost so much of their love and charity. One saith the world was once destroyed with water, *propter ardorem cupidinis*—for the heat of lust which had set it on a flame; and shall be once again destroyed with fire, *propter teporem charitatis*—for the coldness of love and charity. Love is to the soul what natural heat is to the body—it gives vigour, and enables for the performance of all offices of life. But alas! how is this kindly heat decayed among Christians in this old age of the world! This was long ago foretold by our Saviour, 'The love of many shall wax cold,' Matt. 24:12, and no wonder, when self-love, that predatory fire, waxes so hot; foretold also by the apostle, 'In the last days men shall be lovers of themselves,' II Tim. 3:2. And what a black regiment follows this captain sin, is there to be seen! If once a man make self the top of his aim, farewell loving of or praying for others. Charity cannot dwell in so narrow a house as the self-lover's heart is; yea, it is diametrically opposed to it: 'Love seeks not her own,' I Cor. 13:5.

But to turn lamentation into exhortation: labour for a public spirit in prayer. Is there none, O man, that needs the mercy of God besides thyself? Wouldst thou have none saved in another world, nor provided for in this with thee? Now, in remembering others, God will give thee leave thy love should begin at home, though he would not have it end there. Look into thy family; canst thou forget them a day, if thou rememberest thyself? Shall a believer turn worse than an infidel? He provides for his house; and thou hast light that tells thee all thy providing for them is nothing, except God say amen. When thou hast paid thy duty to them, still widen thy charity and take up thy neighbours into thy thoughts. O consider what is doing in the streets and neighbourhood! How many mayest thou there soon find pouring out their precious souls as a drink-offering to Satan, the god of this world, in their horrid abominations? O pray that God would stay their bloody hand before they have irrecoverably made away themselves! Then take a further walk in thy meditations to view the public state and posture of the nation. See what mercies are writ with the golden pen of Providence upon its forehead, and pay thy humble thanks; what prognostics of judgments coming thou canst observe in the face of the times, and get into the gap before the wrath begins. Did Abraham so plead for a Sodom, though himself was far enough from the danger of the storm, and not thou for thy own nation, who art like to be taken in it if it fall in thy days, or thy posterity to rue it, if the cloud impending be not scattered by the prayers of the faithful? Nay, let not the sea that divides thee and the other parts of the earth make thee think thou art not concerned in their happiness or misery. Let thy prayers walk over the vast ocean, and bring matter for thy devotions, like the merchant's ship her freight from afar. Visit the churches of Christ abroad; yea, the poor Indians and other ruins of mankind that lie where Adam's sin threw them with us, without any attempt made as yet upon them by the gospel for their recovery, and carry their deplored condition before the Lord. Our Drake is famous for compassing the earth with his ship in a few years; thou mayest by thy prayers every day, and make a more gainful voyage of it too than he did.

*[Considerations to induce to
a public spirit in prayer.]*

Take two or three *quickenings considerations to set thee the more feelingly to this work.*

1. *Consideration.* Thou canst not pray in faith for thyself, if only for thyself. The Lord Jesus taught his disciples this piece of charity in the form of prayer he gave them: 'When ye pray, say, Our Father.' *Pater est verbum fidei; noster est verbum charitatis*—'father' is a word of faith and confidence; 'our father' imports love and charity, two necessary graces in prayer. We live by faith, and faith works by love. No prayer can be without faith, nor faith without charity. Christ sends him in the gospel from the altar, to reconcile himself to his brother before he offered his gift. And why, but that

he might be as ready and willing to pray for his brother as himself? If we have not charity to pray for our brother, we cannot expect welcome when we pray for ourselves.

2. *Consideration.* You do not else *make good the character and report which God gives of his children.* He speaks of them to be a blessing to the persons and places about them: Israel 'a blessing in the midst of the land of Assyria,' Isa. 19:24. They are compared to a fountain, which is a common benefit to serve a whole town; to stop or trouble which is a wrong to all that draw their water thence, Prov. 25:26. Now, one way wherein the godly are eminently serviceable to others, is by the interest they have in God and the prevalency of their prayers with him. 'By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted,' Prov. 11:11; that is, by their fervent prayers, which draw down a blessing from heaven upon it. God blesseth *imperatorie*—by command: 'he commanded the blessing, even life for evermore,' Ps. 133:3. The saints bless when they pray: 'On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee,' Num. 6:23, 24.

3. *Consideration.* God gives a *signal testimony of his favour to his saints' prayers for others.*

(1.) He doth *great things at their request for others.* How oft did Moses reverse divine plagues that were executed on Egypt? even as oft as Pharaoh had a heart to beg his prayers. How low did Abraham beat the market for Sodom's preservation? he brought it down to 'ten righteous men.' Could that wicked place have but afforded that number, it had not been turned to ashes.

(2.) When their prayers *obtain not a mercy for the people, then nothing else can help them.* Therefore God, to express his peremptory resolution and irreversible decree to punish Israel, tells them, 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people,' Jer. 15:1, thereby intimating their case desperate. If the prayers of such holy men could not prevent the fall of that cloud of his wrath impending, much less could they with their own power or policy shift it off. Indeed when God is fully set upon a vindictive way, he takes them off from praying: 'Pray not thou for this people,...for I will not hear thee,' Jer. 7:16. And even in this he shows at what a rate he values his people's prayers, which makes him loath they should bestow their pains in vain. 'Pray not thou for this people'—as if he had said, Let them pray if they will, I can without any regret reject their motion; but I am unwilling thou shouldst pray in an unaccepted time for that which I have no mind to give.

(3.) When the saints' prayers bring not back with them the mercy for others that is their express errand, yet God is careful that his people should not have the least suspicion that the denial proceeds from any disrespect he hath to their persons or prayers, and therefore he sometimes *gives the thing they desire, only he changes the subject.* Thus, when God denied Abraham for Ishmael he gave him abundantly in Isaac. Sometimes, again, what he denies them for others he grants to

themselves. Thus David's prayers for his enemies 'returned into his own bosom.' Now in praying for others:

(a) Get thy heart *deeply affected with their state and condition for whom thou prayest*. God loves mercy better than sacrifice. To draw out our souls in giving and alms is greater charity than to draw out our purse. So in prayer, be sure thy soul be poured out, or else thou art a deceiver; thou wrongest both God and him also thou prayest for. Before Christ prayed for Lazarus he troubled himself. 'Behold how he loved him!' said those about him who were witness to the groans he fetched and tears he shed. Then thou wilt pray fervently for others when thy heart is warmed into sympathy for them. A lawyer may show more rhetoric in pleading a man's cause, but a brother or dear friend that carries the sense of his condition upon their hearts must needs discover more affection.

(b) *Prefer spiritual blessings in thy prayers for others before temporal*. Is it a sick friend on whose errand thou goest? If health be all thou beggest for him, thou art not faithful to thy friend. He may have that and be the worse for it. Ask of Christ grace and glory for him, and then thou dost something to purpose. Surely this our Saviour meant in his method of causing the palsied man to be cured of his disease: 'Be of good cheer,' saith Christ, 'thy sins are forgiven,' Matt. 9:2. He first brings him the news of a pardon, as a mercy {of} infinitely more worth than life or limbs, thereby tacitly reproving his friends, who took more care to have his body healed than his soul saved. Is it the nation thou art praying for? Aim at more than deliverance from outward judgments and plagues. The carnal Jews could say, 'Give us water that we may drink,' Ex. 17:2; but thought not of their sin, to beg repentance for and pardon of it. That was the cry of the creature—a beast can low and bellow in a drought; but this is the voice of a saint.

(c) Be not *discouraged in your prayers for others though an answer doth not presently overtake them*. Thou prayest for a rebellious child, or carnal friend, who yet continue to be so; take heed thou dost not presently think them past grace, and give over the work. Samuel saw the people he prayed for mend but slowly, yet hear what he saith: 'God forbid that I should cease praying for you,' I Sam. 12:23. I have heard of some that have been laid forth, yea buried, before they were dead, by their overhasty friends. Be not thou thus cruel to the souls of thy relations or neighbours. Lay them not out of thy prayers, bury them not in thy thoughts for reprobates, because thou canst not perceive any sign of spiritual life in them, though thou hast many a time stretched thy hands in prayer over them; their souls thou seest are yet in their bodies, and so long it is not too late for God to breathe the life of grace into their souls. Again, is it for the public thou prayest? Draw not in thy stock of prayer, though thou hast not so quick a return in thy trade with heaven for it as thou desirest. The father's labour is not lost if his son receives the benefit of it. He may be dies before the ship comes home he sent forth, but his child lives to have the gains of that adventure paid into his purse. Thus one generation sows prayers for the church, and another reaps the mercy prayed for.

SECOND PROPOSITION.

[SAINTS *must be specially remembered in prayer.*]

In praying for others, of *all we remember, saints must not be forgot*. The apostle hints this, by making them the instance for all, as the *species famosa*—or chief rank of men, for whom we are to pray; and it suits well with Paul's doctrine elsewhere. We are here bid 'As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith,' Gal. 6:10. Now this of prayer I take to be one of the most eminent ways of doing them good. What greater kindness can a man do for his sick friend than to go to the physician for him. By other acts of charity we give a little out of our own purse; but, by praying for the poor saints, we open God's treasury for them. If one should meet a beggar, and out of his purse throw him a few pence; but another tells him, I have no money of my own to give, yet I will go to court, and open your necessitous condition to the king my master; it were easy to tell which of these does the poor man the greatest kindness. A poor saint may thus do more for another, though, as Peter told the cripple, he hath neither silver nor gold to give, than he who hath the largest purse of his own. That of Araunah is observable, where we have his bountiful offer to king David: 'Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt-sacrifice,' II Sam. 24:22. This was much, and showed his heart to be noble and large, as it follows, 'All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king,' ver. 23. Yet one thing he did amounted to more than all this, which was his hearty prayer to God for David's acceptance: 'And Araunah said to the king, The Lord thy God accept thee.' He might have done all the other for fear; a subject sometimes gives his prince, because he knows he may take though he gives it not. But by his praying for him he discovered his hearty affection to him. There are several weighty reasons for this duty. *First.* >From God. *Second.* From Satan. *Third.* From the saints prayed for. And, *Fourth.* From the saints praying.

[WHY *believers are to be specially remembered in prayer.*]

First. There is a reason taken *from God*.

1. They are the *special object of his love*; his heart is set upon them, his thoughts and providence are at work continually for them. Others indeed do partake of divine bounty, but they may thank the saints' company and neighbourhood for it. When the gardener waters his beds of flowers, some runs down into the alleys, but had he no flowers he would save that pains. When once God hath got his whole family of saints home to himself in heaven, it will quickly be seen what God will do with the rest of the world. God dispenseth the same providence to them both, but not with the same

affection, not to the same end. 'He is the Saviour of all men, but especially of those that believe,' I Tim. 4:10. He saves the saints with saving purposes; the wicked he saves temporally, to destroy them eternally. He saves them from a present sickness or danger that they may ripen for hell; as we save our young wood for greater growth, and then cut it down for the fire. Now what shall be done for those whom God declares so much love? We cannot do less than pray for them. By this we comply with God, and show our content in his choice.

2. God hath made them the *proper heirs of all his promises*. Now promises are the ground of prayer. We are to pray for others, though wicked, not knowing but God may have a secret purpose of doing them good. But when there is grace, *hic se asperit decretum*—here God breaks open his decree. The fountain of his electing grace, which ran hitherto underground, now bursts forth; so that now you may with fuller confidence pray for such a one. When Paul begs prayers, to encourage his friends at the work for him, he assures them of his sincerity: 'Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly' Heb. 13:18. As if he had said, You pray for one that God will not chide you for mentioning. It is an encouragement for a merchant to adventure when he puts his stock into a good bottom.

3. They are a generation *that alone honour God in the world*. Indeed God honours himself upon others in their present lusts and future damnation. He makes their wrath praise him here, and his wrath poured on them shall praise him hereafter; but no thanks to them for all this, for they do their utmost to lay the honour of God in the dirt. But the saints are a people who are not merely passive but active in the praising of God; it is their mother-language to bless the name of God. Whatever is their work, this is their end and aim—'whether they eat or drink,' to 'do all to the glory of God.' Now, upon this account, we are to pray for saints above others. The first thing our Saviour teacheth us to pray for is, that the name of God may be hallowed, in order to which he directs us in the very next words to pray for his church and saints, as those who alone can hallow it—'thy kingdom come.'

Second. There is a reason *from Satan*. His great spite is against the saints. God owns them; therefore he hates them, and spits fire and brimstone at them. Where God is of one side you may be sure to find the devil on the other; indeed they are the only company that stand in his way. As for the wicked, he takes himself to be advanced when they are exalted in the world; the father is honoured when the child is preferred. But the saints' rising portends his fall; this makes him bend all his force, by temptation or persecution, to procure their ruin. these are the stars he would stamp under his feet. The first murder in the world was of a saint; and Cain will kill Abel to the end of the world. In all broils and confusions of nations these are the threatened party, therefore they need our prayers most.

Third. There is a reason taken *from the saints prayed for*.

1. They exceedingly *desire prayers*. The wicked, I confess, may do this also, but it is by fits—in a pang of fear or fright. Thus Pharaoh sends in all haste for Moses when the plagues of God are in his house and fields. The carnal Jews pray Samuel to

pray for them that they die not; but it was when terrified with dreadful thunder and rain that fell, I Sam. 7^[2]. Yea, Simon Magus himself, smitten with horror at Peter's words, begs his payers, 'that none of those things which he had spoken might come upon him.' But at another time these wretches cared neither for the saints nor for their prayers. Pharaoh, who desired Moses at one time to pray for him, at another time chases him out of his presence with a charge never to come at him more. But now, the saints are very covetous, yea ambitious, of the auxiliary prayers of their brethren, and those not the meanest among them neither. Indeed, as any is more eminent in grace, so more greedy of his brethren's help. The richer the tradesman is, the more he sets at work for him. Paul himself is not ashamed to beg this boon of the meanest saint. 'Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,' Rom. 15:30. Did you ever hear a beggar at your door, or prisoner at the gate, beg more passionately?—for the Lord Jesus' sake, for the Spirit's sake. If ever you felt any warmth in your hearts from the blood of Christ, or love of the Spirit comforting you, strive FL<"(T<\.,2,, wrestle with me till we together have the victory, prevailed with God for this mercy.

2. As the saints are covetous of prayers, so they *lot upon it that you do pray for them*; yea, take up comfort beforehand from the expectation of what they shall receive by them. 'I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayers,' Php. 1:19. 'I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you,' Phm. 22. Where,

(1.) Observe Paul's *modesty*. He sinks and drowns his own prayers, and expresseth his faith on theirs.

(2.) His *confidence*. He doubts not but they will pray, neither does he question the happy return of them into his bosom. As if he had said, If ye be faithful ye will pray for me. So that we break our trust, and disappoint our brethren, if we forget them.

3. Saints are the *honest debtors we can deal with*; they will pay you in their own coin. He that shows any kindness to a saint is sure to have God for his paymaster; for it is their way to turn over their debts to God, and engage him to discharge their score to man. Onesiphorus had been a kind friend to Paul, and what does Paul for him? To prayer he goes, and desires God to pay his debts. 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain,' II Tim. 1:16.

Fourth. There is a reason taken *from the saints praying*. There is no duty God commands but he pays the Christian well for the performance, and leaves him a loser that neglects it. There is enough in this duty we are speaking to that may make it lovely and desirable in our eye. The best of saints have accounted it a great privilege to be admitted into this noble order. Paul thanks God that 'without ceasing he had Timothy in remembrance in his prayers night and day.' But wherein lies this mercy to have a heart to pray for our brethren?

1. It is a *singular mercy to be instrumental to the grace or comfort of any saint*, much more to be instrumental for the glorifying of God. This a gracious heart prizeth highly, though it costs him dear to promote it. Now in praying, though but for one single saint, thou dost both. 'Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf,' II Cor. 1:11. Paul, begging prayers, enforceth his request with a double argument.

(1.) From the *prevalency of joint prayers*. When twenty pull at a rope, the strength and force of every one is influential to the drawing of it; so in prayer, where many concur, all help. God looks at every one's faith and fervency exerted in the duty, and directs the answer to all.

(2.) From the *harmony of joint praises*. The fuller the concert in praises, the sweeter the music in God's ear. Joint prayers produce social praises. He that concurs to a prayer, and not in returning praise, is like one that helps his friend into debt, but takes no care to bring him out.

2. By praying for others we *increase our own joy*. When Paul saw the prayers which he had sown for the Thessalonian saints, I Thes. 1, come up in their faith and zeal, he is transported with joy, as an incomparable mercy bestowed upon himself: 'What thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God?' I Thes. 3:9. He had watered them with his prayers; God gives increment to their grace. From this his joy flourisheth, and his heart is so ravished, that he knows not what thanks to God are enough for the mercy he receives through his hands. Truly, the reason why we gain no more from the graces of our brethren, is because we venture no more prayers upon them.

3. This would be an *undoubted evidence to prove ourselves saints—could we but heartily pray for them that are such*. Love to the brethren is oft given as a character of a true saint. Now, no act whereby we express our love to saints stands more clear from scruples of insincerity than this of praying for them. Will you say you love the saints because you frequent their company, show kindness to their persons, stand up ion their defence against those that reproach them, or because you suffer with them? All this is excellent, if sincere; yet how easy is it for vainglory, or some other carnal end, to mingle with these! But if thou canst find thy heart in secret—where none of these temptations have such an advantage to corrupt thee—let out to God for them with a deep sense and feeling of their sins, wants, and sorrows, this will speak more for the sincerity of thy love, than all the former without this.

[*Use or Application.*]

Use First. Must we pray *above all for saints*? Woe then to those who, instead of praying for them, had rather with those, Isa. 59:15, make 'a prey' of them; that, instead of praying for them, can curse them, and drink to their confusion. Haply it is not under the plain name of saints, but as wrapped up in the bearskin of fanatic, puritan,

or some other name of scorn, invented to cover their malice, so they can devour and tear them in pieces. The saints are a sort of people that none love but those that are themselves such. It is a good gloss of Jerome, *estote sancti, ut oratis pro sanctis*—be saints, and then you will pray for saints. The righteous is an abomination to the wicked: it is a sect everywhere spoken against. The feud began at first between Abel and Cain, and so spread over the whole world; one generation takes up the cudgel against them, as another lays it down. Hamilcar bequeathed his hatred against the Romans to his son Hannibal when he died. So is the feud transmitted by the wicked from one generation to another against the saints. Nothing can quench their wrath or take up the quarrel;—no moral perfections, which, were they in others, would be thought lovely. Let the saint be never so wise, meek, affable, and bountiful, yet this, that he is a Christian, is a 'but' that will blot all in the wicked world's thoughts. *Bonus vir Cajus Sejus, sed malus tantum quod Christianus*, was the language in Tertullian's age—Cajus Sejus had been a good man if he had not had that without which he could not be good. No near relation can wear off their spite. Michal cannot bite in her scornful spirit, but jeers her husband to his face for his zeal before the Lord.

In a word, no benefit which accrues to the wicked by the saints' neighbourhood—and that is not a little—can make them lay down their hatred. They are the only bail which God takes to keep a nation, when under his arrest, out of prison. They are the cause of blessings to the families, towns, and kingdoms they live in; yet the butt at which their envenomed arrows are levelled against. The whole city is against Lot; not a man among them to take his part, so true and constant are the wicked to their own side. Tertullian tells us of some heathen husbands that liked their wives, though loose and wanton, and lived with them, when such, before they were converted to Christianity, but when once they had embraced the faith, and thereby were made chaste, they put them away; fathers that could bear undutiful rebellious carriages in their children, when once converted and these amended, they turned them out of doors. *Ut quisque hoc nomine emendatur, offendit*—as any were reformed in their lives by turning Christian, so he became an offender. It were will if this were only the heathens' sin; but by woeful experience we find that the true Christian hath not more cruel enemies in the whole world than some be that are of his own name. The sharpest persecutions of the church have been by those that were in the church. O what a dreadful will such have to make in the great day, who profess the name of Christ, yet hate his nature in the saints!—who call Christ Lord, yet persecute his best servants and destroy his loyalest subjects! These are the men that above all other shall feel the utmost of the Lord's fiery wrath in the day when he shall plead his people's cause and avenge himself on their adversaries.

Use Second. Be exhorted to his duty of praying for saints; you cannot do that which God will take more kindly at your hands. He himself puts this petition into our mouths: 'Ask me of things to come concerning my sons,' Isa. 45:11. Courtiers frame their petitions according to their prince's liking. They are careful not to ask that which he is unwilling to give; but when they perceive he favours a person or business,

then they are ambitious to present the petition. Joab knew what he did in sending the woman of Tekoah to David, with a petition wrapped up in a handsome parable for Absalom the king's son. He knew the king's heart went strongly after him, and so the motion could not but be acceptable. And is not the Lord's heart gone after his saints? Thy prayer for them, therefore, must needs come in a good time, when it shall find the heart of God set upon the very thing thou askest. This was it that God was so pleased with in Daniel, ch. 9:22, 23. Now, in your prayers for the saints, among other things that you pray for them, forget not these:

1. *Pray for their lives.* They are such a blessing when they live, that they seldom fall but the earth shakes under them. It is commonly a prognostic of an approaching evil when God takes them away by death. Jeroboam had but one son in whom some good was found; he must die, and then the ruin of his father's family follows, I Kings 14:7. When Augustine died, then Hippo falls into the enemy's hands. If the wise man be gone that preserved the city, no wonder if its end hastens. God makes way to let his judgments in upon the world by taking the saints out of the world. When God chambers his children in the grave, a storm is at hand, Isa. 26. It is, you see, of concernment to do our utmost to keep them among us, especially when their number is so few and thin already, that we may say, as once the prophet concerning Israel, 'I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage,' Micah 7:1. Did we indeed see them come up as thick in our young ones as they fall in the old, we might say a blessing is in them. These would be as hope-seeds at least for the next generation. But when a wide breach is made and few to step into it, this is ominous. At Moses' death, Joshua stood up in his place, and it went well with Israel's affairs. But when Joshua died, and a generation rose up that had not seen the wonders God had done for his people, and so rebelled, then they to wrack apace, Judges 2:9, 10.

2. *Pray for their liberty and tranquility.* 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee,' Ps. 122:6. Jerusalem was the place for their public worship, 'whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord,' ver. 4; so that, by praying for Jerusalem's peace, is meant such serene times wherein the people of God might enjoy his pure worship without disturbance. The church hath always had her vicissitudes; sometimes fair and sometimes foul weather, but her winter commonly longer than her summer; yea, at the same time that the sun of peace brings day to one part of it, another is wrapped up in a night of persecution. Universal peace over all the churches is a great rarity; and where it is in any part of it enjoyed, some unkind cloud or other soon interposeth. The church's peace therefore is set out by a half-hour's silence, Rev. 8:1. When God gave the poor Jews 'a reviving,' after a tedious captivity, by moving Cyrus to grant them liberty to go and rebuild the house of God, how soon did a storm rise and beat them from their work! One prince furthers them, another obstructs the work. The gospel church Acts 9, had a sweet breathing time of peace; but how long did it last? this short calm went before a sudden hurricane of

persecution that falls upon them, Acts 12. Thus have the politic rulers of the world used the saints, as their carnal interest seemed to require; one while to countenance, another while to suppress, them. No sort of people in the world can expect less favour from the world than the church; their only safety therefore lies to engage God to espouse their cause.

3. Pray *for their love and unity among themselves*. The persecutor's sword—blessed be God!—is not at the church's throat among us. But are not Christians at daggers' drawing amongst themselves? The question in our days hath oft been asked, Why the word preached—being as frequent, clear, and powerful as any former age ever enjoyed in this nation—hath been no more effectual to convert the wicked or to edify the saints? I will not say this is the sole reason, but I dare deliver it as none of the least causes—and that is the woeful divisions and rents amongst those that have made greatest profession of the truth.

(1.) *For the saints*. It is no wonder they should thrive no more under the word, for the body of Christ is edified in love, Eph. 4. So long as there is a fever upon the body it cannot nourish. The apostles themselves, when wrangling, got little good by Christ's sermon, or the sacrament itself administered by Christ unto them. One would have thought that such was a meal in the strength whereof, as so many Elijahs, they might have gone a long journey. But, alas! we see how weak they rise from it. One denies his master, and the rest in a fright forsake him; so unfit were they in such a temper to make a spiritual advantage of the best of means.

(2.) *Again, for the wicked*. It is no wonder that the word prevails no more on them. The divisions and scandals that have arisen among those that call themselves saints have filled their hearts with prejudice against the holy truths and ways of God. Christ prays for his people's unity: 'That the world may believe,' saith he, 'that thou hast sent me,' John 17:21. What is oftener in the mouths of many profane wretches than this—We will believe them when they are all of one mind, and come over to them when they can agree among themselves? Who loves to put his head into a house on fire? This should, methinks, stir up all that wish well to the gospel to pray, and that instantly, for the reunion of their divided hearts. Hot disputes will not do it; prayer, or nothing can. Pliny saith of the pearls called *uniones*, that their nature, though they be engendered in the sea, partakes of the heavens more than the earth. 'The God of peace' can only see us at peace. If ever we be wise to agree, we must borrow our wisdom from above; this alone is 'pure and peaceable.'

THIRD PROPOSITION.

[In praying for saints, we must comprehend 'ALL.']

In praying for saints, we must be careful to *comprehend and encircle all saints*. I do not mean, as the Papists, for quick and dead. Prayer is a means to wait upon them

in their way; at death, then they are at their journey's end. Prayers are bootless for the dead sinner, and needless for the deceased saint. The wicked in that state are beneath, the saint above, our prayers. We cannot help the wicked. The tree is fallen, and so it must lie. We read of a change the body shall have after death. Vile bodies may, but filthy souls cannot, after death be made glorious. If they go off the body filthy, so they shall meet it at the resurrection. The time to pray for them is now while they live among you, or never; for death and hell come together to the sinner. No sooner Dives' wretched soul is forced out of his body, but you hear it shriek in hell, 'The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment,' Luke 16:22, 23. But Abraham tells him 'there is a gulf fixed,' that forbids all intercourse betwixt heaven and him. No what is that but an irrevocable decree with which the wicked are sealed under everlasting wrath? If God receive no prayers from them, then not from others for them. And as the wicked are beyond our help, so the saints above all need of our help; for they are in their port and haven. Prayer implies want, but saints departed are perfect, called therefore 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' We need not beg a pardon for them, for the Lord acquits them—they are 'just;' not for a supply of any good they want, they are 'made perfect;' not to remove any pain they feel, for 'the Spirit saith, Blessed are they that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours.' But they who invented this device intended, it is like, gain to their own purse, rather than benefit to others' souls. It is a pick-purse doctrine, contrived to bring grist to the pope's mill. But, to leave this, they are the living saints, *your companions here in tribulation*, that are the subject of your prayers, and of these we are to encircle the whole community within our remembrance. The Papists speak much of a treasury the church hath. This indeed is the true treasury of the church—the common stock of prayers with which they all trade to heaven for one another. Paul tells us what a large heart he had, even for those whose 'face he never saw in the flesh,' Col. 1:2. Take a few REASONS for the point.

[WHY *in praying on behalf of saints we are to comprehend 'ALL.'*]

REASON FIRST. We are to *love all saints, therefore to pray for all*. Love in a saint is the picture of God's love to us; and God's love looks not asquint to one saint more than another. That image is not of God's drawing which is not like himself. Nature may err in its productions, but not God in the grace he begets in his saint's bosom. The new creature never wants its true nature. If God loves all his children, then wilt thou all thy brethren, or not one of them. When Paul commends Christians for this grace of love, he doth it from this note of universality, Eph. 1:15; 'After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints;' so Col. 1:4; Phm. 5. Now, if we love all, we cannot but pray for all. To say we love one, and not pray for him, is a solecism. Can a courtier love his friend and not speak to his prince for him, when he may do him a favour by it? Love prompts a man to do that wherein he may express the greatest

kindness to his friend. Mary pours the most precious ointment she hath upon Christ. Prayer, if of the right composition, is the most precious ointment thou canst bestow on the saints. Save it not for some few of them that are of thy private society or particular acquaintance; but let the sweet odour of it fill the whole house of the church; pray for all.

REASON SECOND. We are to pray for all saints, *because Christ prays for all*. He carries all their names in his breastplate. 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.' He leaves not one of the number out of his remembrance. The elder brother was priest to the whole family; so is Christ, our elder brother, to the whole household of believers. Now Christ's intercession is a pattern for our prayers. We cannot indeed pray for all as he doth. He prays for them not only in the lump, but for every individual saint by name: 'I have prayed,' Peter, 'for thee,' Luke 22:32; yea, not only for every person by name, but for their particular wants and occasions. 'I have prayed that thy faith fail not.' Christ takes notice of that very grace which was in most imminent danger, and secures it by his intercession. O what unspeakable comfort is this to a saint, that he in particular should be spoken of in heaven, and every want or temptation he laboureth with be taken notice of, and provided for, by Christ's mediation! Thus indeed we cannot pray for all, because we know but few of their persons, and little of the state and condition of those we know. Neither is there need we should. Our general suffrage and vote is as kindly taken as if we could descend to particular instances. God knows the mind of the Spirit, in our prayers on earth, to be for the same things which Christ insisteth on in his intercession in heaven.

REASON THIRD. We must pray for all saints, *or else we can pray for none*.

1. We cannot pray *really for any, if not for all*. He that prays for one saint and desires not good to another, prays not for that one as a saint, but under some other consideration, as wife, friend, child, or the like—a saint clothed with such and such circumstances; for *à quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*—he that loves a man, because a man, loves all, because the same human nature is found in all; and all saints have the same nature.

2. We cannot pray *acceptably for one, except for all*; and so we wrong those for whom we do pray, by leaving them out for whom we also should. Joseph would not hear the patriarchs for Simeon's release till they brought Benjamin over to him also. If thou wouldst be welcome to God in praying for any, carry all thy brethren to him in thy devotions; leave none behind. 'Are here all thy children?' said Samuel to Jesse. He would not sit down till the stripling David was fetched to complete the company. May be thou art earnest in prayer for thy hear neighbour Christians, but dost thou not forget others that are further off? Thou rememberest the church of God at home, but dost thou lay the miseries of the churches abroad to heart? What if God should ask thee now, Are here all thy brethren? Are there none but these that live under thy eye to be remembered? Have not I children, and you brethren, elsewhere in the world to be thought upon? The Jews in Babylon were not to forget Jerusalem

because of the great distance. 'Remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind,' Jer. 51:50.

[Use or Application.]

Use First. O what a rich merchant is the saint, *who hath a stock going in so many hands!* In heaven Christ is hard at prayer for him, on earth his brethren. What can this man want? Christ hath such an interest in his Father's heart, that he can deny him nothing; the saints such interest in Christ, that he will not deny them. So the Christian's trade goes smoothly on in both worlds. Think of this, Christian, for thy comfort—wherever a child of God is living upon earth, there hast thou a factor to traffic with heaven for thy good. Let this help thy faith in putting up thy own private prayers, knowing that thou prayest in a communion and fellowship with others. Even when thou art alone in thy closet, expect an answer to more than thy own prayer. It is an uncharitableness not to pray for others, and pride not to expect a benefit from the prayers of others.

Use Second. It teacheth us *how inquisitive we should be of the affairs of our brethren and state of the church*, that so we may pray with a more bowelly sense of their wants for them. Nehemiah, when he heard of some that were come out of Judea, inquires how it fared with his brethren there? and from the sad report he heard of their afflictions and reproaches is put into a bitter passion, which he emptied, with prayers and tears for them, into the bosom of God, Neh. 1:4. How could he have done this so feelingly, had he not first been acquainted with their distressed condition? We are many of us asking oft, 'What news?' and reading books of intelligence, foreign and national; but is it as Athenians, or as Christians? to fill our heads, or to affect our hearts? to furnish us with matter of chat and talk by the fireside with our neighbours, or of prayer to our God?

Use Third. Labour to *get a wide heart in prayer for all the saints*. God, it is said, gave Solomon a large heart of knowledge and wisdom, as the sand of the sea, I Kings 4:29. Behold a mercy greater than that to Solomon is here. A large heart is better than a large head—to do good, than to know it. Nothing is more unworthy than a selfish spirit; no selfishness worse than that which is vented in prayer. A heathen could blame that Athenian who in a drought prayed for his own city, saying, 'O Jupiter, rain upon the fields of the Athenians,' but forgot that his neighbours wanted as well as himself. Many heathens were great admirers of this virtue of charity. Take one instance for all. It was a law among the Romans that none should come near the emperor's tent in the night upon pain of death. Now, there was one night a certain soldier apprehended, standing near the emperor's tent with a petition to deliver unto him, who was therefore presently to be executed; but the emperor, hearing the noise from within his pavilion, called out, saying, 'If it be for himself, let him die; if for another, spare his life.' Being examined, it was found his petition was for two of his fellow-soldiers that were taken asleep on the watch. So both he escaped death and

they punishment. Was this office of charity so pleasing to an earthly prince as to dispense with a law for its sake? O how acceptable then to our merciful God is it to intercede for our fellow-saints! But the more to provoke you to the exercise of this duty in its full breadth and latitude—viz. for all saints —consider,

1. This praying for all saints *will prove thy love to saints sincere*. A man, in praying for himself or his relations, stands not at that advantage to see the actings of pure grace, as when he prays for such as have not these carnal dependencies on him. When thou prayest for thyself in want or sickness, how knowest thou that it is any more than the natural cry of the creature? Is it for thy family thou prayest? Still thy flesh hath an interest in the work, and may help to quicken thee—if it be not the chief spring to set thee agoing. But when thy heart beats strongly with a sense of any other's misery, that hath nothing to move thee, but his Christianity to be his remembrancer, and thou canst in secret plead with God for him as feelingly as if thou didst go on thy own errand, truly thou breathest a gracious spirit.

2. As it will speak for the truth of thy grace, *so for the height and vigour of it*. It is corruption that contracts our hearts. They were none of the best Christians of whom Paul gives this character, 'They sought their own,' Php. 2:21. As the heart advanceth in grace, so it widens and grows more public-spirited. The higher a man ascends a hill the larger his prospect. One that stands upon the ground cannot look over the next hedge; his eye is confined within the compass of his own wall. Thus the carnal spirit thinks of none but his own estate or stake, feels not the water till it comes into his own cabin; whereas grace cleaves the soul, and the more grace a man hath, the more it will enable to look from himself over into the condition of his brethren. Such a one partakes of the nature of the heavenly bodies, which shed their influences down upon the whole world. Especially this would speak grace high in its actings, if these circumstances concur with it:

(1.) When a person is himself *swimming in abundance of all enjoyments, and can then lay aside his own joy to weep and mourn for and with any afflicted saints, though at never so great a distance from them*. Thus did Nehemiah for his brethren at Jerusalem, when himself was in a warm nest and had all the enjoyments that so great a prince's court could afford. It is not usual for any but those of great grace to feel the cords of the church's afflictions through a bed of down on which themselves lie. It must be a David that can prefer Jerusalem above his chief joy.

(2.) On the other hand, *when in the depth of our own personal troubles and miseries, we can yet reserve a large room in our prayers for any other saints*, this speaks a great measure of grace. It showed the Romans' strength and courage to be great, that they could spare several legions to send into Spain for the help of their friends there, while Hannibal was near their own walls with a puissant army. To be able to lend auxiliary prayers to other afflicted saints, or abroad to the church of God, when thou thyself art engaged deeply with private sorrows, does signify a very gracious spirit.

(3.) When, *in our own distresses, we can entertain the tidings of any other saint's mercies with joy and thankfulness.* This requires great grace indeed, to act two so contrary parts well at the same time. The prosperity of others too oft breeds envy and discontent in them that want it. If therefore thou canst praise God for others' mercies, while the tears stand in thy eyes for thy own miseries, it is a rare temper; flesh and blood never learned thee it thou mayest be sure.

To shut up this with a caution—though we are to pray for all saints, yet *some call for a more special remembrance at our hands.*

(a) Those that are *near to us by other relations.* First, by bond of nature as well as of grace: 'A brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?' Phm. 16. It is true the bond of the Spirit is more sacred than that of the flesh—*sanctior est copula cordis quàm corporis*; yet, when that of the flesh is twisted with the other, it adds, as force to the affection, so argument to the duty; therefore saith Paul, 'much more unto thee.' Charity may begin, though it must not end, at home. Again, by domestic relation, society and communion, whether civil or religious—these give an enforcement to the duty; master for servant, and servants for masters; minister for people, and people for minister. He that starves his family is not like to feast his neighbours. He that is a churl to his neighbours, is not like to be overkind to strangers. So he that prays not for those who by these relations stand so near to him, is very unlike to abound in this duty for others.

(b) Those that are *in distress.* Whoever you forget, remember these. If one be sick in our family, we will send him his portion before we carve for any that are at the table. This is a fit season for love. A friend for adversity is as proper as fire is for a winter's day. Job's friends chose the right time to visit him in, but took not the right course of improving their visit. Had they spent the time in prayer for him which they did in hot disputes with him, they had profited and pleased God more. Again, this is the season that the tempter is busy. This lion walks abroad in the night of affliction, hoping then to make the Christian his prey. And if he wakes to make a prey of him, shall not we watch to pray for him? Again, this is the season of God's most speedy answering prayers. 'In the day when I cried thou answeredst me,' Ps. 138:3; that is, in the day of affliction. Indeed now is the time when the Spirit of Christ will be stirring us up to pray. And when should we send our letters but when the post calls? He that stirs thee up to pray for them, will be as careful to deliver up thy prayers and see an answer returned.

(c) Such of the saints as are *of a public place and use.* You pray for many here while you pray for one.

(d) Such as have *expressly desired and engaged you to remember them at the throne of grace.* Among debts, specialties are paid in the first place. Thou art a debtor to all thy brethren, and owest them a remembrance in thy prayers; but more especially them to whom thou hast particularly promised it. This is, as it were, a bond under thy hand, given for further security of paying this debt to thy friend. Whoever thou forgettest, remember him. Did the butler's conscience accuse him for not

remembering his promise to Joseph, who had engaged him—when he was restored to court—to intercede with Pharaoh for him? ‘I do,’ saith he, ‘remember my faults this day,’ Gen. 41:9. Much more hast thou cause to confess thy faults, who forgettest to make mention of them to the Lord that have solemnly desired it at thy hands. To have promised the payment of a sum of money, and to have failed, were not greater dishonesty. Thou mayest prejudice his soul more by disappointing him of thy prayer, than his estate could suffer for want of thy money. How knowest thou but the mercy he wants is stopped while [until] thy prayers come to heaven for it? That other saints obtain by their prayers for us what sometimes we do not by our own is clear from Job 42:8.

[\[1\]](#) *CLOUT*, n. 1. A patch; a piece of cloth or leather, &c., to close a breach.
2. A piece of cloth for mean purposes.

—From *Webster’s*

[\[2\]](#) *Precedaneous*: (Pre`ce*da"ne*ous) *a.* Preceding; antecedent; previous. [Obs.] *Hammond*. — From *Webster’s*

[\[3\]](#) *Familist*: — member of Family Of Love, religious sect of Dutch origin, followers of Hendrik Niclaes, a 16th-century Dutch merchant. Niclaes’ main activity was in Emden, East Friesland (1540-60). In his *Evangelium regni*, issued in England as *A Joyfyl Message of the Kingdom*, he invited all “lovers of truth, of what nation and religion soever they be, Christian, Jews, Mahomites, or Turks, and heathen,” to join in a great fellowship of peace, the Family of Love, giving up all contention over dogma and seeking to be incorporated into the body of Christ.

[\[4\]](#) *Exsuscitation*:—Ex*sus`ci*ta"tion) *n.* [L. *exsuscitatio*.] A stirring up; a rousing.

— From *Webster’s*

[\[5\]](#) *causey*: — a raised path or road as across wet ground.

—SDB

[\[6\]](#) *Gust*: — taste; relish; flavour; savour.

[\[7\]](#) I Sam 7:9-11. But also see I Sam 12:14-19; which seems to fit Gurnall's context better. — SDB